

AT A WORKSHOP HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 19, 2025, AT
4:00 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, Appeared online
Brenda A. Holt, District 4
Shawn Wood, District 3
Reginald James, Interim County Administrator
Louis Baptiste, Interim County Attorney
Adriana Quijada, Deputy Clerk

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Holt called the workshop to order at 4:02 p.m. Commissioner Holt led into a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Simpkins and Commissioner Green appeared online.

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.

Commissioner Wood read aloud the above statement.

5. General Business

5.a. Introduction

Mr. James introduced budget workshop #6. He stated he has gone over the budget with Ms. Raynak and they have cut as much as they could without affecting personnel. He also stated they need a number on the non-profit reserve part.

Chair Hinson appeared at 4:05 p.m.

5.b. Budget Workshop #6

Ms. Raynak appeared. She wanted to provide an update on property insurance and stated they have received their preliminary premiums back from the company on Friday and it was looking like a \$300,000 mark. She stated the only way they could get their property insurance down is increasing their deductible mostly for name storms.

Commissioner Green appeared at 4:18 p.m.

Ms. Raynak went on to the EMS plan. She stated Chief Ford had presented a 24/72 schedule and that would raise some salaries. It would hopefully reduce overtime and burnout.

Chief Ford appeared before the board. He wanted to clarify that there would not be employee raises in regards to the overall salary; there will be some reduction in salary. The increased cost they will see is the cost of adding that extra shift they would need. It would be a \$200,000 increase to what they are currently budgeted for. He stated there is a raise in the hourly pay but in regards to the overall salary, it has decreased because they would be working approximately 600 hours less.

Commissioner Wood asked about the EMS cost. Ms. Raynak stated it will be around \$1.8 million transferred from the general fund into EMS, if the plan is approved.

Chief Ford stated he got numbers from Madison County where their average salary is \$72,000. Chair Hinson asked to get numbers from 3 different counties.

Ms. Raynak went on to the Summer Youth Program. Originally, it was at \$552,000 and they took out \$100,000 from that to put into another project per the commissioner's request. They approved adding 90 additional students and it brought the budget up to around \$487,000 for last year. On August 4, they put back \$350,000 to the program. It was up to commissioners on what level they wanted for this.

Mr. James stated he supported this program and did not want to diminish it but there are ground rules they need to set. Commissioner Wood asked to consider if that program should have more money than the Boys & Girls Club.

Commissioner Holt thought to set the Summer Youth program at \$300,000 and Commissioner Green suggested \$350,000. Mr. James requested the exact number for the program and Chair Hinson stated they could set it at \$350,000.

Commissioner Holt stated there are approximately 15 employees that have not received their raises going on two years. They need to include that into these numbers because they were promised a raise.

Mr. James mentioned the non-profit reserves and stated they need numbers on this. Ms. Raynak stated they spent around \$300,000 to \$400,000 last year, that included TDC. She suggested an amount be set for this and each commissioner will have an equal share of that amount.

Commissioner Holt stated they need policy and procedure for non-profits. It could be a problem if they are picking and choosing. Chair Hinson stated personally, he would rather spend on emergency housing as there are a lot of homes still affected by Hurricane Michael.

Commissioner Green stated they definitely would need to cut back on non-profits. They need to also see the return in investment and if the non-profits are really serving the community.

Commissioner Wood stated he agreed with Commissioner Holt on needing a process for non-profits. They will have a problem with picking one over the other and what district they are in.

Chair Hinson stated this year, they should not worry about non-profits. Commissioner Simpkins stated that sounded really good, but it was not reality. They need to set an amount and put a process in place. Chair Hinson stated he was not against non-profits; it was just a tough year.

Commissioner Holt stated they should set up a committee and let them go through non-profit applications.

Chair Hinson stated he would like to set funding for the Gadsden County Development Council. Commissioner Simpkins would also like to add funding for that in the budget. Commissioner Green stated it did not make any sense to add it to the budget right now when they are trying to do some cutting. Chair Hinson stated he would consider this an investment, not a takeaway.

Chair Hinson stepped out at 5:42 p.m.

Ms. Raynak stated she needed numbers for the millage rate. The preliminary estimate was at 9.5 and she needed direction. For the last 3 years, the millage rate has been at 9.0.

Commissioner Green suggested to stay at the 9.0 millage rate. Commissioner Holt suggested 9.2 and Commissioner Simpkins suggested a rollback rate of 8.75.

Ms. Raynak stated EMS was looking at around \$5.1 million dollars for their budget. It was at \$5.2 million last year. Commissioner Holt asked if that fits into the millage rate. Ms. Raynak stated it was budgeted in the 9.0 millage rate.

Commissioner Holt stated she has always supported GCDC but she thought that they need to get with the Economic Developer; that was the purpose of hiring that position.

6. Motion to Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE-CHAIR GREEN DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:53 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

ERIC F. HINSON, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk