

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 AT 6:00  
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 meeting to order at 6 p.m. Chair Green led into the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

**Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Dixon requested to pull items 4, 9, 10, and 11.

Mr. Dixon stated the below amendments:

*Request to be added under Consent:*

10a. Approval of the CDBG-CV Grant Agreement 22CV-SO9, Amendment #2 to  
Extend the Agreement Expiration Date through September 30, 2025

*Request to be added under General Business:*

11a. Board Direction Regarding the Appointment of a Commissioner or a Designee to  
Serve on the RFP 24-02 Auditing Services Evaluation Committee  
11b. Board Direction on Gadsden County Legal Services contract

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND  
COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

**Awards, Presentations and Appearances**

**1. Recognition of Linda Mason**

Commissioner Simpkins stated she will personally deliver the recognition to Ms. Mason.

**Consent**

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND  
COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

2. **Ratification Memo**
3. **BOCC Meeting/ Workshop Minutes:**
  - a. August 6, 2024, Regular BOCC Meeting
  - b. September 3, 2024, 6<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop
4. **Approval of State Aid Grant Agreement**
5. **Approval of Mutual Aid Agreement between Gadsden County and Florida State Hospital**
6. **Approval of Gadsden County Fire Service Education Agreement**
7. **Approval to Accept the Emergency Management Program Grants Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Agreement #A0480**
8. **Approval to Accept Proposed Funding Agreement #F0114 from the Florida Division of Emergency Management for final stage of construction and design of the Emergency Operations Center and Public Safety Complex**
9. **Approval of Severance Pay Policy**
10. **Approval of Lease Agreement for Heavy Equipment**
- 10a. **Approval of the CDBG-CV Grant Agreement 22CV-SO9, Amendment #2 to Extend the Agreement Expiration Date through September 30, 2025**

**Items Pulled for Discussion**

**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.org](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.org) 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 via Zoom using the credentials on the County's website. The Board's meetings are also broadcast live on the Board's Facebook page.

Chair Green read aloud the above statement.

**Gary Yates, 2120 Killarney Way Tallahassee, FL 32309**

Mr. Yates, President of Integrity Group, appeared before the Board. He stated he was there to discuss inaccuracies regarding the Integrity item from the last Board of County Commissioners Meeting. The first inaccuracy goes back to the budget project and hourly rate. There was a belief that the county was unaware of that hourly rate until they received the invoice. The two task orders that were provided at the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting were assigned by the County Administrator dated August 1 and August 11. The hourly rate was 155 for both task orders. The 155 was not their disaster rate.

Mr. Yates stated the budget that was presented to them on September 3<sup>rd</sup> was very close to what last year's budget looked like. They were directed to provide a forced balance budget. Their first contract with the county was April 2020-2023.

Mr. Yates stated they were proud of the work they did for Gadsden County. It was not true they were ripping off the county.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about the 2 task orders. Mr. Yates stated originally had one task order; he was asked to break it down to multiple task orders.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about the forced budget and if there were implications. Mr. Yates stated there are implications. In their experience, it was important that before submitted to the state, it be a true budget.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if the staff was aware of the costs beforehand and Mr. Yates stated yes.

Commissioner Hinson asked to get all the documents that were sent to the county from June up until now.

**John Czunis, 2120 Killarney Way Tallahassee, FL**

Mr. Czunis gave his minutes to Mr. Yates.

**David Gillespie, 2120 Killarney Way Tallahassee, FL**

Mr. Gillespie gave his minutes to Mr. Yates.

**Kalen Bruno**

Ms. Bruno stated she was here from New Jersey. She is a director of environmental services at New Jersey Institute of Technology Assistance. They are the technical assistance provider from the EPA to provide free technical assistance to local governments, institutions, etc.

Ms. Bruno stated tomorrow, they are having an event from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Extension Office and invited all commissioners to attend.

**Gloria Robinson, Linda Moore**

Gloria Robinson and Linda Moore appeared before the board regarding Greenshade-Dogtown Volunteer Fire Department. They had a recent fire in their neighborhood and Ms. Davis lost her life. They were there to see what the county could do to better equip their fire department.

Gloria Robinson appeared to discuss this issue on behalf of her sister, Ms. Davis. She stated it took someone at least an hour to start clearing the fire out.

Chief Douglas appeared and stated they need to improve communication between the fire departments. He was asking for help from the county to be able to man that station. Ms. Moore stated 10 houses has caught on fire in that community.

Mr. Dixon stated they had to go through the EMS budget; they need to start moving away from Volunteer Fire Departments. The board allowed them to redirect a brand-new truck to Dogtown. Almost every fire truck they have is over 20 years old.

Commissioner Simpkins stated their communication needs to be better. The Chief was not notified and that was a problem. They may need to allocate funds for EMS services.

Commissioner Holt stated she was in favor of a full-time fire station on the east side of the county.

Commissioner Hinson stated they should start a committee to find ways to increase revenue. Mr. Dixon stated Greenshade-Dogtown needed their own people, it was too difficult moving people around.

Commissioner Simpkins wanted to make sure that if the staff were not at the station, then they were communicating with the Chief.

Commissioner Hinson stated to bring a whole new EMS to Dogtown and for them to stay overnight. Commissioner Simpkins stated that station was capable of that already to have staff overnight.

Chair Green stated they need to have a workshop within the next 2 weeks regarding fire services.

**Dr. Traci Thompson**

Dr. Traci Thompson appeared through Zoom to provide an update from North Florida Rural Health Clinic. They have seen over 200 patients for primary care and dental services. They receive patients regardless of their ability to pay. They just hired a new dentist and brought on a new team for mental health services. In one year, they could save the county upwards of 20 million dollars by treating uninsured patients in a clinic setting.

Commissioner Holt asked about applying for the low-income pool. Dr. Thompson stated that was a submission of information to the state; there was an application process and she could provide more information to her later.

Commissioner NeSmith asked when the clinic opened. Dr. Thompson stated starting from May; officially opened in August.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they were seeing patients in person and Dr. Thompson stated the majority was in person but they also did telehealth. She stated non-clinical staff were there Monday-Friday and the clinical staff were there about once or twice a week.

Commissioner Hinson stated the reason he was asking these extensive questions was because they were the only ones who asked for a million dollars. They need to do research on this organization before moving forward.

Dr. Thompson stated the county could utilize funds as they wish; as they see uninsured individuals, they would request the county in terms of reimbursement of \$150 per visit.

**Derrick Elias**

Mr. Elias appeared before the Board regarding Greenshade-Dogtown fire station issue. He stated lives have been lost and they need to stop talking about these issues and take action.

**Public Hearings**

**General Business**

11. ~~**Discussion and Approval of Lease Agreement with the City of Quincy Lease for property located at S 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Quincy Florida (Martin Luther King, Jr. Track Field) for the placement of a Community Center featuring a Boys and Girls Club**~~

Item pulled.

**11a. Board Direction Regarding the Appointment of a Commissioner or a Designee to Serve on the RFP 24-02 Auditing Services Evaluation Committee**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He stated they were excluding Mr. Hayes and replacing him with Janice Harris.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if that was normal practice that the board appoints the staff members versus a commissioner being appointed. Mr. Dixon stated it included a commissioner.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a background on this. Mr. Dixon stated

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THIS ITEM WITH THE CORRECTION OF NAMES AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS TO SERVE ON THE RFP 24-02 AUDITING SERVICES EVALUATION COMMITTEE.**

**11b. Board Direction on Gadsden County Legal Services Contract with Pittman Law Group**

Mr. Dixon introduced.

Mr. Knowles, County Attorney, stated for the record:

- This was illegal, there is an active bid protest that was timely filed
- Protest has not been resolved
- Protest period has not expired
- Contract of Pittman Law Group requires that termination notice is effective after 30 days of receipt of notice

Commissioner Simpkins stated it looked like it was going against the policy in place. They need to make sure they were following the process.

Mr. Dixon stated it was staff recommendation. He was not sure if the county attorney was representing himself or the county regarding the statement he made; it was a little concerning to him.

Commissioner Simpkins stated the attorney works for the board. She asked why they were not going through the process.

Commissioner Hinson stated they were voting on something that could affect the general funds. He stated they need to wait this out and make sure they are being fair. He asked if it

was fair to approve this agenda item when it was not properly advertised. Commissioner Holt stated they have approved items before without them being advertised.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she requested the board to follow the policy that they put in place. Mr. Dixon stated this was simply the next step in the process. They were following the will of the board. Commissioner Simpkins stated the board should decide how things are done. She was not sure why it says 'effective immediately'. They were going to have to pay both attorneys for the 30 days.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO TERMINATE PITTMAN LAW FIRM WITHOUT CAUSE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS OPPOSED.**

**Clerk of Court**

12. No updates.

**County Administrator**

13. Mr. Dixon stated there will be a Budget Hearing on September 24.

Mr. Dixon mentioned City of Gretna and the Love's truck stop coming out of Greensboro/Gretna I-10 exit. Some type of public hearing would need to be scheduled. Commissioner Holt was hoping to fast track that because they did not want to stall that project.

**County Attorney**

14. No Updates.

15. **Discussion Items by Commissioners**

**Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson stated for them to stay positive and love each other.

**Commissioner Kimblin E. Nesmith, J.D., District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the staff for progress on Hardaway Highway.

*Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 8:06 p.m.*

*Chair Green stepped out at 8:06 pm.*

*Chair Green returned at 8:07 p.m.*

Commissioner NeSmith stated they need to work on the evaluation of the Administrator. They need to have a workshop on the County Administrator.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the full-time grants coordinator position.

**Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4**

Commissioner Holt mentioned schools abandoned. They need to look at an ordinance for that. She also wanted the board to consider amnesty day regarding trash.

**Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2**

Commissioner Simpkins stated even when she gets upset, she still loves her fellow commissioners.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at 8:22 p.m.*

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned Dogtown road and asked for an update. She also mentioned striping on Jamieson Road.

Commissioner Simpkins requested a timeframe on property county owns.

*Commissioner Holt returned at 8:24 p.m.*

Commissioner Simpkins stated their directors should be able to come together and write grants. She asked about the mowing schedule – when are they mowing on the east side?

Commissioner Simpkins stated she was having a town hall meeting in Havana at 6 p.m. on September 26.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned the voter registration drive at Fontana Trail on September 29.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Chair Green mentioned having directors at meetings or online in case they had questions.

Chair Green mentioned the project on Spooner Road. He has had complaints due to the work being done.

Chair Green stated they have had 2 Boys & Girls Club meetings. He asked Mr. Dixon if they looked at other properties on Strong Road and Mr. Dixon stated they have.



Chair Green asked about the workshop for fire service. Mr. Dixon mentioned getting a consultant.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted CHP present –they need to schedule that. Commissioner NeSmith asked about FACT helping with fire.

Chair Green asked to start conversations with the school board now about schools that are closing.

Chair Green stated on October 7, there will be a Community Meeting in Midway at the Fellowship Church.

Chair Green mentioned a drum major named Dontrell Hall and wanted to make a motion to give a proclamation.

**CHAIR GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR DONTRELL HALL AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE.**

**CHAIR GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR ARDELLA BONDS AND ROSALIE WASHINGTON, WHO TURNED 90, AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE.**

**Motion to Adjourn**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:40 PM.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**