

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 1, 2024 AT 4:00 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Ronterious Green, Chair, District 5, appeared online
Alonzetta Simpkins, Vice-Chair, District 2
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
Brenda Holt, District 4
Eric Hinson, District 1
Roosevelt Morris, Assistant Interim County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair Simpkins called the workshop to order at 4 p.m. Vice-Chair led into invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens Requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (3-minutes Limit)

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.

Vice-Chair Simpkins read aloud the above statement.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 4:02 p.m.

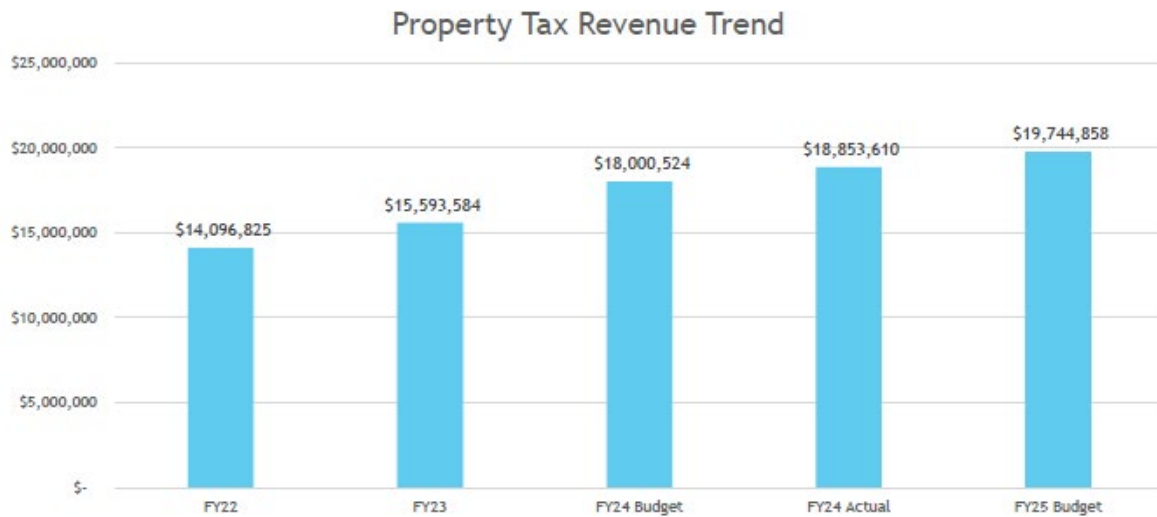
General Business

1. Introduction

Roosevelt Morris, on behalf of Mr. Dixon, introduced Ms. Burgess and stated she would provide a presentation on the budget.

2. Tentative Budget Summary

Ms. Burgess appeared. She went through the property tax revenue trend chart:



Ms. Burgess stated for Fiscal Year 2024, they budgeted 18 million and for Fiscal Year 2025 budget, they were estimated to receive \$19.7 million in ad valorem revenue.

Year	Taxable Property Value	Millage Rate	Estimated Revenue Generated	95% Revenue Budgeted	Additional Revenue Over 9.0000 Millage Rate (Budgeted 95%)
2025	\$2,309,340,165	9.0000	\$ 20,784,061	\$ 19,744,858	
	\$2,309,340,165	9.2500	\$ 21,361,397	\$ 20,293,327	\$ 548,468
	\$2,309,340,165	9.5000	\$ 21,938,732	\$ 20,841,795	\$ 1,096,937
	\$2,309,340,165	9.7500	\$ 22,516,067	\$ 21,390,263	\$ 1,645,405
	\$2,309,340,165	10.0000	\$ 23,093,402	\$ 21,938,732	\$ 2,193,873

The current millage rate is 9.0000 mills. The table above represents the fiscal impact of increasing the millage rate. The column labeled additional revenue over 9.0000 millage rate, represents the additional revenue estimated to be received if millage rate is increased.

Ms. Burgess went through expenditures by fund for their tentative budget that they were requesting for Fiscal Year 2025. The tentative budget for the general fund is at 30.5 million.

Ms. Burgess went through the budget highlights for the Summer Youth Program:

- The Summer Youth Employment Opportunity and Initiative Program is a 6-week work program for youth between the ages of 14 and 19.
- The program provides employment opportunities that provide them with on-the-job training that will help them prepare for the future. With support from local government and businesses, our Gadsden youth can transform their lives and start to develop career dreams.

- The Tentative Budget for FY2025 has been calculated at 315 students, working 20 hours a week, earning \$12 per hour.

Fiscal Year 2025 Outlook:

- Increase the number of participating businesses/departments to 72.
- Apply for grants and seek additional funding from businesses. Note: With consideration of the County's current budget, the County may consider first seeking the Board's direction in order to determine how many students can the County fund for FY25.
- Lastly, utilize volunteers to manage the increased number of students and ensure the quality of training and support services.

Ms. Burgess went through the budget highlight for Elderly Affairs:

The Department of Elderly Affairs was awarded the Older American Act Grant in 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 (IIB) Transportation and Recreation. The OAA grants is contracted with the Elderly Affairs department for a 5-year period.

The FY2024-25 Elderly Affairs Operations Budget includes:

- Congregate meals & Home Delivered Meals (\$45k)
- Supplemental utility assistance (\$30k)
- Transportation Services
- Various programs and classes for Senior Citizens throughout the year

Ms. Burgess went through the budget highlights for Love Where You Live Campaign:

- Gadsden County is working with our cities, community and civic groups and neighbors to help keep the county clean and litter-free. The campaign includes county-wide programs for recycling, litter control and volunteer opportunities such as Adopt-a-Road and Community Clean ups.

The Love Where You Live Campaign includes the following expenses:

- Advertising
- Signage
- Multimedia
- Community cleaning campaign spearheaded through Public Works, etc.

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In FY2024-25, \$100,000 has been allocated in the Tentative Budget for the Love Where You Live Campaign.

Ms. Burgess went through the Economic Development budget highlights.

FY2024-25 Economic Development Outlook:

- The Department will work on implementing the new Economic Development and Resiliency Plan.
- Tentative Budget includes funds to launch a
- marketing/advertising campaign for job/land development opportunities in Gadsden County.
- Quarterly participation in regional or national tradeshows to market Gadsden County to prospective site selectors.
- Funds for continued support for the Economic Development website to assist in supporting businesses and providing information.

Ms. Burgess went on to the budget highlights for Parks and Recreation.

FY2025 Outlook:

- Implement and enhance recreational programs and activities for the youth, adults and Senior Citizens of Gadsden County
- Implement non-Sports related activities such as gaming, gardening, swimming, fitness, etc.
- Research and continue to apply for new grant opportunities that can assist with paying for equipment.
- We are recommending utilizing \$370k in ARPA funds towards funding Parks Upgrades and Expansion.

Description	Fiscal Impact
Increases in salary due to Board approved compensation study.	\$ 500,000
Increase in the County's contribution to Medicaid	\$ 196,163
Enterprise Vehicle Leases and Maintenance (All Departments)	\$ 388,000
Health Insurance Increase (8.4% increase from prior year)	\$ 222,000
Summer Youth Program (FY25 Tentative Budget was calculated 315 students).	\$ 202,000
Tax Collector- Requesting increase due to collection fees being underestimated in FY2024. In addition, the tax collector is a fee officer and is anticipating potentially not collecting enough fees and being in a deficit.	\$ 141,000
Legal services (current contract based on a fix fee of \$7k per month and hourly rate for additional fees). Based on trend, we are anticipating potentially higher expense.	\$ 66,000
Information Technology- increase due to licenses and cybersecurity.	\$ 100,000
Total	\$ 1,815,163

3. Questions

Commissioner Holt stated there was two ways they could run the budget. They could increase taxes or decrease costs. She stated they can bring in revenue by bringing in businesses.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they have to be good stewards of their citizens money. They need to be more fiscally responsible. She agreed with Commissioner Holt on making sure the students from Summer Youth are trained.

Chair Green stated they may need to look at other options with healthcare.

Commissioner NeSmith stated he did not see the list of items they wanted to achieve in the strategic plan. He just saw the overall picture of the plan. They want to make sure their budget is in line with their goals. Commissioner NeSmith mentioned having the cities make a contribution to the Summer Youth Program instead of the Board of County Commissioners having the whole 100%. They were supporting students not just in their county but all municipalities. They cannot continue to carry all of the students on this program.

Chair Green stated to be realistic in what it takes to get the Economic Development department going. It was not going to happen within the first 2 years.

Commissioner Holt stated she was going to ask for \$30,000 for travel for the Planning and Zoning Board. She stated the Planning Commission were making decisions on items coming before them but they have no training in those areas.

Commissioner Simpkins stated Medicaid was a mandatory cost. They need to look at the vehicle lease. It was presented as a savings in maintenance and there has not been a decrease in that. They still have repairs of heavy equipment – that's where major costs come in. The Vehicle lease was affecting everyone's budget.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned health insurance and stated they need a conversation with CHP. They provide a lack of service in Gadsden County. Mr. Morris stated they have already brought Capital Health Plan to the table.

Commissioner Holt stated she would like to see the number of savings that they would have in their maintenance department. Curtis Young appeared and stated they were prepared to cut that budget by 200,000. They have hired a mechanic and that has been helping a lot.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned vehicle maintenance. She asked if on page 3 of the packet, it would have to be going from \$300,000 to \$100,000 then? Mr. Young stated correct, \$150,000.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to look at tax possibilities and millage rate increase.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they need to have an environment where they maintain qualified staff. They need to do exit surveys when people leave the county.

Commissioner Holt stated salaries need to be competitive. She stated she was still asking for a fire station on the east side of the county.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to sit down with Capital Regional. Chief Hood stated 95% of calls were non-emergent.

Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 5:11 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at 5:11 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated there are conversations needed to be had – insurance is expensive. They need to be coming to the table.

Commissioner NeSmith returned at 5:17 p.m.

Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 5:18 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson stated they should fund the volunteer fire fighters.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 5:21 p.m.

Commissioner Holt returned at 5:22 p.m.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 5:22 p.m.

Commissioner Holt returned at 5:23 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson stated what greater infrastructure than fire. He stated Zoom was going in and out – they need to put a premium on Broadband. Commissioner Simpkins mentioned Broadband and stated they were planning a meeting with constituents.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to ask Capital Regional for a meeting and CHP could be there as well.

Chair Green asked when would they have their finalized numbers. Ms. Burgess stated last year, it was mid-August – they keep updating numbers until they get all estimates.

Commissioner Simpkins stated keeping the county clean was important but asked for a breakdown on advertisement for that.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they were maintaining or exceeding. Ms. Burgess stated it depends on a lot of factors.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they will be having problems if nothing changes.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned amendment dealing with homestead – if it happens, will lose funding. It would be great to have no changes and wait until they know what is going to happen first.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned salaries and stated it was not addressed the way she intended.

Motion to Adjourn

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE-CHAIR SIMPKINS
DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:45 PM.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk