

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 11, 2024 AT 4:00 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Ronterious Green, Chair, District 5
Alonzetta Simpkins, Vice-Chair, District 2
Eric Hinson, District 1
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
Brenda Holt, District 4
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green called the workshop to order at 4 p.m. He led into Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners welcomes and encourages public participation at all meetings of the Board. Citizens are free to speak for up to three (3) minutes on non-agenda items. Public comments and participation are also encouraged for items on the agenda. Additionally, if you are unable to attend a meeting in person, comments from the Public can also be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on the date of the meeting. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record, but the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting. Citizens are further encouraged to participate on the County's website at www.gadsdencountyfl.gov.

Chair Green read aloud the above statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Property Tax Revenue Estimate**

Mr. Dixon appeared and stated they will be going through the budget but not as in-depth as Mrs. Burgess was not present but there were other departments present to go deeper into their budget. Mr. Dixon stated they did not do a walk through on fire and EMS because there were a lot of things to be worked out first.

Commissioner Simpkins appeared at 4:07 p.m.

Mr. Dixon went through the first few pages of the packet discussing the budget report on state funding and projected revenues.

Mr. Dixon mentioned the Ad Valorem Revenue Estimate and stated there was an estimated increase from 2024 to 2025 of \$1,376,287. Mr. Dixon also mentioned the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

Commissioner Hinson appeared at 4:14 p.m.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they heard from the CRA's – they have 4 of them. He asked if there were any presentations by CRA to see where the money is going. Mr. Dixon stated they could gather information on that. Commissioner Holt asked about the funding and what amounts were they matching. She stated the County could set up their own CRA.

Chair Green stated a presentation from CRA would be appreciated. Commissioner Holt stated to make sure they are on good legal ground beforehand. Mr. Dixon stated a great portion of their funding comes from the county.

3. Department Presentations

ELDERLY AFFAIRS (LATOYA FRYSON)

Ms. Fryson appeared before the board to discuss Elderly Affairs.

Chair Green stepped out at 4:21 p.m.

The Department of Elderly Affairs focuses on providing diverse recreational, educational, social, nutritional, cultural, and health activities, programs, services, and special events for older adults in the community.

Elderly Affairs offers programs, activities and opportunities designed to encourage active living, optimal aging, and physical and social fitness for independents adults aged 55 and over.

Senior services and operational congregate meals site are located in 3 areas of the county Quincy, Chattahoochee, and Havana. A partnership is extended to the City of Gretna and Gadsden Wellness for the seniors that receive services from their sites as well.

There are over 200 seniors registered within the 3 sites for Congregate meal and home delivered meal services. In addition to the programs that have been in existence for years, the Elderly Affairs department continues to create and offer programs and services that directly address the needs of seniors in Gadsden County.

Ms. Fryson gave a recap of Fiscal Year 2024:

1. Awarded the Older American Act Grant July 2023. January 2024 new reward amount of over \$250k for the year. Over 50% of the staff that work directly within the OAA Grant, salaries go into each category of the OAA grant (C1) Congregate Meals, (C2) Home Delivered Meals, and (IIIB) Transportation and Recreation. The OAA grant is contracted with the Elderly Affairs department for a 5-year period.
2. Full Operation of the Carver Height Senior Center from 2 day a week to 5 and from around 8 seniors to just over 30 seniors registered at this site.
3. Over 200 seniors registered services between all 3 sites; currently serving Meals on Wheels to 33 clients.

4. Provided Diabetes Education Classes in each of the Centers.
5. Farmer' Market Vouchers issued to seniors in the community twice a year.
6. Held Food and Community Supply Drives in Quincy and Chattahoochee for seniors over 60.
7. Offered monthly legal clinic monthly at all the center with the North Florida Legal Services
8. Partnered with the Salvation Army for the setup of a food pantry every 2nd Tuesday of each month
9. Line dancing classes twice a month
10. Exercise classes every Tuesday
11. Alzheimer and Healthy Brain Series with FSU COM and DCCI monthly
12. Hurricane Preparedness Meal Distribution, yearly with FPL and FCOA
13. Computer training with the library.
14. Produce market and education by Second Harvest.
15. Bi-monthly haircuts with Gadsden Technical College.
16. Senior Outings, Senior Appreciation Day with Making a Difference Org. and Senior Fun Day in Partnership with GCSO.

Chair Green returned at 4:27 p.m.

Ms. Fryson mentioned the Elderly Affairs goals/achievements and went through the budget snapshot.

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Department Achievements	FY24
Number of Congregate meals served	5,903
Number of Home Delivered Meals served	5,920
Emergency Home Delivered Meals provided	463
Number of seniors that received supplemental utility assistance	172
Number of seniors that were provided transportation services (shopping assistance, individual & group trips)	5,322
Number of Recreation Hours	449.45
Farmer's Market Vouchers issued	550
Simon Scott Registered Participants	135
Carver Heights Registered Participants	34
Chattahoochee Registered Participants	12
Home Delivery Clients	33

Dept. Title	DEPT.#	FY2024	FY2025	FY24-25 ADOPTED VS	
		ADOPTED	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED	FY23-24 ADOPTED	
		BUDGET	BASE BUDGET	VARIANCE	COMMENTS
Elderly Affairs	0060	\$ 810,859	\$ 830,000	\$ 19,141	Variance due to impact of staff salary increases.

- OAA Grant Billed- 2023: \$104,378
- OAA Grant Projected 2024: \$251,040
- Total Projected to Receive from Grant: \$355,247

Chair Green asked if they were maximizing opportunities for grants. Ms. Fryson stated they were definitely looking for grants.

Chair Green asked about the utility assistance program and the funding balance. Ms. Fryson stated that was a supplemental utility assistance program.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have workout equipment and Ms. Fryson stated they have dumbbells and ordered bands as well. They also walk as well.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they brief the seniors on transportation and Ms. Fryson mentioned the Big Bend transit.

Mr. Dixon stated they need to be more inclusive with them on grants.

PUBLIC WORKS (CURTIS YOUNG)

Mr. Dixon stated Agnes Denson and Roy Bradwell will present for public works on behalf of Mr. Young.

Ms. Denson explained the Public Works Department. Gadsden County's Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining over 700 miles of roads in unincorporated Gadsden County. Public Works is responsible for the administration of policy and objectives, responding to citizen's needs, providing department guidance and direction, reviewing policy matters, preparing, and monitoring capital projects and ensuring consistent day to day maintenance of county roads and storm water infrastructure. The administration division also manages, supervises, and supports the activities of all divisions including budget, payroll, customer service, engineering, invoices, and grants.

Ms. Denson mentioned their goals/ achievements for Public Works. They have maintained 633 miles of paved roads for FY23 and FY24. They have maintained 67 miles of unpaved roads and 67 bridges maintained. They have striped 12 roads with paint for FY23 and they have done 20 roads with thermoplastic in FY24.

Accomplishment: FY 23/24

The Public Works Department received and managed the following grant funded projects:

(5) Local Agency Program – LAP Project - Totaling \$1,690,090

(8) Infrastructure Project

Ms. Denson went through all funds received from FDOT:

Hardway Highway \$4,410,560 SCOP

Providence Road \$3,025,298 SCOP

Ben Bostic Road \$1,902,402 SCOP

Dogtown Road \$1,874,149 SCRAP

Fairbanks Ferry (2nd Phase) \$2,037,148 SCOP

Barineau B-SCOP \$296,120 B-SCOP

Point Milligan Road \$3,240,021 SCOP

Fairbanks Ferry (1st Phase) \$1,700,000 SCOP

Mr. Erik Justin appeared and talked about mosquito control. They normally spray around 860 miles and they have citizen requests of around 300-400 annually. Chemical usage (spray adulticide) – 330-380 gallons for FY24. Chemical usage (larvicide) standing water – 1100 BTI briquets 50lbs granular product.

Mr. Justin went through the FY25 Outlook for Public Works:

- Chemical use to remain in the 330–380-gallon range with 2 spray trucks actively being used for evening operations.
- Zone spray approximately 800-1000 miles of roadways for a treatment acreage of 30,000 to 40,000 acres.
- Larvicide use in the range of 12 cases (1200) units of BTI product.

- Chemical price has increased dramatically in the last couple of years (currently \$30 a gallon) and we have purchased the most affordable effective product available. There are options more effective, however the price increases with a higher percentage active ingredient.
- Monthly purchase of dry ice to bait 5 mosquito traps set within the county to determine baseline mosquito levels as required by the State for verification of the need for chemical applications. Dry ice cost is average of \$50 monthly.

Chair Green asked if any estimate on costs. Mr. Justin stated the chemical cost has doubled - \$30 a gallon.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have stayed within the budget and Mr. Justin stated they were in budget right now.

Commissioner Holt asked if there was public notice if they were going to spray a road and Mr. Justin stated not typically, unless there was a notice spray in the system.

Commissioner Hinson asked how effective are the mosquito repellent plants. Mr. Justin stated there were a lot of contradictory answers to that; not very effective for him.

Ms. Denson stated the next portion is about Fleet – vehicle maintenance.

The Fleet Department is responsible for maintaining and servicing ALL vehicles and equipment through-out the County. Fleet Maintenance also orders parts and supplies and maintains an inventory. In addition to these primary functions, replacement of vehicles and equipment, development of specifications before purchase and the submissions for procurement are made through the Fleet Department.

Department Goals/Achievements	FY23	FY24
Number of ALL Vehicles Maintained	120	104
Number of Equipment Maintained	115	115
Number of Small Equipment Maintained	60	60

Ms. Denson mentioned the fuel system. The Department is responsible for managing and maintaining the county fuel dispensing sites.

Department Goals/Achievements	FY23	FY24
Number of Fuel Systems Maintained	2 - Sites	2 Sites
Number of Fuel Equipment Maintained	\$975,904	\$604,673

Commissioner NeSmith asked for clarification on users – were they purchasing and paying the county for usage? Ms. Denson stated yes.

Commissioner Simpkins asked how much they were paying annually and what they were using annually. They stated they would get back with her on that question.

Mr. Dixon stated tanks need to be replaced in regards to the fuel system.

Ms. Denson went through the FY25 Outlook:

Pending available funding:

- Public Works will request fund to pave (1) unpaved road in each district. She stated there was a correction with that. They were actually requesting to pave one mile per year of unpaved roads. One mile equals one million dollars.
- The Fleet department will request shop renovations/upgrades and large working area. The renovations would provide the current mechanics the ability to repair heavy equipment inhouse.
- Fleet department will request to replace the fuel pump and add a covered awning for protection.

Roy Braswell appeared. Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a road in district 3 or 4 less than a mile and Mr. Bradwell stated yes. Commissioner Holt stated it was expensive to do a mile – she asked if they have equipment and Mr. Bradwell stated yes. Commissioner Hinson stated they should do a bond.

Commissioner Holt mentioned a mowing crew. They need help with that and what numbers it would cost to hire an extra crew.

Commissioner Hinson stated they seem to talk about asking for tractors every year. They need to do an inventory first and look at what was purchased the last couple years. Mr. Dixon stated in 2021, they purchased additional tractors and mowers – the equipment was not performing like they thought they would.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how many mowers and Mr. Dixon stated 6 – total of 10; they were having trouble with newer ones.

		FY2024	FY2025
		ADOPTED	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED
Dept. Title	DEPT. #	BUDGET	BASE BUDGET
Roads & Bridges (PW)	0112	\$ 979,584	\$ 1,020,000
Paved Road & Right of Way Maintenance (PW)	0126	\$ 4,203,960	\$ 4,200,000
Vehicle Maintenance (PW)	0128	\$ 648,527	\$ 715,000
Mosquito Control (PW)	0221	\$ 91,524	\$ 175,000
Total		\$ 5,923,595	\$ 6,110,000

Ms. Denson stated the Fleet Department was requesting shop renovations. They were also requesting to replace the fuel pumps and add the awning covering to protect the fuel pumps.

Chair Green stated if they were leasing new vehicles, should that line item be going up? Mr. Dixon stated the number will be cut in half in terms of maintenance.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if leasing 102 vehicles and they stated no. She asked if it was strictly for vehicles in public works and they stated it entailed all.

BUILDING INSPECTION (ROOSEVELT MORRIS)

Mr. Dixon stated he will go through building inspection. The Building Inspection Department ensures the health, safety, and public welfare of the built environments in Gadsden County by Enforcing the Florida Building Code and related Gadsden County ordinances. This Department is responsible for processing building permit applications, plan reviews, code compliance inspections, and monitoring construction projects to ensure they meet the quality and safety standards required by Florida.

Department Achievements	FY23	YTD FY 24
Number of building inspections performed	\$475,373	\$332,742

- The building department is expecting a slight decline in residential construction with a slight increase in commercial construction for the next year.
- There will be at least several capital improvements project beginning. Steven School improvements and Gadsden County EOC new construction to name a few.
- There is a need to add a Deputy Building Official to the department to ensure the level of service is maintained throughout the year.
- The department will continue to educate the public on the New Florida Building Code 2023 8th edition, that came into effect January 1 of this year.
- To gain more professional experience and community networking opportunities, the

department looks forward to joining the Tallahassee Building Association and the National Building Association this fiscal year.

HUMAN RESOURCES (DR. LISA BURROUGHS)

Ms. Burroughs mentioned their goals/accomplishment for Human Resources:

- Compensation Study - increased County employees pay to the median of their respective pay ranges.
- HRIS – currently in discussions with UKG for a contract to acquire a software system to fully support the employee life cycle from recruitment to separation/retirement.
- Open Access and Communication with HR
– increasing communication and transparency with employees have enhanced trust, morale and employee engagement, while reducing misunderstandings, conflicts, and legal risks, ultimately fostering a positive organizational culture and well-being.

Department Goals/Achievements	FY23	FY24
Number of requisitions created and or recruited for vacant positions.	77	25
Number of positions filled.	40	8
Average Turnover Rate.	16.44%	6.55%
Number of days to fill vacant positions	60	30

Dept. Title	DEPT. #	FY2024		FY2025		FY24-25 ADOPTED VS FY23-24 ADOPTED	COMMENTS
		ADOPTED		DEPARTMENT REQUESTED			
		BUDGET		BASE BUDGET		VARIANCE	
Human Resources	0016	\$	361,339	\$	475,000	113,661	Increase due to estimated impact of HRIS system and staff salary increase.

SUMMER YOUTH (DR. LISA BURROUGHS)

Ms. Burroughs stated they were about to launch the Summer Youth 6-Week Program; June 21 is orientation day. June 24 will be the start of the program and last through August 2.

She stated they will provide on the job training; next year will be \$13 for wage so they would have to budget for that. She mentioned partnering with Gadsden Technical College and FL Public Safety Institute They would also be partnering with CareerSource Capital Region.

They were anticipating 450 students for FY25. The county needs to secure a budget of \$700,000.

Commissioner Hinson asked about jobs for special needs students. Ms. Burroughs stated they have not customized it yet. Commissioner Hinson stated if they do not identify them, they will not have any. He also wanted to make sure to partner with the school system.

Chair Green stated they need to do a better job on communication with special needs parents. Commissioner Holt asked about monitoring students while working. Ms. Burroughs stated Ms. Germany was working to identify people on job and follow up with them if any issues. They will be doing random visits as well.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have enough staff and resources and Mr. Dixon stated no, they need more staff.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned CareerSource and asked if they were paying for all kids? Mr. Dixon stated they know what CareerSource said they would do; they said 100 upfront and then they came back and said as many as possible. Mr. Dixon stated if they hire all the kids, they will be in a budget deficit. Commissioner Simpkins asked if they have something in writing with CareerSource. Mr. Dixon stated they will be Friday.

Department Goals/Achievements	FY23	FY24
Number of summer youth applicants	291	380
Number of students accepted in jobs or educational programs	220	315
Incomplete/Ineligible	71	65
Number of Participating Business/County Departments	62	65

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (TJ LEWIS)

TJ Lewis appeared before the Board to discuss the department of Economic Development. He stated the primary function of Economic Development is business retention and expansion.

Mr. Lewis went through accomplishments:

- Office staffing
- Office lease and buildout
- GadsdenBiz.com
- Using CAD (Computer Animated Design) to tell a story
- New Economic Development & Resiliency Plan

Mr. Lewis mentioned GIS Webtech + Resimplifi

Commissioner NeSmith returned at 6:51 p.m.

Mr. Lewis went through the Goals/25 Outlook for Economic Development:



Dept. Title	DEPT.#	FY2024	FY2025	FY2025	FY24-25
		ADOPTED BUDGET	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED BASE BUDGET	DEPARTMENT REQUESTED BASE BUDGET	ADOPTED VS FY23-24 ADOPTED VARIANCE
Gadsden County Economic Development	0024	377,131	375,672	380,000	4,328

Mr. Lewis mentioned that they would be pursuing grants – one in Brownfield area.

Commissioner Hinson would like for them to talk about how they could build infrastructure. Commissioner NeSmith asked if any applications submitted for infrastructure for the 3 undeveloped exits. Mr. Lewis stated he has been in contact with FDOT.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were actively looking for resources for interchange. Mr. Lewis stated yes, a plan is coming.

Commissioner Hinson stated he would like for them to authorize the County Administrator to find 10 students that are special needs for the summer youth program. Mr. Dixon stated he will reach out to Ms. Harris at the School District.

Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 7:22 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**Ronterious Green, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk