

**AT A WORKSHOP HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 4, 2025 AT 6:00
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,
VIZ:**

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

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Hinson called the workshop to order at 6 p.m. Commissioner Green led into invocation and Chair Hinson led into the Pledge of Allegiance.

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.

Chair Hinson read aloud the above statement.

Marcella Blocker, 144 Brangus Lane, Quincy FL

Mrs. Blocker appeared regarding concerns of increasing the millage rate. She stated an increase in property tax without first evaluating the county's expenditures seems premature. She stated it was time for the commission to adopt a roll-back rate. People are hurting and a dollar more is too much.

Introduction

Mr. Morris stated staff would like to present proposals. EMS was critical and Chief Ford has a presentation. Chair Hinson asked for them to start with the presentation from Ms. Raynak.

Commissioner Simpkins appeared at 6:07 p.m.

Commissioner Holt appeared at 6:07 p.m.

Commissioner Holt stated that Mr. Lewis from economic development was supposed to present last time and asked if he was presenting today. Mr. Morris stated he was in training at the moment.

Department Budget Presentation - Budget Workshop #4

Rose Raynak, Director of Finance, appeared. She stated one of the things the board wanted to discuss was what kind of budget impacts were on the horizon.

Ms. Raynak stated ad valorem taxes currently make up 65% of the general fund and almost 50% of the entire budget. If ad valorem were to be cut, there would be a reduction of over 22 million dollars for the general fund.

Ms. Raynak stated another big thing was the potential of FEMA cuts. It could have some huge impacts if they are dealing with natural disasters. She also mentioned potential impacts from the Big Beautiful Bill like Medicaid that could lead to more children not being covered by health insurance and would create more demand on the county. SNAP was another potential impact.

Ms. Raynak stated there has been talk about the discontinuation of long-standing awards and clawing back money. She stated administrative costs were expected to go up 20%.

Ms. Raynak mentioned that Mr. Baptiste had stated he was going to look at the possibility of maybe using some of the indigent funding to help offset some of the Medicaid issues.

Ms. Raynak stated they could set aside money to prepare for these potential cuts. She also mentioned bonding for road projects and building projects. She mentioned doing long term payments as well. Those were some possibilities. Ms. Raynak mentioned ARPA ending December 2026. The only thing that was recurring was the \$1.9 million. It would have to be re-absorbed.

Ms. Raynak stated they also have increased operational costs. Health insurance premiums were going up. Liability, automobile, equipment, workers comp, property was all expected to go up. Total operational cost increase of approximately \$2.5 million. They were also looking at the amount of money that did not get paid out of general fund to go toward EMS salaries to not go in any extra fund balance. Ms. Raynak stated that was not a shortfall, it was already budgeted to be gone as of December. All of the agencies were advised not to use the funding for recurring costs. From what she gathered, the intent of using that \$1.9 million was a one-time deal so that it would give some relief to the general fund.

Chair Hinson asked about the \$1.2 million dollars for public works. Ms. Raynak stated they made a recommendation about the \$1.2 million. Their option was to either pay it off and keep the equipment, but instead of doing that, they recommend that they go back and get another lease and it could be an additional \$60,000 or \$70,000 added to their long-term debt payment. They would be able to get new equipment.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she thought they had people to repair heavy equipment. She asked if they were maintaining the lease vehicles. Mr. Morris stated no, they are not. He stated there are trucks that are not leased that they own.

Chair Hinson stated they could save a lot of money by training them to get certified.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they need to keep a lot of this in-house. They need to purchase equipment that staff is able to repair and check to see what certifications are necessary. There have been problems with tractors they just purchased and they need to make sure they are doing their due diligence when making these purchases.

Chair Hinson stated they could save money by having an inventory specialist. Commissioner Holt stated they need to consider the fact that manufacturers require different licenses and also it would increase the pay scale to get a diesel mechanic. Commissioner Wood stated a diesel mechanic would cost \$80-120k a year. The best option to him would be to go down the lease.

Ms. Raynak stated they are projecting that at 9.00 mills; it would bring in \$1.3 million in ad valorem. Recommended \$1.1 million for restricted projects only from surtaxes. They recommended to pull and set aside \$600,000 to contingency funds.

Chair Hinson recommended to see what they could do without touching the fund balance. They do not know what was going to happen and it was a bad time to be spending.

Chair Hinson recessed workshop at 6:57 p.m.

Chair Hinson resumed workshop at 7:06 p.m.

Ms. Raynak stated the recommendation was for them to remain at the 9.00 millage rate and try to use other sources like debt service. She suggested to go out with formal bids for health insurance to make sure they are still at competitive rates. Another thing to look at was contracts as several of them are being paid but they have expired.

Ms. Raynak went into recommendations from the staff. They are recommending that they finalize the 2024 reclassifications/compressions, assume 100% health insurance increases, and adding critical staff positions.

Ms. Raynak stated Mr. Young will discuss mowing issues they have. Curtis Young appeared and mentioned the 4 mowers not getting the job done. They need to look at replacing them. He stated only certain parts of the tractor were under warranty and the transmission was not under warranty.

Commissioner Simpkins stated they need to figure out the equipment and find out about costs so they can get these areas mowed. They need a timeline on getting this done.

Commissioner Wood did not think roadside dumping was legal. It could be a liability. Some citizens dump large piles at other people's houses weeks in advance. Other counties have drop off places, like they used to have.

Commissioner Wood stepped out at 7:40 pm.

Commissioner Wood returned at 7:42 p.m.

Ms. Raynak stated this presentation had suggestions, but it was ultimately up to the board. Chair Hinson thanked Ms. Raynak and stated they received all the information they need, and can make great decisions based on that.

Commissioner Green asked about the last time they did bids for the health providers. Ms. Raynak stated they were not sure. Commissioner Green asked if there were other ways where they could get assistance with parks other than general funds. He asked if they included lights with parks in the budget. Ms. Raynak stated she did not have that information at the moment on if lights specifically were included.

Commissioner Green stated several departments have asked for part time employees but it will be hard to find someone that wants to work only 20 hours per week.

Commissioner Holt asked if there were any other healthcare providers besides Blue Cross and Capital Health. Ms. Raynak stated there was United Healthcare, etc. Commissioner Holt mentioned Summer Youth and stated the students they had this year were a lot better, but she did think they need to reduce the number of students. She mentioned evaluating the parks and showing pictures of them in a meeting to know what they all look like. That way they can make their decisions. She also stated they did not have anything showing what they are going to do if they have Medicare/Medicaid cuts.

Commissioner Wood stated cuts are happening and if DOGE comes to the county, then they will deal with it. They need to keep in mind that changes are coming. He stated he did not think it would look good if they cut farmers.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned wanting to see their actuals for this year that they can take out of the budget. That way, they could see if some of the things listed to be cut could be taken care of with that. Ms. Raynak stated whatever they do this year, the Clerk has to see it as complete before the end of the fiscal year. Some of these things take more than 6 weeks to develop. They could not use this year's budget money to pay for it because it would not have been completed. Commissioner Simpkins stated she wants to see the cost factors like she has been asking for and would like to see it before the end of August.

Commissioner Holt stated they need to look at all the parks together. The rest of the county wonders how one district has 2 parks and other districts do not have anything they need. It causes hard feelings and now people are requesting things they want added in their park. If all the parks look alike, she was fine with that. They need to know where they are going with this process.

COMMISSIONER WOOD MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THE EMS PRESENTATION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.

Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HINSON DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 8:57 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk