

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON NOVEMBER 4, 2024 AT 6:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: Ronterious “Ron” 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

1. Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Green called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Chair Green led into Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 6:01 p.m.

2. Amendments and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dixon stated the following amendments:

Add under Consent: Item 7.i, *Approval of the Finance Office to Process Payment for the 3rd Annual HOLA Gadsden*

Add under General Business: Item 11.h, *Approval of Settlement Agreement with Georgette Daniels*

Mr. Dixon requested to pull items 11.c, *Approval to renew WastePro contract*, and 11.d, *Lease Agreement with City of Quincy for S 9th Street Quincy, Florida*.

Chair Green asked if they considered other properties regarding item 11.d. Mr. Dixon stated they looked at the property and they have not done any technical research on it.

Commissioner Simpkins stated item 7.h, *Approval to Reinstate an Agreement between the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners and the Gadsden Community Health Council to assist with the Prescription Assistance Medical Assistance Program Funding*, should be under general business since it has a fiscal impact. She also asked that Item 11.h, *Approval of Settlement Agreement with Georgette Daniels*, be pulled because they stated they were going to do a policy.

The County Attorney stated they should approve the amendments and then go to consent and pulls item to discuss.

**COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION FOR ITEM 11.H TO BE PULLED AND
COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Holt stated she did not realize she was voting for the item to be pulled and wanted to change her vote.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION FOR ITEM 11.H TO BE PULLED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 2-3 TO DENY THIS MOTION AND KEEP ITEM 11.H ON THE AGENDA.

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

6. Awards, Presentations and Appearances

6.a. – Recognition of Mother Maudie Lee Green Nealy

Chair Green asked for Ms. Nealy to come forward and he presented the recognition to her.

Chair Green gave recognition to Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith. This will be his last board meeting.

6.b. – Tourist Development Council Presentation:

Ms. Steele provided a presentation on TDC. She provided a background on Tourist Development Council.

Ms. Steele stated in recent reports, visitors generated over 15.3 million dollars to Gadsden County. She mentioned that Black History has had a tremendous impact on their tourism. Their partnership with Bicentennial also had an impact. 4.3% increase in funding since 2021. She stated last year, it went up to 78.8 million.

In 2025, Gadsden County will be putting out a visitors guide brochure about exploring Gadsden County.

Mr. Lewis appeared and provided a presentation regarding the Golden Triangle Mississippi trip.

CONSENT

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH EXCEPTION OF ITEMS 7.G AND 7.H AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Hinson asked to discuss item 7.g and Commissioner Simpkins requested to discuss item 7.h. Commissioner Hinson stated items 11.e and 11.f are normally under public hearings. Mr. Williams stated those budget amendments have been under consent in the past. Chair Green stated it was properly advertised and citizens could always request to speak.

Commissioner Hinson stated at the last meeting, they voted to cancel the November 5 meeting. This could be an illegal meeting as the board did not vote for a November 4 meeting. He asked for an opinion from the county attorney. Chair Green stated he asked for them to call commissioners to see if they wanted to have the meeting and he was told that the commissioners agreed to have this meeting. Chair Green asked if it was properly advertised and Mr. Dixon stated yes. The County Attorney stated he did call Commissioner Hinson about this. He stated he could not get it back to him in writing on time.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 7:07 p.m.

Commissioner Holt returned at 7:09 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson stated they did not want to set a precedent. Chair Green stated Commissioner Hinson could have stated he was unavailable for today's meeting. Commissioner Simpkins stated she was told they were having this meeting; they did not ask if she was available.

Chair Green asked the attorney if this meeting was illegal. Mr. Williams stated under section 125.001, it talks about board meetings; they do have meetings on the first and third Tuesday statutorily. But there is a section that states regular and special meetings can be held in any appropriate public place in the county. So, that allows them to have a meeting other than first and third Tuesday of the month.

Mr. Williams stated to have a motion to ratify this as a regular meeting.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO RATIFY AS A REGULAR MEETING AND
COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

7.

7.a – Ratification Memo

7.b – BOCC Meeting/ Workshop Minutes:

1. September 17, 2024, Economic Development Workshop
2. September 24, 2024, 2nd Budget Public Hearing
3. September 24, 2024, Emergency Meeting
4. October 1, 2024, Regular BOCC Meeting

7.c – Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Contracts – State Housing Initiative Partnership Program (SHIP)

7.d. – Approval and Signatures for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien State Housing Initiative Partnership Program (SHIP)

7.e – Approval of Payment to Emerald Coast Striping

7.f – Approval of a Letter to Governor Ron DeSantis in Support of Reintroducing Passenger Rail to North Florida

7.g – Approval of Selling Surplus Vehicles at Auction

7.h – Approval to Reinstate Memorandum of Agreement between the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners and the Gadsden County Health Council to assist with the Prescription Assistance Medical Assistance Program Funding

7.i – Approval of the Finance Office to Process Payment for the 3rd Annual HOLA Gadsden

8. Items Pulled for Discussion

7.g – Approval of Selling Surplus Vehicles at Auction

Commissioner Hinson asked how could he go to this event and what day is this taking place. Mr. Young stated it was last Saturday. Chair Green stated they technically could not vote on this item since it already took place.

Commissioner Holt stated this item will have to be discussed and brought back. Chair Green asked if all the vehicles were sold. Mr. Dixon stated he was not aware.

Chair Green asked who coordinated this auction and Mr. Young stated it was Charles Hayes and the Fleet manager. Charles Hayes appeared before the board. He stated Enterprise only offered \$1,000 for it so that was why they separated it.

Chair Green asked who gave authority to do it in that manner; he would have liked to be a part of that conversation.

Commissioner Simpkins also asked who gave authority; she had a problem with this as well. She felt like they knew that this had to come before the board before it went to an auction. She asked if they already signed over titles and Mr. Hayes stated yes.

Chair Green stated documentation from the auction should have been included as well. Mr. Dixon stated this caught him off guard as well. He asked to bring this back with a written report.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

7.h – Approval to Reinstate Memorandum of Agreement between the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners and the Gadsden County Health Council to assist with the Prescription Assistance Medical Assistance Program Funding

Commissioner Simpkins asked about the funding. Mr. Dixon stated the funds were coming directly from the county; when the board initiated its no funding for non-profits, the funding stopped.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they still receive funds from the Department of Health. Reverend Hannah, President, stated yes.

Mr. Dixon stated the money comes from the board and given to Department of Health; it was from the half cent sales tax.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wanted specifics; it was a broad item.

Chair Green stated it needed to be more detailed as to what services are being provided and what funding they already receive. Rev. Hannah stated it was their desire to provide services. They have already gone to Havana and plan to go to Midway. They will come back with more details and what they plan on doing.

Commissioner Holt stated she would like the schedule of where the bus will be; wants a workshop on this.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

9. 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.

Marion Lasley, 5 Dante Court, Quincy, FL

Ms. Lasley appeared regarding cease-and-desist letter from Special Magistrate Paul Arnold to Alicia Bopp regarding Champs Chance dog rescue. She stated Ms. Bopp has not stopped her activities and has done a poor job on re-capturing her escapees. Ms. Lasley complained about the barking and smell of feces.

The County Attorney stated there was an order on September 23rd stating this activity should be terminated. Alicia Bopp filed an appeal October 21st and the county is in litigation right now. Comments about this would be premature, as we go through the appeal process.

10. Public Hearing

11. General Business

11.a Approval of Titel VI Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval of Titel VI Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan. This is part of the LAP Program and in order to qualify for federal assistance, they must have the approved Titel VI Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan to continue to receive any current funding for the LAP program. Which accepts and processes complaints for discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, and disability.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Williams if he had looked at a previous document for compliance and he said no, he just looked at this document that was brought to him. Mr. Williams stated they needed this for compliance, and also stated they would be putting forms in place for the complainant to use and to keep them in compliance as there are no forms out there.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TITLE VI NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY AND PLAN AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

11.b Approval to Upgrade the Avtec Radio Dispatch Software

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval to Upgrade the Avtec Radio Dispatch Software. This software is currently being used; however, it is not up to date and needs to be upgraded with a patch.

Kembrew Jackson and Andre Walker appeared before the board, and explained the software was actually bought in 2016, and it was delivered in 2017. Mr. Jackson stated there was licensing for hardware and software, but that is expiring October 2025 and they will no longer have support for this hardware without the patch.

Chair Green stated he would like to know the physical impact and the shift of funds. Mr. Dixon asked Ms. Harris to come forward.

Ms. Harris appeared and stated the funds would be coming from the general fund reserve budget and going into the Information technology budget. Commissioner Simpkins asked for clarity on what budget account the funds were coming from and wanted to make sure the funds are not coming from the reserve. Ms. Harris said they are not coming from the reserve.

Commissioner Hinson stated he wants a workshop on this item to do some research and discuss further what has already been spent for this item.

Representative from communications appeared before the board to explain the original agreement for the software and how the patches would fix the software.

Mr. Dixon stated they know they have a problem, that problem has shown itself, and they are going to continue to have that problem with not being able to dispatch certain people in a timely manner until we fix dispatch.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FUNDING TO UPGRADE THE AVTEC RADIO DISPATCH SOFTWARE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

11.c Approval to Renew Waste Pro Contract

Item pulled.

11.d Discussion and Approval of Lease Agreement with the City of Quincy for property located at 5 9th Street

Item pulled.

11.e Approval of Resolution 25-007 Budget Amendments for FY25

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval of Resolution 25-007 Budget Amendments for FY25.

Commissioner Hinson asked for overview of this item.

Ms. Harris appeared before the board and stated this was a resolution to correct transfers that were done incorrectly during the budget.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION 25-007 BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOR FY25 AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

11.f Approval of Resolution 24-037 Budget Amendments for FY24

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval of Resolution 24-037 Budget Amendments for FY24. He stated this is to clean up last year's physical budget.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION 24-037 BUDGET AMENDMENTS FOR FY24 AND CHAIR GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

11.g Board Approval to Award RFP 24-02 Professional Auditing Services to Purvis-Gray and Approval for Staff to Negotiate a Contract

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval to Award RFP 24-02 Professional Auditing Services to Purvis-Gray and Approval for Staff to Negotiate a Contract. This company won the bid by grading score; however, this company is \$20, 000 higher than the other competitor.

Mr. Dixon stated for the record that they are making the recommendation, as it is important to change auditors on a regular basis.

Commissioner Simpkins stated would have liked for other firm to have the opportunity to present as she only had about a week to go through both proposals. She stated they need to be more proactive.

Commissioner Hinson stated the price may be more, but they may bring more. He stated he did not have a problem with Purvis personally.

Mr. Williams stated this contract is not just for the County, it is for all constitutionals. All constitutionals reviewed, voted, and scored both proposals. They have looked at all the options but what is stopping the board is that the contract is for all constitutionals.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO NEGOTIATE THE LENGTH OF THE CONTRACT TO APPROVE THE AWARDDING FOR RFP 24-02 PROFESSIONAL AUDITING SERVICES TO PURVIS-GRAY AND APPROVAL FOR STAFF TO NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

11.h Approval of Settlement Agreement with Georgette Daniels

Mr. Dixon presented the above item. The item is presented to the board for the approval of Settlement Agreement with Georgette Daniels. This is a separation agreement that is common among select exempt staff.

Commissioner Simpkins stated when this item was brought to the board, they pulled the item because there was no policy and they were going to put a policy in place. She stated she has done research, and this is not something Counties normally do, this is private sector policy where they give severance packages.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could table the item until they have a workshop to discuss this item further.

Chair Green stated he was ready to approve this item with a termination policy in place going forward, but he now has concerns with the administration as to why the workshop that was requested to discuss this item further had not happened, but the item was brought back.

Mr. Dixon stated they have not had the workshop simply because the attorney has not had the time for them. He stated Commissioner NeSmith requested this item be brought back, and that is why it was.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to look into the termination policy because people are terminated all the time.

Mr. Williams stated this issue has not been resolved yet. He also stated there are no pending lawsuits, so he thought it was a proper issue to bring back before the board after discussion so they would understand the 2 issues don't have to be coupled.

Commissioner Hinson stated he thinks they should table this item until they can have a workshop. He stated they are opening a can of worms if they don't go through the process first.

CHAIR GREEN MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THE ITEM AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

12. Clerk of Court

No updates.

13. County Attorney

No updates.

14. County Administrator

Mr. Dixon stated they received the grants summary on movement of grants on what they have out there. He said they did a walk thru of Stevens school, and he will be contacting the Commissioners on the next steps forward.

Mr. Dixon stated they should have received a letter from Federal lobbyist. They are in the 2nd and 3rd year with them, and are glad to see some things are finally starting to come home as they picked up 1. some odd million dollars.

Mr. Dixon stated they are looking at a meeting on the legislature calendar for the big items that will come forward. The state legislature will meet in March, and everyone on the Federal level is waiting on the election tomorrow before they move forward with the million that will help them with Pat Thomas Parkway over to Joe Adams Road.

Mr. Dixon stated they will have a non-profit meeting this month. There is also a DOT 5-year work plan meeting scheduled later this month to discuss the 5-year work plan.

Mr. Dixon stated the Publics works director has come up with a striping list for the county inclusive of all 5 districts, and he will get it out to the Commissioners the next day. Mr. Dixon stated the list is approximately \$800, 000 dollars.

15. Discussion Items by Commissioners

15.a Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson stated he wants to make sure everyone goes out to vote tomorrow. He stated that 52% of Gadsden County had already voted, and we just 48% more to go.

Commissioner Hinson stated Halloween was fun in Gadsden County this year. He stated it was good to see all the kids out smiling, and it's all about the fellowship.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned bulky item pick-up, and that district 1 was the only one not advertised. Asked Mr. Dixon if they could re-run bulky item pick-up for district 1.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 9:03 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson stated he would like to give a proclamation to FAMU Baseball Coach.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO GIVE PROCLAMATION TO FAMU BASEBALL COACH AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 9:04 p.m.

15.b Commissioner Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D., District 3

Commissioner NeSmith asked about Hardaway Highway and the final inspection. Mr. Young appeared and stated they were still trying to set up the final inspection.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about Providence Road in the Sawdust community, and Mr. Young stated 100% design is done and they are just waiting to be informed that they can proceed.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about Aspalaga road, and Mr. Young stated he has not heard about it yet.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about Rowan Road, and Mr. Young stated he had not heard anything about it.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon about Lincoln Drive and mentioned how the seniors will now be using the new mature facility on Lincoln Drive and there is a rough patch. Mr. Dixon stated it was part of the striping list he mentioned but it had not made their list for road repair.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the state funds and federal dollars being available for road repair as driving on the road is infrastructure. Mr. Dixon stated yes, they do, however that's the money that was talked about to be set aside for ARPA.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon about the Summer Youth program 2025. Budget, and Mr. Dixon said they don't have it.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Ms. In the Sawdust community for the 1st annual trunk or treat that they put together. Also thanked the Parks and recreation director, Ms. Moye and Mr. Dixon as well for their help, along with thanking all the volunteers.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Commissioners for letting him serve these past 4 years. He will still be available for any questions.

15.c Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt mentioned having a regional evacuation center in the event of hurricanes. She said Franklin County along with other counties along the coast would like to join forces and apply for federal funding. Stated she spoke with a state representative about this, and also left a message for the state senator.

Commissioner Holt stated she spoke with Mr. Franklin about industrial development. She said she hopes they can look at it and take it seriously.

Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 9:28 p.m.

15.d Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins asked Mr. Dixon if Jaimeson Road was on his striping list, and he said yes, Jaimeson Road is on it.

Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 9:31 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about Dog Town road, and Mr. Young stated 60% design.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about Selman Road research and funding for a sidewalk. Mr. Young stated they did speak with an engineer on that, but right now they're trying to figure out the cost.

Commissioner NeSmith returned at 9:32 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned that she had been studying Bainbridge. She said it would be beneficial to have conversations with them, as Bainbridge is doing well because of collaborations.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned community clean up in St. Hebron & St. Matthew on Saturday November 9th beginning at 7:30am-12pm.

15.e Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Chair Green stated the traffic light on Pat Thomas Parkway was back working.

Chair Green asked about Spooner Road, and Mr. Young stated they did a walk thru this morning with the final walk thru this Thursday so he would let Chair Green know what time it is.

Chair Green stated he would like bulky item pick-up to be explained better with more detail as far as the process goes. Mr. Dixon stated he was going to develop some community signage for the bulky item pick-up.

Commissioner Simpkins stated that district 2 has a lot of dead trees and trash on the road that needs to be picked up. Also requested that the trash be picked up before mowing cause it's not happening so the trash is just being cut up.

Chair Green thanked everyone who participated with homecoming for both high schools, and also the FAMU homecoming parade. He also congratulated Cross Roads Academy on 1st place for their homecoming parade float for the 2nd year in a row as this was only their 2nd year in the parade.

Chair Green mentioned issues with wild hogs, and concerned citizens who have walked out to them sitting on their front porch. Wanted to know when they can come in to rectify the situation.

Chair Green stated they have to get the cameras installed because there are certain areas where there is constant dumping. Commissioner Simpkins stated she spoke with Flock regarding the cameras, and the portable cameras have been shipped out but the stationary cameras have not as they are waiting on DOT approval.

Mr. Dixon asked if they were at liberty to help the football team. Chair Green stated he was glad Mr. Dixon brought this up and they are going to have to buy into our kids. Chair Green asked if Mr. Dixon could get them some numbers so they can meet with staff and the schools to find out what they can do.

16. Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:55 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk