

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 22, 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
Thornton Williams, County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk
Leann Jinks, Assistant BOCC Secretary

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Chair Green led into invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amendments and Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Dixon stated there are no amendments.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE 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-minute 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.

Chair Green read aloud the above statement.

General Business

7.a. - Approval on the ARPA Prioritization of Remaining Funds to Meet U.S. Treasury Allowable Uses and Deadlines

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for approval on the APRA prioritization of remaining funds to meet the U.S. Treasury allowable uses and deadlines. He stated

the board had met on this item weeks prior, and the goal still remained the same to authorize staff to move funds.

Commissioner Simpkins appeared at 6:03 p.m.

Ms. Harris appeared and stated the only change to the package presented to the board was adding the Clerk of Courts for funds to be obligated. She stated they received the Clerk of Courts information that morning.

Chair Green asked Ms. Harris how adding the Clerk of Courts would impact the things they already have allocated. Ms. Harris stated added the Clerk of Courts just re-allocates the funds down to 1.8 million.

Chair Green stated the main reason for this special meeting was to make sure 2 of his colleagues were able to have adequate time to go through the package presented to them and give them the opportunity to have conversation with staff and/or add information if they wanted.

Chair Green asked Commissioner Hinson if he had the opportunity to get the appropriate numbers and things in that nature for his ideas to be able to present the items to the board.

Commissioner Hinson stated again he would like for them to look into adding 2 community centers, one in each part of Gadsden County. So that the citizens that are so far from the community could have something to do. Chair Green stated he wished they had numbers to go with what Commissioner Hinson is requesting, as he supports adding community Centers but would love to see an outline with some numbers.

Commissioner Hinson stated he has not spoken with staff yet about this, he said they have been playing phone tag so unfortunately, he hasn't had the chance. He stated he does think this is a pressing issue and this is a board conversation.

Chair Green stated he was hoping for due diligence so they can have the conversation via numbers and what it would cost approximately from the funding that they are trying to allocate tonight. He stated he thought the idea was great, but wished they had some numbers so that they can make a better-informed decision.

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Dixon once the funds are obligated, how many years do we have to spend the funds. Mr. Dixon stated once the funds are obligated, the funds will go into general revenue and then you have an unlimited amount of time to spend the money at your leisure.

Mr. Dixon stated Ms. Harris had been working with NACo (National Association of Counties) and they revealed other options for the funds for Gadsden County.

Ms. Harris stated will be coding EMS salaries for this fiscal year and the next fiscal year if they have enough. She said meaning those funds will come out of ARPA, and in turn that will free up the general revenue budget and the board can use that for their projects as they deem it necessary.

Chair Green stated to Commissioner Hinson that he is not sure why staff had been inaccessible to Commissioner Hinson as he himself had met with staff and also asked Commissioner Simpkins if she had the opportunity to speak with staff, and Commissioner Simpkins stated she met with Ms. Harris to have her questions answered. Commissioner NeSmith stated he also spoke with staff.

Chair Green stated he wants to support the community centers so he suggested that Commissioner Hinson get with staff to try to get an outline and what its going to take to make it happen. He stated with the funds being freed up in general funds that this maybe something they can look into.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she walked in on the meeting in progress and wanted to know if anything was covered before she got there, and Chair Green stated nothing.

Ms. Harris stated they will be coding salaries to ARPA, and it will free up the general revenue budget due to no longer paying salaries out of the general revenue budget. She stated you have to choose projects that you can obligate the money before December 31st, and they identified 6 projects that they suggest.

Commissioner NeSmith stated he was also interested in community centers, and stated to Commissioner Hinson that the community center they are putting in Quincy will help give some numbers and a baseline for his idea of 2 new community centers.

Commissioner NeSmith asked to clarify the projects on the priority list. He also asked Ms. Harris about the budget for EMS, and Mr. Dixon stated some funds had already been allocated as they had already sent 2 ambulances to be transitioned.

Ms. Harris stated the funds do not have to be expended; they just have to be obligated.

Commissioner Holt stated none of the projects they are obligating money to make money so they may have to go back and look at this again. Until we have a plan in place, they cannot get state or federal money. So, the remaining money they need to look into using it for match money in economic development.

Chair Green stated maybe they can use the money freed up in the general fund for economic development.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Chair Green if they had allocated any funds for infrastructure. Mr. Dixon stated there is a small pot.

Chair Green stated that the board can decide if they want to do something differently with the money that has already been coded, then they will have the opportunity to do that.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned setting money aside for businesses. He stated 1.2 million was set aside for businesses 1 year and then they got a new commissioner that year and the pot dwindled down to about \$400, 000 that year. He suggested the money be put back into the pot for small businesses.

Mr. Dixon stated there was \$100, 000 in industrial park and \$120, 000 for infrastructure.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ORIGINAL PRIORITY LIST WITH RE-ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

8. Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:31 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk