

**AT A BUDGET HEARING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2024 AT 6:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

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

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair Simpkins called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Commissioner Hinson led into invocation and Commissioner Simpkins led into the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dixon stated there were no amendments to the agenda.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED AND
COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE.**

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.

Terry & Tonia Mitchell, 6360 Old Bainbridge Road Tallahassee, FL

Terry and Tonia Mitchell appeared before the board regarding their concerns about a private, unmaintained county road called Clifford Johnson Road. This was where the Love's Travel Stop project will be bringing in and out 8,000 vehicles a day based on their traffic study.

Mrs. Mitchell stated that for the past 2 years, they have attempted to meet and discuss this massive project with Love's representatives and the City of Gretna Manager. They have never been contacted, informed, noticed, or included by the City of Gretna. To this day, their attempts have been denied or

ignored. They were here to oppose Gadsden County transferring ownership of Clifford Johnson Road to the City of Gretna. They would like for Clifford Johnson Road to be lawfully annexed as other properties have in this project.

Mrs. Mitchell stated they would love to schedule a meeting with the Commissioners individually to see what they may know or not know.

Mr. Dixon stated this will be on the agenda next Tuesday, October 1.

Cathy and William Farr, 564 Middle Creek Road

Cathy Farr appeared to discuss the budget and millage rate.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she will call them back up once they get to the item.

Public Hearing

a. Introduction of Proposed Final FY 2024/2025 Aggregate Millage Rate

Commissioner Simpkins stated the proposed final aggregate millage rate is 9.0000.

Mr. Dixon stated citizens were allowed to speak now.

Cathy Farr, 564 Middle Creek Road Quincy, FL, appeared before the board to discuss millage rate and was requesting an 8.5 millage rate.

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Dixon if they were increasing taxes this year. Mr. Dixon stated they maintain the same millage rate as last year.

Reginald Cunningham appeared before the board. He stated this would be considered an increase from last year. The 9.0 millage rate would increase property tax.

Commissioner Hinson stated he wished they talked about this beforehand. They were not responsible for the value. Mr. Cunningham stated once they report the millage rate of 9.0 to the newspaper, the Department of Revenue would consider that as an increase to the citizens. That was the purpose of the rollback rate.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how much revenue generated via ad valorem. Mr. Dixon stated about 1.3 million.

Commissioner Holt stated when evaluation goes up, the tax amounts go up. The problem was that the cost of services went up too.

Mr. William Farr, 564 Middle Creek Road Quincy, FL, appeared. He stated revenues went up because property values went up. So, everybody pays more. Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Farr how long he has been in Gadsden County. Mr. Farr stated 2 years.

Mr. Dixon stated they could always lower millage rate. County Attorney stated they have a balanced budget that has already been advertised.

b. Introduction of Proposed Final FY 2024/2025 Budget

c. Questions from Public

d. Chairman Introduces Motion for the following items: (Voted on separately and in order presented below)

1) Approval of Final FY 2024/2025 Millage Rate

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE MILLAGE RATE OF 9.0 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE.

2) Approval for Final FY 2024/2025 Budget

Commissioner Hinson asked if the budget was completed and Mr. Dixon stated yes.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about revenues listed and if they were updated. Mr. Dixon stated they did get updated numbers.

Ms. Steele stated Chair Green was on Zoom.

Lauren Scott appeared before the board. Commissioner Simpkins asked if these projections were correct. Ms. Scott stated they did reach out to different entities. Commissioner Simpkins asked why the projected amount was not put it and Ms. Scot state she was told to balance it what it was at that time.

Mr. Dixon stated they took a conservative approach to budget because they had to work through things like fire and EMS. Commissioner Hinson stated he had same concerns which is why he wanted a workshop. Commissioner Simpkins stated she felt like she could not defend this budget.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT THE FY 24/25 BUDGET AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS AND COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the County Administrator how many staff positions in budget were unfilled. Mr. Dixon stated there are 2 people dedicated to budget.

Motion to Adjourn

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE-CHAIR SIMPKINS
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:36 PM.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk