

AT A WORKSHOP HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 25, 2025 AT 9:00
A.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,
VIZ:

Present: Eric F. Hinson, Chair, District 1
Ronterious Green, District 5 (Absent)
Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
Shawn Wood, District 3
Brenda A. Holt, District 4
Roosevelt Morris, Interim 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 9:02 p.m. He stated Commissioner Green was unable to attend due to job responsibilities and led into invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **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.

Antonio Jefferson, 14615 Mason St. Gretna, FL

Mr. Jefferson stated he was here on behalf of the Gadsden County Development Council regarding economic development. He stated they need to be more of a team and would like to see the board invest \$160,000 for the Economic Development Council.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 9:11 a.m.

5. **General Business**

5.a. **Introduction**

5.b. **Budget Workshop #3**

Chair Hinson stated they need to talk about revenue shortfall.

Mr. Morris stated Ms. Raynak was unable to attend and Ms. Bennett was going to take her spot today.

Commissioner Holt stated if they do not look at the economic development part, they may not know what to do in this budget.

Chair Hinson stated they need to know where they are at with unfunded mandates before they start spending money.

Ms. Bennett stated the budget department has created a presentation for them today where they are going to discuss their potential budget reductions and increases for them to consider.

Ms. Bennett stated she spoke with Ms. Raynak regarding revenue shortfall and if they were to fund every ask from each department and fund current expenses that the board has already approved, that would have them at a shortfall.

Commissioner Wood asked what was the difference in the ask versus what they have. Ms. Bennet stated it was approximately a 2.2-million-dollar difference.

Chair Hinson stated the people need to know that they have a 2.2 million shortfall. He stated they cannot make any decisions until they know more about the unfunded mandates. He asked why numbers were not brought to the board.

Mr. Morris stated they can go down the list that shows the cuts. The first item they have on the list was for health insurance. CHP rates will increase by 7.4%. Every shortfall that they are aware of was in the presentation.

Jeronda Robinson, Human Resource Director, appeared and went through the Capital Health Plan rate comparisons for FY 25-26.

FY 25-26 CHP Rate Comparison				
	EE Only	EE & SP	EE & CH	Family
New Rate - FY 25-26	\$ 917.26	\$ 1,836.50	\$ 1,559.34	\$ 2,751.76
Current Rate - FY 24-25	\$ 854.06	\$ 1,708.10	\$ 1,451.90	\$ 2,562.16
Amount of Increase	\$ 63.20	\$ 127.40	\$ 107.44	\$ 189.60

Currents Rates FY 24-25 for Board & Employee				
	EE Only	EE & SP	EE & CH	Family
Current Board Rate	\$ 854.06	\$ 1,297.96	\$ 1,103.28	\$ 2,107.62
Current Employee Rate		\$ 410.14	\$ 348.62	\$ 454.54
Total	\$ 854.06	\$ 1,708.10	\$ 1,451.90	\$ 2,562.16

Current & Estimated Monthly Rates for CHP Premiums						
	EE Only	EE & SP	EE & CH	Family	Monthly Est.	Yearly Est.
Board & Constitutional	145	11	16	10		
Current Rates	854.06	1,297.96	1,103.28	454.54	\$ 3,709.84	\$ 44,518.08
FY24-25	\$ 123,411.67	\$ 14,277.56	\$ 17,652.48	\$ 21,076.20	\$ 176,417.91	\$ 2,117,014.92
Proposed Rate	\$ 917.26	\$ 1,425.36	\$ 1,210.72	\$ 2,297.22	\$ 5,850.56	\$ 70,206.72
FY 25-26	\$ 133,002.70	\$ 15,678.96	\$ 19,371.52	\$ 22,972.20	\$ 191,025.38	\$ 2,292,304.56
Increase Amt.	\$ 9,591.03	\$ 1,401.40	\$ 1,719.04	\$ 1,896.00	\$ 14,607.47	\$ 175,289.64
Employee Responsibility						
FY24-25		\$ 4,511.54	\$ 5,577.92	\$ 4,545.40	\$ 14,634.86	\$ 175,618.32

	EE Only	EE & SP	EE & CH	Family	Monthly Est.	Yearly Est.
Clerk						
Number of Employees	21	4	2	6		
Current Rates	854.06	1,297.96	1,103.28	454.54	\$ 3,709.84	\$ 44,518.08
FY24-25	\$ 17,935.26	\$ 5,191.84	\$ 2,206.56	\$ 12,645.72	\$ 37,979.38	\$ 455,752.56
Proposed Rate	\$ 917.26	\$ 1,425.36	\$ 1,210.72	\$ 2,297.22	\$ 5,850.56	\$ 70,206.72
FY 25-26	\$ 19,262.46	\$ 5,701.44	\$ 2,421.44	\$ 13,783.32	\$ 41,168.66	\$ 494,023.92
Increase Amt.	\$ 1,327.20	\$ 509.60	\$ 214.88	\$ 1,137.60	\$ 3,189.28	\$ 38,271.36
Employee Responsibility						
FY24-25		\$ 1,640.56	\$ 697.24	\$ 2,727.24	\$ 5,065.04	\$ 60,780.48

Commissioner Wood asked what the board has to pay per employee a month for family insurance. Ms. Robinson stated for family insurance, the board is paying \$2,107.62 per month. The employee pays \$454.54.

Commissioner Wood stepped out at 10:05 a.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they really do not have an equal benefit package. They need to look at numbers and also discuss the incentive piece. Some employees may have spouses that work where they have insurance and they might be willing to go on to their spouse's insurance to possibly save them money. She stated health insurance was expensive in general, but they are spending quite a bit.

Commissioner Wood returned at 10:08 a.m.

Chair Hinson asked what was the total budget for the county. Ms. Bennett stated for the current year it was at 63 million.

Ms. Bennett went on to the next item, county property insurance. The budget for fiscal year 2025 is at \$977, 090. The current actuals are at \$1,659,594. They do not have current numbers for property insurance; it was not due until October.

Mr. Morris stated staff was working with their insurance carrier. When Hurricane Michael came through, they found out that a lot of their buildings were underinsured. They are working with them to make sure they get the property insurance.

Commissioner Green appeared online.

Commissioner Holt mentioned liability insurance and asked if it was included. Ms. Bennett stated yes.

Commissioner Green asked about putting insurance on facilities not built yet. He asked if they have to include that in this budget if they do not have anything yet. Chair Hinson stated they could budget for it just in case.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 10:18 a.m.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 10:22 a.m.

Ms. Bennett mentioned the next item on the list, use of restricted tax revenues and assessments. Added some of this to preliminary budgets to project impact (fire assessment, county transportation, EMS, TDC).

Chair Hinson stated they should focus more on how they will be impacted by the federal and state government. He wanted to know how they will be impacted on things like Medicaid. Ms. Bennett stated they do not have that information yet.

Commissioner Holt mentioned SNAP cuts and it now being at the local level. She stated they need a marketing campaign for EMS. She also mentioned people petitioning in the county due to the half-cent sales tax.

Chair Hinson mentioned the Big Beautiful Bill and how it will make an impact on the local level. That was why he thought they were coming here today to discuss how everything will be impacted.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 10:38 a.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated that as a board, they are going to have to look at things that are critical and mandatory.

Commissioner Holt returned at 10:41 a.m.

Commissioner Green asked what shortfalls they will have in this budget cycle.

Ms. Bennett stated Ms. Raynak is online. Chair Hinson stated as of now, they have a \$760,000 shortfall.

Chair Hinson recessed workshop at 10:53 a.m.

Chair Hinson resumed workshop at 11:14 a.m.

Ms. Bennett went on to ARPA. There are ARPA projects that require general funding to complete. This was approved by the board on October 22, 2024. There are 2 projects completed at 1.9 million dollars. However, at that time, the board did not indicate where these funds would be coming from. From the list below, they need to know what projects they would like to fund. They need to add \$440,000 from the fund balance to complete the parks project.

- \$340,000 for two more ambulances
- \$100,000 for ambulance remounts
- \$66,646 for emergency housing
- \$127,760 for record storage building and document scanning
- \$63,880 for Park Master Plan
- \$70,000 for Railroad Crossings
- \$82,132 for Community Camera Pilot
- \$18,251 for Community Business Lighting Feasibility Study
- \$196,203 for Economic Development
- \$219,018 for Lighting
- \$109,509 for Infrastructure study
- \$100,383 for Clerk software upgrades

Total \$1,493,782

Commissioner Wood stepped out at 11:21 a.m.

Commissioner Holt stated they need economic development and an infrastructure study. She mentioned the Planning & Zoning Board not having the training for issues coming before them. They need to spend some money on that because that board can increase their economic development businesses coming in.

Chair Hinson stated lighting was important for safety.

Commissioner Wood returned at 11:23 a.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they were told that because they were using the 1.9 million from ARPA, that would free up EMS.

Commissioner Holt stated she was under the impression that there was a shortfall with EMS and they had to go after that.

Commissioner Wood stated they need to be more diligent with the money they allocate.

Mr. Baptiste stated if an incident happens on county property, the county has the potential to be sued. There is no lease agreement that he could draft to avoid being sued. However, the County has no legal duties with trespassers.

Commissioner Holt stated for them to turn their ideas in to Mr. Morris, so that way they have that list.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she wants to make sure they go line by line in the budget this year. She also mentioned bonds.

Chair Hinson recessed for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

Chair Hinson resumed workshop at 1:33 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they need to update their software and how they do business.

Mr. Baptiste asked a question regarding reserve for discretionary projects. Ms. Bennett stated it would need to still come before the board.

Commissioner Wood stated this was not the year to look at increases; they need to look at cuts.

Chair Hinson wanted Mr. Morris to look at the budget and come back to the board.

5.c. Economic Development Budget Presentation

5.d. Questions

6. **Motion to Adjourn**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HINSON DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 2:04 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**ERIC F. HINSON, Chair
Board of County Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk