

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 18,
2025 AT 6:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Eric F. Hinson, Chair, District 1
Ronterious Green, Vice-Chair, District 5
Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
Shawn Wood, District 3
Brenda Holt, District 4
Roosevelt Morris, Assistant County Administrator
Louis Baptiste, Interim County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

1. **Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Hinson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Pastor Williams led into Invocation and Chair Hinson led into the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Amendments to the Agenda**

Commissioner Green stated Demetrius Branca was here today and wanted to add his presentation to the agenda. Commissioner Green mentioned the advisory board and asked that this item be put on the next agenda. Chair Hinson stated they could have a workshop on it.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste requested to include the interim County Administrator contract for Mr. Stiell under his comment section.

Chair Hinson requested to pull agenda item 11.a, Funding Request for Dr. Camron Browning.

5. **Approval of Agenda**

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND
COMMISSIONER WOOD MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.**

6. **Awards, Presentations, and Appearances**

Demetrius Branca appeared before the board and asked the board to adopt a resolution that will save lives in your community and across the state. He Stated he is a dad from Tallahassee and is on a mission to save lives. Mr. Branca stated he is a member of the Florida Handsfree Coalition, which is a group that consists of pedestrian advocates, bicycle advocates, insurance companies, law enforcement, as well as non-profit, and for-profit entities. The coalition has been asking the state legislature to pass a handsfree law in Florida which will compel drivers to put their electronic devices down, especially their phones while driving.

7. **Consent**

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

7.a Ratification Memo

7.b BOCC Meeting/Workshop Minutes:

1. January 7, 2025, Regular BOCC Meeting
2. January 14, 2025, Special Meeting
3. January 16, 2025, Legislative Priorities Workshop
4. January 21, 2025, Emergency Meeting

7.c Approval of Management Audit Attestation Letter

8. **Items Pulled for Discussion**

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 Hinson read aloud the above statement.

Alexie Rittman, 547 Dusty House Road, Quincy, FL

Mr. Rittman, Fire Chief at Robertsville Volunteer Fire Department, appeared before the board to discuss concerns of the County fire services. He mentioned being kicked out of their station and being disrespected by county EMS.

Chair Hinson stated they will schedule a meeting with the fire department and EMS.

Kimblin NeSmith, 183 Hardaway Hwy, Chattahoochee, FL

Former Commissioner NeSmith appeared before the board to discuss the youth program. He stated the commissioner's received a proposal that outlined not only the Gadsden Leadership and Law Academy, but also to include summer youth; Those 2 programs actually blend together.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 6:39 p.m. and returned at 6:41 p.m.

Sergeant Vontez Jackson, Sheriff's Office

Mr. Jackson appeared regarding Mr. NeSmith's presentation. Mr. Jackson stated he went through the program Mr. NeSmith is advocating for and graduated from it being very proud of that accomplishment. He stated the program does have benefactors to it.

Tony Hannah, P.O. Box 481, Quincy, FL

Mr. Hannah appeared before the board to ask for a workshop for the PANS program trying to get re-instated and the bus.

Chair Hinson stated he would request a workshop under his comment section for the PANS program and the bus to be re-instated.

10. Public Hearing

11. General Business

11.a Funding Request for Dr. Camron Browning

Item pulled.

Commissioner Holt stated Mr. Quick from North Florida Rural Health was here to give a presentation. Chair Hinson stated they must keep things in order and to move on.

Mr. Baptiste stated for the record that Chair Hinson has discretion to accept comment cards.

Commissioner Wood stated this item was pulled and he was not sure if Mr. Quick was for Dr. Browning or against him. It was not fair for Dr. Browning since he was not present. Commissioner Holt stated she could do it in her comments.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO ADD A PRESENTATION FROM MR. QUICK AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 2-3 BY VOICE VOTE AND MOTION FAILED.

11.b Funding Request for Gadsden County Senior Services (Gretna, Midway, Gadsden Wellness, and Greensboro)

Mr. Morris presented the above item. This agenda item seeks Board approval for funding allocations to support Gadsden Senior Services in the following locations: City of Gretna, City of Midway, Gadsden Wellness Center, and Town of Greensboro, at \$15,000 each.

Chair Hinson mentioned the Clerk of Court sent out an email about some cities not being funded within Gadsden, and he didn't think it was fair that they stopped their funding.

Commissioner Green stated there is an Elderly Affairs department and he thought that something of this magnitude would be spearheaded by that department. He also stated he

would like a more detailed conversation with the facilities they are giving funding to as to what services they provide to seniors.

Mr. Morris stated in the past, there was an interlocal agreement between these organizations and the County for this.

Latoya Fryson, Director of Elderly Affairs, appeared and stated she agreed with Commissioner Green. They will be receiving information on the services provided by these programs.

Antonio Jefferson, City Manager of Gretna, appeared and stated he would appreciate their continued support for their senior citizens program. He gave a brief synopsis of their program and what services they provide.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 7:33 p.m. and returned at 7:34 p.m.

Commissioner Green stated they should amend the motion that they can vote to give money but with the intention that the programs receiving funding will bring more information to the Board.

Mr. Jefferson stated they do provide the clerk with a financial report that shows how they expended the funds as part of the yearly renewal, if they do budget for their program to receive funding.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ABOVE ITEM AND TO INCLUDE BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND FUNDING BEING PROVIDED WITH INTENTION OF THE ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING INFORMATION ON WHAT SERVICES THEY PROVIDE TO SENIORS, AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

11.c Approval of the Summer Youth Employment for 150 Students

Mr. Morris presented the above item. This agenda item seeks Board approval of Summer Youth Employment for 150 students. The Summer Youth Employment Program offers students valuable work experience, professional development, and financial support during the summer months. By partnering with local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations, the program helps participants develop essential workplace skills, explore career interests, and contribute to the local economy.

Commissioner Green asked about the budget for this program. He also stated they want some definition on somethings being done differently than in the past with the program and may need to revamp some things.

Mr. Morris stated he did reach out to finance, and the board budgeted 552k for the summer youth program.

Chair Hinson mentioned extending the program to 8 weeks with the crime being sky high right now.

Commissioner Holt stated employers are upset over the kids not working and fighting or sleeping on the job; they need to put stipulations in place for the students in this program.

Commissioner Wood stated the program was admiral and he liked the program. He stated supervising children and the liability of having juveniles is very concerning. He stated he agrees on the program but not at 500k.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 7:56 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 7:59 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins suggested to have a workshop on this Agenda item to determine the number of students and what the expectations are for the students and the program.

COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE A MOTION FOR A WORKSHOP TO BE SCHEDULED ON THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEM AND COMMISSIONER WOOD MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

12. Clerk of Court

No updates.

13. County Attorney

Mr. Baptiste mentioned the Clerk's report. He stated the Clerk received the CRA funds back from Midway, and the funds need to have a motion to incorporate the funds into this fiscal year's budget, but the Board cannot vote tonight as this is not an Agenda item. He requested that they add this to the next meeting's agenda.

Commissioner Holt stated she has been told by several accounting individuals that they must have a budget department and a finance department. They do not mix the two. She asked Mr. Baptiste to check that out.

Mr. Baptiste mentioned that he is working on the fire contract and has been in contact with the City of Quincy. He also mentioned pending lawsuits and stated that the Jackson matter has been resolved and closed. The Gadsden County Republican Committee matter was still pending and the Bopp matter was still in litigation. The bid protest was also still pending.

Mr. Baptiste stated the county currently has employees placed on administrative leave with pay. He has been reviewing this matter and he intends to make a recommendation to the County Administrator to make a change to the pay status for it to be without pay.

Mr. Baptiste mentioned changes to the interim county administrator: Under Section 1.d, nothing in the last line has been added; nothing in this agreement prohibits Mr. Stiell for applying to serve as County Administrator. Under Section 3.c, there was a severance pay provision. If Mr. Stiell separated from the county, then he would have been entitled to the 15 weeks, but there was no mitigation requirement. Essentially, if Mr. Stiell accepted another position, he could get paid from that other position and still receive the 15 weeks of severance pay. The language that he added was called 'setoff language'. The last change was under Section 8, paragraphs B and C were added. If Mr. Stiell was removed for cause, and the county alleged that there was misconduct, then the county was not required to pay any severance pay.

Commissioner Wood stepped out at 8:25 p.m. and returned at 8:27 p.m.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 8:30 p.m. and returned at 8:32 p.m.

Mr. Baptiste stated the county does have discretion; the contract has not been signed and there cannot be a breach of the contract.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 8:42 p.m. and returned at 8:43 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she did not see the leave piece; They need Mr. Morris in his original position. They need to move Gadsden County forward. She believed Mr. Stiell would be an asset at this time.

CHAIR HINSON MADE A MOTION TO NOT APPROVE THE INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S CONTRACT AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

Mr. Baptiste stated to rescind the previous motion regarding the approval of the contract from the previous meeting. He also stated to amend the motion to not proceed on both contractual documents.

CHAIR HINSON MADE A MOTION TO NOT PROCEED ON BOTH CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS FOR INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO KEEP MR. MORRIS AS THE INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR UNTIL PERMANENT POSITION IS HIRED AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE TO APPROVE.

14. County Administrator

Mr. Morris stated he supplied each commissioner with a list of grants and also sent it to them by email, but there are no grants in jeopardy at this time.

15. Discussion Items by Commissioners

15.a Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins stated she has concerns that there were changes made to the budget and they have no one in that department so they don't even know if they have the funding to fund the changes. She asked Mr. Morris if the HR director could come forward, and he called Ms. Burroughs to come forward.

Ms. Burroughs appeared, Commissioner Simpkins asked about a salary survey the board approved, and Ms. Burroughs stated it has been a stop and go process. Commissioner Simpkins mentioned that proposals should've come before board.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she agrees with Commissioner Woods earlier statement about needing all programs that provide Senior Services to come together with Ms. Fryson to discuss how they can meet all the needs or at least most of the needs for the Senior Services.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wants the Board of County Commissioners to schedule a meeting with the boys & girls club board.

15.b Commissioner Shawn Wood, District 3

Commissioner Wood mentioned bridges being out; and stated he was told there are a lot of bridges need to be re-done.

Commissioner Wood mentioned a million dollars that they were not expecting to get, and it could be used towards infrastructure.

15.c Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt asked for Mr. Quick to come forward.

Mr. Quick appeared before the board to provide an update on North FL Rural Health.

Commissioner Holt stated she wants a healthcare workshop. Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Baptiste to look into the Enterprise lease.

Commissioner Holt wants a non-profit workshop. Commissioner Holt mentioned having a fire workshop. She asked if they could get GPS on the firetrucks.

Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Baptiste how commissioners put items on the agenda; Mr. Baptiste stated Agenda items have to be sent to the County Administrator.

15.d Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green asked Mr. Morris about where they are with the budget director position. Mr. Morris stated he will reach back out to Human Resources and will look at applications.

Commissioner Green thanked everyone that attended, and the staff that helped in the memorial for the Lake Talquin drowning victims.

Commissioner Green stated temperatures will drop in the next couple of days, and they will have a warm shelter open on Thursday.

Commissioner Green stated he wanted to give a huge shoutout to the Crossroads Academy school for going to state for Basketball.

15.e Commissioner Eric F. Hinson, District 1

Chair Hinson mentioned bonds and wanting to look into that again. Chair Hinson asked if they could advertise there is also openings in Chattahoochee for the warm shelter.

16. Motion to Adjourn

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HINSON
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:47 PM.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**Eric F. Hinson, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk