

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JANUARY 5, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1 – APPEARED REMOTELY  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone at 6:02 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to table Item 1 and Item 9.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**Georgia Ackerman, Riverkeeper**, appeared before the Board remotely to give a report.

She said there is a legal challenge to the Army Corp of Engineers controlling fresh water to the Apalachicola River and asked if the County wished to join.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if she would be able to provide other Counties’ supporting statement for the project to the Administrator and Attorney and provide more detail with bullet points of what she was asking the body to support? He said their next meeting would not be before the timeline she had just given.

**CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

**If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.**  
Chair Holt read aloud the COVID statement.

**Bishop Willie C. Green 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board.

#### **Broadband Contract**

He said he was here when had what was to be short meeting regarding broadband. He said it was his understanding the vendor had been approved and now they were trying to work out the contractual details. He said he hoped the details could be worked out as soon as possible and was something the citizens in the County really needed.

He asked that they make sure have a priority of what they want when it comes to the legislature for the upcoming session. He added that he hoped Stevens School was a priority this session.

#### **CBOR**

He hoped to be at the Planning meeting on Thursday. He asked what meaningful purpose has the CBOR accomplished in the past and it was nothing.

He stated he had been at almost every meeting and had witnessed the decorum. He said he felt it was inappropriate for governmental leaders at this level. He said they should not be reacting personally when they disagree. He added that language can be very impactful in how people see them in the County.

He further stated that they have been elected not to represent themselves but the citizens of the County. He said he was representing a group that was working hard to try to make Gadsden County better but it started with the Commissioners and if they find Commissioners were not working for the citizens, they will be challenging them and will work to put them out.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- ~~**1. Public Hearing Adoption of Ordinance No. 2018-003, An Ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, Florida adopting Chapter 66, Article III of the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances, the Gadsden County Emergency Repair Program; providing for repeal, severability, inclusion in the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances, modifications that may arise from considering at a Public Hearing, and correction of Scrivener's errors; and providing for an effective date.**~~

Item Pulled

- 2. Public Hearing – Legislative- Adoption of Ordinance 2020-006, Jett Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment (LSPA 2020-01)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was to adopt a Large-Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map amendment to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity to change the future land use category from Agriculture 2 to Agriculture 1 on a 62.13-acre parcel located at 1232 Scotland Road, Havana.

**Jill Jeglie, Senior Planner**, appeared before the Board to explain the item. She said this was to change the map from Ag 2 that allowed one unit per ten acres to Ag 1, which allowed one unit per 5 acres on a 62.13-acre parcel.

She said the Planning Commission voted 7-1 to approve and then voted 5-0 to transmit the amendment to DEO.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and asked if there were any comments and there was none.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **3. Public Officials Bond Review**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for review of the sufficiency of Bonds of County Officers.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

#### **4. Approval of Use of the Language Line Solutions service through the State of Florida Contract Number 90121702-20-ACS**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval for the use of the Language Line Solutions service through the State of Florida Contract Number 90121702-20-ACS.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

#### **5. Public Works Roof Replacement Change-Order Number One**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of additional work needed on the Public Works Warehouse. While Exterior Specialties, Inc. was installing the roof, severe sagging between the posts was found and leveling and stabilization of the structure was needed.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND FOR DISCUSSION.**

Commissioner Green said the job was already done and the County needed to pay the bill. He added he did not want a situation like this to occur in the future.

Chair Holt said she agreed with him and did not approve the process taken for recommendation of a low bid when all the work and estimates had not been done properly and that was her concern.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. CHAIR HOLT AND COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

Mr. Dixon said he heard the concerns of the Commissioners and would make adjustments accordingly.

Chair Holt said she knew this did not occur on his watch.

**6. Ralph Strong Road Sidewalk Project FDOT LAP Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the FDOT LAP agreement for the construction of a new sidewalk that included lighting from US 90 to Crossroads Academy.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**7. Florida Department of Health, Bureau of EMS Matching Grant**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Florida Department of Health, County Matching Grant Application for Emergency Services. He added Gadsden Emergency Services was seeking grant funding for the replacement of stair chairs and temporal thermal scanners.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND SECOND MADE BY CHAIR HOLT. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE HAD A COMMENT.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said whenever they have a chance for a matching grant with 25% from the County's pocket and 75% from the other pocket and was for the good of Gadsden County, he did not see any reason why that should be a second thought.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**8. St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Change Order Number One**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of Change Order Number 1 for the St. Hebron Walk and Bike Trail for Life. He explained this would allocate funds within the budget to complete the walking trail.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. Bid Award for the Massey Building Roof and Structural Repair**

Item Pulled

**10. Terms and Conditions Agreement between Butterfly Network, Inc. and Gadsden County Emergency Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and explained it was for Board approval of the Terms and Conditions Agreement between Butterfly Network, Inc. and Gadsden County Emergency Services.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**11. FCI Contract (DOCUMENTATION NOT PROVIDED TO CLERK'S OFFICE)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He stated at a previous meeting he and the Attorney was directed to get with FCI to review the contract and remove any questions about what was happening. They met...

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND AND ASKED MR. DIXON TO CONTINUE.**

Mr. Dixon continued, he met with FCI, they were able to agree on a delivery date, which was agreed to in a previous meeting of January 15<sup>th</sup>; start date of February 1<sup>st</sup>; the finish date would be February 1, 2022; a buy-back program that would hold the Board harmless for devices should they not be used, and a Service Agreement where the County would only pay for services that were used in association with the number of devices. He said the Board would be able to get back money if the 25,000 devices were not used and the County would only pay for services rendered. He said it was presented to the Attorney and he had comments and he would let him speak to that.

Mr. Knowles said his only concern and he expressed that he thought it was easier to procure the devices on an as needed basis but he deferred to the Board.

Mr. Dixon said he presented to them the proposal that was presented to the Board in August, the analysis that the Commissioners kept referring to and there is a contract presented by FCI.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had not seen the contract and if it was in the packet provided to the Commissioners (copy not provided to Clerk's Office) because when he came to the office to pick up his book, he asked for the contract and asked questions on all the items, at that point, the contract had not been delivered yet. Now, they have been presented with the contract and they have not had time to review it.

Commissioner Green said a citizen made a good point, they were elected by the citizens and they were doing the work for those citizens and several of his constituents reached out to him in reference to this contract. There are things he has been asking from the beginning. He stated he agreed with Bishop Green that this is a needed item but could not come to grips with the language of purchasing up to 25,000. He said why purchase 25,000 when they do not need the quantity. He said while there is a surety bond, the numbers could come back to haunt them in reference to trying to get the money back. He said he did not see why spend what they did not need.

Chair Holt said the 25,000 number came up when they looked at each household and they were estimating the need of two per household. She said hotspots cover a certain amount of space and may not work two – three rooms down the hall. She said there was still a need for the internet service and some do not have it. She said the other thing, if they were looking at that, they had to look at utilities, that was how to count the number of households. If looking at the hotspots themselves, take that number and use that number for the number of people that need them, approximately 2 per household. She said if they were going to pay back, would you do half the job and then do the other half? She said no, and that was why no-one bid on this, because it was not a money-maker for them. She stated TDS had been here the whole time and

never came in and tried to services for the County other than telephones, nor did Comcast or any of the others bid on the contract. She said they had in other locations in the State but not here.

Commissioner Green said he needed more buy-back information, it should be more detailed in reference, was it 100%, 80%, what was the percentage amount they could expect to get back from the devices not used.

**Germain Bebe, FCI Communication COO**, appeared remotely and said he spoke with Mr. Dixon about the language and agreed that whatever devices were not used, the County would get back 100% and they would “soften” the language. He said, so the Board was aware with the device technology, on an average the shelf-life was between 2-3 years and normally the buy-back on that would be 50% but they will give the County back 100% and it was in the contract under **Payment Terms-5.3 Surety Bond**. Mr. Bebe said it would be within 60 days at the end of the distribution period and would be for devices and services not used.

Commissioner Viegbesie said while the contract was on-screen, he asked the rate per unit for the devices because they were elected to serve the will of the citizens, they were also elected to be a good, conservative custodian of the citizens’ money. He said Verizon and other companies provide hotspots for broadband, but Verizon has unlimited costs with 3 GB for \$20/unit and this was around \$38/unit. He said the price was too high. He asked what was the rate per unit compared to Verizon.

Mr. Bebe asked if he was being asked to provide a competing bid and Commissioner Viegbesie said he was asking for a rate comparison. Chair Holt stated they did not bid on this item. Mr. Bebe said it was their estimation they were providing the devices at the lowest cost possible. He further stated there was a level of quality they did guarantee within their proposal and it included that customers should be able to connect up to 4-5 devices at one time. He added that based on the quality and the guaranteed quality that was proposed and approved, that was the best hotspot to be carried on the level of service that was required. He also said he was unsure as to the type of hotspot they were referring to on Verizon for \$24.00, he could not vouch for them and they did not compete on the bids.

Commissioner Hinson said they had to be fair to the constituents when they make comments. What Commissioner Viegbesie said in comparing 3G and 5G; that was a huge comparison and a big difference and they needed to be clear in their comparison. He said there was really no service at all with 3G and 5G was much faster. He said they were talking about apples and bananas.

Commissioner NeSmith said he was still looking over the contract. Chair Holt said “that was not a problem, because we instructed them to get it done and they were supposed to get, they were supposed to get it to them before now. That was the instructions to the Attorney. That was the instructions to the Administrator. The Administrator told us what he did. The Attorney told us he didn’t think we should buy more than we need. So, where was the work being done that this Board asked to do. That means it would have been up here. One way or the other, we would have gotten it; whether you agree with the outline or not, it would have been up here and would have been done and we would have had it early. Because we gave instructions, didn’t we?” Commissioner NeSmith said they did. She said she understood what Commissioner

NeSmith was saying, that they did not have time to read it and that was a fault in the people they hired. She stated “The Administrator told us what he did. The Attorney told us what he didn’t do.”

Commissioner Hinson said he did not get this; he was trying to be fair about the process. He added that the Attorney said he did not think it was that important, and he was all about being fair.

Chair Holt said she understood the Commissioners were saying they did not have an opportunity to read this; but she was upset for a totally different reason from Commissioner Hinson. She said “You do not, and I don’t care who you are, if you are an employee of this Board, you do not defy the Board because, because the Board gave directions, you do what the Board asks you to do. That’s all. We have to vote. It doesn’t matter, if we say we want to buy 2 pigs instead of three horses, that’s what the Board votes on, we all have to go along with it. I’ve done it for years on things I didn’t agree on. But if three people up here voted for it, I went along with it and I had to support what the Board said. We did not get a contract back but are we not paying for legal services? Yes, yes.”

Mr. Knowles asked if they did not get a contract back.

**Chair Holt**

“Not tonight, we told you to get it here and it just got here, when did it get here?”

**Mr. Knowles**

“I got it Saturday night from FCI; then I forwarded it to Mr. Dixon yesterday (on Monday).”

**Chair Holt**

“Mr. Dixon, what’s your side of the story”.

**Mr. Dixon**

“I didn’t receive a contract.”

**Chair Holt**

“Now, get this, what happened to last week?”

**Mr. Knowles**

“10:58 a.m. yesterday.”

**Chair Holt**

“10:58 a.m.; he got it. That means we wouldn’t have had a chance to go over it that much either.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“Right, so FCI should have gotten it to us earlier, right?”.

**Chair Holt**

“Why didn’t you do the contract?”

**Mr. Knowles**

“I had done the contract...”

**Chair Holt**

“Whoa, whoa, hold up. I was telling him (pointing at Commissioner Viegbesie), not you. So, what I’m saying is, we they that it had to get here, it had to get here in a hurry; because we been going at this for months. When did we start this, June?”

**Mr. Knowles**

“But I submitted it Commissioner, or Chair...”

**Chair Holt**

“Yeah, but like this weekend.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“That’s when I got it from FCI. I can’t submit the document until I get it from FCI.”

**Chair Holt**

“Mr. Dixon, what’s your timeline?”

**Mr. Dixon**

“FCI, when did you submit the contract to us?”

**Mr. Bebe**

“The copy of the current contract? I believe I sent that in last week, Thursday?”

**Mr. Knowles**

“Then I asked for the Word copy, when did that come in?”

**Mr. Bebe**

“I can’t say for certain, I sent both a signed copy and a Word copy on Thursday. I was told that Mr. Knowles did not receive the PDF, I did send him a PDF copy on Friday. I’m sorry, a Word copy on Friday.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“At 9:32 p.m.”

**Mr. Dixon**

“Madam Chair, FCI submitted a PDF copy signed that was submitted to the Attorney. The Attorney requested that it be, that he send it in MS Word editable copy.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“The same day.”

**Mr. Dixon**



“After it was submitted to him from me for comment and for any revisions he might have. Ah, FCI then, the next day I think, submitted the editable copy, I think Friday. Saturday and Sunday, I requested of the attorney that, do you have any comments, would you revise the document and give us the document. Ah, he responded to me that his wife...”

**Mr. Knowles**

“My wife had contractions; she’s due in 2 weeks, which is more important in my mind.”

**Mr. Dixon**

“Yes, and I, Sunday morning I think it was, I reached out to him and asked him would you please submit to me whatever comments you have so I can have it ready for the Board. Ah, and his response to me was he said what he said and it’s gonna be on the record. I’m not a lawyer and could not draft a contract for you so I submitted the contract that FCI submitted because I did not have one from the attorney.”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Madam Chairman, so, we have a, ah, don’t get me wrong, I’m not trying to be picky, ah, you know, I understand the issues and everything here because I said the same thing a couple of years ago during Hurricane Katrina. In the mist of trying times, you still got to act humble and do your job because someone else (inaudible) lost their lives during Hurricane Michael, I apologize and we had certain people that we’re representing that lost it because they said they had other issues and everything else. But when we give contracts, right, the contract does not represent a person, the contract represents saying they say they gonna do it, not the person gonna do it, but the firm or organization is gonna do it. So, if you got a problem, somebody within that organization should make it happen because what’s more important to me, my Mom is more important too, right? My Aunt is more important, my cousin, the neighbor down the street. These people are losing their lives right now. So, if you can’t do the job, give it to somebody else that can do the job. That’s more important because at the end of the day, people dying. I can’t, I’m not sure how y’all looking at this thing. But people are dying. I can’t worry about your problems because you can’t worry about my problems. We got to make decisions now to keep him. If I can’t do it, I’ve got to make sure somebody else can cover the load. (Inaudible) can do it that’s why you got a firm with other people that can do it just in case you end up dying and we know that’s fair, man, that’s fair. So, I’m for the people.”

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

“I hope in this conversation that we are having; I hope no-one listening or no-one here thinks that there is a soul under the sky that understands that people live in Gadsden County that one soul thinks that broadband and internet connectivity for Gadsden County is not paramount, is not important, is not viable. I don’t think that is what anyone in this room or anyone listening, especially if you are living in this county like we are, knowing the conditions that exist in this county. No-one is talking about the irrelevance of internet connectivity or broadband service to everyone. That is not where the issue is. So, I would think that if that if that is the (inaudible) I am going to suggest that since there is a motion and a second, Madam Chair, we need to carry this vote up or down and I will suggest that we do it by roll-call so that we know exactly who voted which way and if it passes, then we all heed to it. Madam Chair, you just said a number of times, sometimes there are things we don’t vote for but once the Board approves it, you go along with it. We all have to know how to agree and disagree agreeably rather than making things very (inaudible) finger pointing. So, Madam Chair, if it is appropriate...”

**Chair Holt**

“Not Yet...”

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

“I am going to, ah...”

**Chair Holt**

“I have another comment but if you are going to call the question, it will be in a minute.”

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

“I was going to call the question but if you have a comment...”

**Chair Holt**

“Let me, let me, let me finish, let me say this. Let me say this. Now, I have sat in the audience back in ‘99 and I hadn’t said anything like this. When you give a direction, they take the direction. If you aren’t going to do it Mr. Attorney, you from a law firm, pass it on. They could have gone over this or written this up. Take in what Mr. Bebe said and taken out whatever. But before today we should have had a contract. Now, ah, ah, you might be hot but I’m real hot. But, let me say this, let me say this. Ah, Marcella’s husband was our attorney at one time. He, he that, he got stuff done, you know? I’m saying, we have so many things to do that this is something that we shouldn’t even be discussing. Ah, a late contract, we don’t have, we’re not prepared, I (inaudible) I feel, has nothing to do with this contract, has nothing to do with this contract. If I thought they ought to have 10,000 and three commissioners thought they ought to have 15, it’s 15. That’s just the way it is. But when we come and it’s late like this, that’s sabotage, as far as I’m concerned and, and that’s why, I’m not really upset about, I’m upset about the timeframe, that we had all these opportunities and we didn’t take care of this. How many companies will be looking at us to take care of the County’s business and then those citizens are depending on us for the jobs that we didn’t get because we couldn’t get the legal side right. This is unheard of, as I said. I’m almost at a loss for words. Now, Mr. Attorney, you’re going to comment...”

**Mr. Knowles**

“No Ma’am, I just have a question.”

**Chair Holt**

“Sure”

**Mr. Knowles**

“How would the Board prefer that I handle these sorts of situations when I get contracts on New Years’ Day at 9:30 in the evening for the future?”

**Chair Holt**

“Do them, go ahead and do them. I, I...”

**Mr. Knowles**

“Well, I did. But after that if I don’t get a response or anything and I sent the contract, how would I better serve you doing this moving forward?”

**Chair Holt**

“Well, since y’all don’t have a timeline, I suggest you just get it back to us. That’s all I can tell you. Get it done, get it back. That’s just how it works.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“Yes Ma’am, I’m saying if I got it yesterday, and I sent it over...”

**Chair Holt**

“Well, what I’m saying though, is this, in, in the future it just has to be done. I can’t tell you tonight because we got to deal with this.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“Yes Ma’am, I just wanted to make sure...”

**Chair Holt**

“OK, well, I’m, I’m, I’m, yeah, yeah, I tell you it, it’s a mess. Yes sir?” (looking at Commissioner Green)

**Commissioner Green**

“Thank you, Madam Chair. Let’s, I hear the question going to be called but how can we answer a question especially individually, how can we make a vote again. I’m looking at Commissioner NeSmith as he is trying to peruse through the contract...”

**Chair Holt**

“Peruse through yours; peruse through it.”

**Commissioner Green**

“But, I mean, how can we make a vote on something that, that’s not, that we’re just getting?”

**Chair Holt**

“Well, you understand why I’m upset then. OK, OK, now, now, tonight the question is going to be called; it’s gonna be called. So, if, when and why is not going to matter. You get my point? If someone says ‘I know someone down the street has a better deal’, well, you already have this one in front of you. It’s been voted on; we’ve looked at it; we should go back and negotiate the terms; we already selected the company; ah, so, who’s fault is it? We’re the Board of County Commissioners, that’s who we are. If you have a wagon with three wheels, you looking for a fourth wheel, you had to get the wheel all ready. That’s just the way it is. Because people are going to get up in the morning ready to go to work and they depend on us to get this done. Not from last June, not from August, they intent for us to get this done. This is just one contract out of many that you will be seeing. Ah, Commissioner, wait, wait a minute, we’re not going at this all night. Commissioner Viegbesie, go ahead and call the question.”

**Commissioner Green**

“Madam Chair?”

**Chair Holt**

“Yes Sir?”

**Commissioner Green**

“In all due respect, I don’t want to go on all night, but, however, ah, we still have questions, I mean, I don’t see...”

**Chair Holt**

“Well, if you call the question, you got to stop. But what I’m saying is, you want to look through it, you want to take a break, you want to take a 30-minute break and look through it; you want to give Mr. Bebe and them a chance to look through it, give the attorney a chance to look through it, but one way or the other, we need to finish this tonight, right?”

**Commissioner Green**

“And, and I agree with you to an extent, to an extent, but it’s almost like, we, we, even in a discussion, and you know, I’m not gonna go back and forth, I do feel that, you know, we’re moving it, but there are still so many uncertainties, even with the question that I asked. It’s really not enough clarity in reference to the buy-back program in this contract. Because, that’s my biggest concern is the buy-back and being able to make sure that the devices that we do not use, that it is very clear that it’s understandable, legible writing that we will get this money back. Because there are so many other things that are great, just as important, but if it’s not used, if the people are not using it, the devices, then I don’t want to go through us having to wait 2-3 years, trying to go through litigation, trying to get this money back that could be utilized in other areas, if the people are not getting the (inaudible).”

**Chair Holt**

“That would have been gone through by your legal team. Ah, Mr. Bebe, Mr. Bebe, Mr. Bebe?”

**Mr. Bebe**

“Yes, Madam Chairwoman.”

**Chair Holt**

“Ah, Commissioner wants some clarity before the question’s called.”

**Mr. Bebe**

“Yes, I, I believe we, we addressed it clearly. I, I do want to make it clear as well; the last Board meeting that the Board requested some specific changes in that contract. Literally, all we changed in that contract from the one that was approved was those specific changes. 1) We made it very clear that you are going to get a refund and it’s backed by the surety bond; 2) That we changed the payment terms as to when the funds are drawn down when you have the funds and you’re given, from the time you actually have the funds, you have 45 days to make the initial payment; also, and the last thing that was changed was, I’m sorry, the last two things that were changed were the deadline for having the devices and the program start date. Everything else there we made it, we stripped it down to where it is black and white. My devices, whatever isn’t used at the end of the program, you are entitled to a, for a refund. We didn’t soften the clause back, that’s the original clause the language that was in there, we didn’t soften it at all. You will get a refund and it is backed by a surety bond. Which means, this ought to clear that. If I drop dead or my company goes under, no matter what, you get a refund.”

**Chair Holt**

“And, also, thank you Mr. Bebe. And also, Commissioners, you did have that contract before, because we had it in the last meeting.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“It’s the same one we’ve had.”

**Chair Holt**

“Yeah.”

**Mr. Knowles**

“This is the same one we’ve had?”

**Chair Holt**

“Yeah. So that’s the only thing they changed. So, you already had it.”

**Mr. Dixon**

“Yes Ma’am, the only questions we changed were the ones that y’all brought forth last meeting.”

**Chair Holt**

“Right, so that was already in there, you already had the contract.”

**Commissioner NeSmith**

“Right, but Madam Chair, again, I just received the contract and I just have not had a chance to read it.”

**Chair Holt**

“But you had it, two weeks ago, three weeks ago, whatever. We done had it, what, twice? So, you, you had it.”

**Commissioner Green**

“Yes, we have had it, but we don’t know what changes, now they are telling us the changes that have been made, you know, it’s just good to see those changes and I still have the same concerns that I had, but I am a little bit more at ease. I will say that, knowing that it has been stated and has been documented that whatever devices are not utilized, would be fully refunded for. So, with that understanding, if you want to call this, I will vote accordingly.”

**Chair Holt**

“Commissioner V, you want to go ahead and call it?”

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

“There is no reason to call for me to call the question, you can go ahead and carry the vote. I just wanted to make sure that this back and forth stopped.”

**Chair Holt**

“OK, OK, there you go. OK. Alright, we’re about through with this. Ah, all in favor of the contract that was presented, all in favor.”

**THE MOTION PASSED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED SAID MOTION.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**12. Updates**

Clerk’s Office was not asked if there were any updates.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**13. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said on January 19<sup>th</sup> there will be a Volunteer Fire Department Workshop at 4:30 and the Commissioners would be going over the funding, on how they are funded and based on what information;

January 21<sup>st</sup> will be the local Delegation hearing;

January 26<sup>th</sup> will be the Comprehensive Plan workshop.

He said they started vaccinations last week and gave close to 500 doses, was able to do so very quickly. Governor DeSantis put out an Executive Order that they would only service health care workers, elderly (65 and older); first responders (not to include law enforcement, per the Governor) and long-term care. Health Department has received additional doses. They have partnered with Chief Maddox and Dr. Cooksey to help with the vaccination effort for Friday. He added that Chief Maddox was working on program that would routinely test Public Works, custodial and facility employees; they have to work closely together and custodial employees were on the front-lines continually. He said they have asked Dr. Cooksey to see if they could get them classified as “essential employees”. He said they would have to staff up if they were going to do vaccinations right. Dr. Cooksey did not have the staff to deliver the kind of services that would be needed for the citizens.

Chair Holt mentioned she received a call from Go Nurses and said there were several traveling nurses and some have ending contracts and they have asked if they could come home and work through their organization to help.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked the Governor, staff, National Guard, Health Department workers, Dr. Cooksey and staff, and the Sheriff’s Office for logistics provided during the services of the first round of vaccinations. He encouraged everyone to take the shot when they have the opportunity.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**14 Updates**

Mr. Knowles said Mr. Dixon covered what he was going to cover, which was the Executive Order.

He mentioned the Board had not addressed the Resolution recently; they have new Commissioners and asked the Board for direction on how they wanted to move forward.

Chair Holt said basically on that, they require masks and there was not really much more that was required.

Mr. Knowles said there was no curfew, they required masks and had a gathering restriction of 50.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested as long as there were no drastic changes, go ahead with the Chair signing a new Resolution every Friday.

Mr. Dixon pointed out they had an employee die last week from COVID and a deputy died this week from COVID.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 7:31 p.m.*

Chair Holt added she was still trying to figure out why law enforcement was not classified as first responders. They were going into homes and needed to be covered. She stated the Public Works employees were first responders as well.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

##### **15. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

###### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he spoke with Mr. Dixon earlier and wanted to present it to the Board. He said they needed to do something for Public Works as well as EMS. They are in the streets and he came up with a number to give them a small bonus. The number he came up with was \$250 to all Public Works and EMS employees and asked for it to be put on the Agenda.

Chair Holt said for him to pray on it and they had to check on what was in the budget.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned 7:34 p.m.*

Chair Holt stated they did give them a raise and that was pretty good.

###### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith asked if it was possible to draft a Resolution for the two that passed away and was told it was normally done.

He thanked Mr. Knowles for always being assessable when he has issues and thanked Mr. Dixon as well.

###### **Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said she was going to do something and say something, some may agree and some may not, but she had been known to be very direct and straightforward. She said they were in

need of legal services, she liked Mr. Clayton as a person but they needed some legal help. She said “all the pretty words don’t work if you don’t have anything else going on”. She added when those developers and contractors come in that door, they come with their legal people and were almost always experienced in those areas. She said they have to have it better than what they have right now. She said she started to put in a motion tonight and do not hesitate when it comes to Gadsden County. She said she had been knowing Mr. Dixon a long time and if he started falling down on the job, she would be the first one to put a motion in. Timelines matter, if you have ever been in business, you have 30 days to make money.

**Chair Holt**

“I tell you what, I’m tempted to go think about it, but I’m tempted not. In fact, I won’t.” (passing gavel to Vice-Chair Viegbesie)

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“Ah, Madam Chair, madam Chair...”

**Chair Holt**

“Sir, Sir...”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“Just hold it, hold it, hold it, hold it...”

**Chair Holt**

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, hold up, I did not recognize you so I do not have to. You do not have to accept this gavel. Commissioner Hinson will become the next person that gets the gavel because that’s the next senior person.”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“I was thinking that holding the gavel did not have to do with seniority...”

**Chair Holt**

V said holding the gavel did not have to do with seniority and Holt interjected and said if she did not recognize you then they were not arguing.

**Chair Holt**

“Well, Sir, listen, let me say this. If I didn’t recognize you then we’re not arguing. But I move that we hire Williams Law Firm out of Tallahassee...”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“Well Madam Chair...”

**Chair Holt**

“Wait, wait, wait, if I get a second (talking over Vice Chair Viegbesie) If I get a second, then I get a second.”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“Madam Chair, I am sorry...”



**Chair Holt**

“You can be sorry but listen at, let me finish my motion...”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“Procedurally, procedurally you the Chair cannot make a motion...”

**Chair Holt** (hitting the gavel on the dais)

“There’s the gavel, OK, now I move that we hire Williams Law Firm out of Tallahassee as the County Attorney. That’s my motion, I let it die at the dais.”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Madam Chair?”

**Chair Holt**

“Yes Sir?”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Madam Chair, I’m gonna second with a question.”

**Chair Holt**

“Sure, go ahead.”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“What’s the reason why Vice Chairman don’t want to do his due diligence?”

**Chair Holt**

“Mr., ah, Commissioner, you can answer that. He asked you a question.”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“What was the question?”

**Chair Holt**

“Commissioner, speak up please he said he didn’t hear you. He didn’t hear your question”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Yeah, I was curious, why you don’t want to do your due diligence by accepting the Chairman position because I’m quite sure you when Chairman passed the gavel so you could make a motion too.”

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

“I had, I had, I had done it, all I was going to do was to bring to the attention of the Chair that she cannot make a motion when she had the gavel. That was all I was going to bring to her attention. I was going to bring to her attention procedurally of the fact that the Chair cannot make a motion. That was what I was going to do to bring to her attention when she kept on saying she had not recognized me because she was about to make a motion, which is contrary to Robert’s Rules procedurally of the Chairman, chairmanship, or chairwomanship. That was what I was saying. So, you can, it can be interpreted whichever, I was just trying to guide us procedurally. Thank you.”

**Chair Holt**

“OK, and the reason that I said that Commissioner, is because you can pass the gavel, now there’s nothing to say if he has to accept it. OK? But, that’s not the point, the point is that we need some help. OK? When you start seeing these companies knocking on our door, they’re already ready and as some of them can say, they already looked at the property; they already know what they want to do and we can’t, we gonna have to go back and change what we’re doing. We cannot have this month after month after month. Whether it’s the company’s problem or our problem. We can’t have it. So, like I said, vote it up or down and let’s go. Yes sir?”

**Commissioner Green**

“So, you were getting ready to make a motion for a law firm that we’ve used in the past, is that correct?”

**Chair Holt**

“Yes.”

**Commissioner Green**

“I just wanted to have clarity. Ah, and there is a reason why they are not here. I don’t know because I don’t know who this firm is and so, I’m going to say this and at some point, this roller coaster ride of all these chosen has to come to a cease.”

**Chair Holt**

“It does.”

**Commissioner Green**

“And we, just because we don’t agree with certain things or, how certain things have been done, we’re not going to always agree. Why not express how we feel about a situation, give opportunity and then if those opportunities are not met, then we go another route. There’s always been times that I’ve watched that we have been so quick to just make changes just based upon how we feel. I feel a lot of ways but I don’t always make those changes because I feel that way. I mean, so, I, I, you can make your call, I, I just wanted to give that, that point. Thank you for the opportunity.”

**Chair Holt**

“And I appreciate that. I don’t do things without thinking about them. I do not do things without going through them. Whenever something happens, I document, either on this phone or I document it in my truck or at the house. So, but I don’t go out and just talk about it and the reason I don’t do that is because as I have done before, I don’t have any reason to sit here and criticize you. If I’m going to make a motion, I make it and we keep going. Now, if there anything you want to talk about, we talk about that in the back room. I’m not going to say anything negative about you, or Commissioner V or anyone like that. But I have to look at the performance. That’s what I look at and I make notes on everything. And that’s what I’m saying. We need some help and I do not believe that we are getting what we need to get. Now, that’s my point. It’s not, I didn’t say Williams Law Firm because he didn’t write number 1 twice in the advertisements. I didn’t say that Williams Law Firm because we did not get excellent service under him from Washington, DC back down to the District Court down to the Federal Court over

in Tallahassee to here. So, I'm not saying that I didn't chose, I could have chosen another one but that's the one that I chose. Yes Sir?"

**Commissioner Green**

"And all that is good and I hear the accolades that are being thrown out, but, however, we, I, how can we, I can't make a vote for a firm that..."

**Chair Holt**

"Right. There's just, that's why I say you go ahead and vote up or down. Commissioner Hinson, do you have..."

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

(Hand has been raised) "Ah..."

**Chair Holt**

"I'm sorry...Hold on. Y'all call the question and let's go. Go ahead."

**Commissioner Hinson**

"Madam Chair..."

**Chair Holt**

"I thought he was saying...Go ahead, Commissioner Hinson, hold on a minute."

**Commissioner Hinson**

"OK, I thought that Commissioner, I thought that Commissioner V was..."

**Chair Holt**

"He was. That's why I said hold on a minute. Commissioner V?"

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

"Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to echo the position and the (inaudible) of Commissioner Green. I think sometimes on this government, not just this Commission, since even when I was sitting out in the audience, I see too much knee-jerk reaction to situations that we do not like going on. So, what I'm going to suggest, I think that's what I've been asking for, we are in (inaudible). We need to come up with this document, this performance trail so if we are not satisfied with the performance of the two positions that this Board hires, the County Administrator or the Attorney, and in the evaluation process, we can have the vote of lack of confidence that would lead to a proper way of transitioning from one service provider to the other. Because I think as Commissioner Green just said, too much knee-jerk reaction, I don't know meetings were had before this meeting, or meeting after meeting or between meetings that has come to this point. But, right now, I think it's something that we need to take a breather on and if there are dissatisfaction, there should be some expression of those dissatisfactions and a way of finding a remedy of correcting those dissatisfactions before making choices of just severing the services of any entity. So, that is my position too. I think right now this is, from my point of view, I don't know what had been discussed in the past. This is a knee-jerk reaction to something that had just went on and went on with regard to a contract that I don't know how that is the call of that particular contract. We've done some other contracts before since this law firm come in but this very one, I think, is touching some nerves, some

sensitive nerves that is getting up to this point where we want to sever a relationship with the law firm because of one specific contract and, right now that is very, very disturbing to me.”

**Chair Holt**

“Thank you. OK, I’m glad. Your knee may be jerking but mine isn’t. I look at facts, I look at data and facts and that’s all I look at. Commissioner Hinson?”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Yes, and I concur. I don’t have any problem with the lawyer, I think he’s a great guy. But like he said (inaudible). He said it, we didn’t say that. He said it, on many occasions. He said that; and guess what, we’re about to go through this CARES Act again, right? We’re about to go through the Housing crisis again, about to go through so many other things again and we don’t have time for what happened in the past. How can we sustain him, ah, and I love him, I think he’s a great guy, a super person. But unfortunately, right now, we got a crisis in a lot of different areas and that’s not knee-jerking to me. I’m just repeating what he said.”

**Commissioner NeSmith**

“Madam Chair?”

**Chair Holt**

“Thank you. I’m sorry Commissioner, I thought you were finished. Go ahead.”

**Commissioner Hinson**

“Oh, I’m finished Madam Chair.”

**Commissioner NeSmith**

“Can we call the question, please?”

**Chair Holt**

“Commissioner, you want to speak?”

**Commissioner Viegbesie and Commissioner NeSmith**

Both said to call the question.

**Chair Holt**

“I wanted to say right quick it’s not because of one contract. I don’t know where you get such idea like that from. I don’t do things like that. I always evaluate. Alright ladies and gentlemen, we’ve called for the vote. All in favor?”

**THE BOARD VOTED 2-3. MOTION DIED. VICE-CHAIR VIEGBESIE, COMMISSIONER GREEN AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH OPPOSED THE MOTION.**

**Chair Holt**

“Motion died 3-2. I will say this; I’ve got to get a Proclamation approved for the National Association of Women Construction.

**UPON MOTION BY VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

**CHAIR HOLT**

“I would like to say this. If we do not improve, you gonna hear this motion every week, every two weeks. That’s just what we’re gonna do. We gonna straighten this up. We gonna do that we need to do. If the Board says we’re good to go, Mr. Knowles, that’s what we have to do. If they say we’re not, then we’re not. But I am always going to evaluate. I do not, ah, I do not sit up here and criticize you in public. That’s not going to happen. Now you may say you don’t have anything, but I document everything. But what I am saying is this. We need professional legal help. I didn’t say you couldn’t do that. I said I make a decision on the evidence so if your knee is jerking, it’s not mine. Y’all ready to go home?”

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Mr. Green asked if there was any idea when the next draw-down would be available from the CARES Act funding because he also believed they should make something available for Public Works and EMS. He said several of those employees work other jobs that they could not go on during the time they could not work waiting on results to come back from the virus. Especially if the County received more CARES Act money that they could be included to show appreciation for their hard work. He added if they do receive more money, they should plan another workshop to plan how to spend it.

He asked how to add a name to the board of the Veterans’ Memorial Monument that was across the street.

He also stated he does go back and forth to Facebook on his phone because he was concerned about what was being said because they were representing everyone and wanted to assure everyone that better days were ahead.

Commissioner Hinson said he also had a list for Resolutions of people that had passed away.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was not surprised when Bishop Green made his comments, which were part of the comment he was going to make today.

He asked what type of leader would they be in 2021. He said for them to “work for a cause, not for applause”. He asked that they not let their personal ambition interfere with the reason they were elected.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
January 5, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:57 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A PRE-BOCC MEETING WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY ON JANUARY 5, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2 – arrived late  
Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt thanked everyone for attending the workshop and explained the purpose behind it. She then asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to amend the Agenda to include discussion of their legislative agenda. He said they would not do it at the 6:00 meeting but this was for the workshop. He explained on January 21<sup>st</sup>, the local representatives, Senator Lorann Ausley and Rep. Ramon Alexander would be present.

Leslie Steele appeared and stated she had reached out to the Commissioners to find out what their legislative requests were and also met with the City Managers. She gave a report to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Nesmith asked for clarification of when their lists were due. Ms. Steele explained they needed to have their lists submitted to the Administrator and explained the process.

Commissioner NeSmith expressed the need for a workshop to complete a strategic plan that showed their priorities for down the road.

Mr. Dixon said he expected every department to bring funding opportunities that were specific to their area.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.**

**If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.**

Mr. Dixon read aloud the COVID statement.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**1. Public Hearing-Adoption of Ordinance No. 2018-003, An Ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, Florida adopting Chapter 66, Article III of the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances, the Gadsden County Emergency Repair Program; providing for repeal, severability, inclusion in the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances, modifications that may arise from considering at a Public Hearing, and correction of Scrivener's errors; and providing for an effective date.**

Mr. Dixon explained this item was requested by Commissioner Hinson. He asked that this be discussed tonight to make sure this was the route the Commissioners wanted to go.

Chair Holt said they had discussed this before and asked how they could make this impartial.

Mr. Dixon said it would be handled through the SHIP Program and the applicants would have to meet certain qualifications.

Commissioner Green asked where money would come from. Mr. Dixon said this was their money and they would find a line item to fund it if they wanted to go forward with it.

Chair Holt said this should be impartial and the Commissioners should not be involved in how the money was spent and where it went.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to add they had discretionary funds that each Commissioner could receive so they could choose what they wanted to do. He added they needed to make sure they had the right people there in the Housing Department. With discretionary funds, the Commissioner could use the money as they choose.

**2. Public Hearing – Legislative- Adoption of Ordinance 2020-006, Jett Large Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment (LSPA 2020-01)**

Diane Quigley, Growth Management Director, appeared to discuss the Jett Comp Plan and tonight was for the final adoption.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**3. Public Officials Bond Review**

This item was not discussed.

**4. Approval of Use of the Language Line Solutions service through the State of Florida Contract Number 90121702-20-ACS**

Tomoka Rollins, Probation Division Manager, appeared to explain the Language Line Solutions service and how the service was needed to break the barriers.

Hinson asked if that was probation and stated it was hard to hear. He asked how could they stay there, was it safe because the office was so small.

**5. Public Works Roof Replacement Change-Order Number One**

Allan Meeks, Facilities Manager, appeared before the Board to explain this item.

Chair Holt said she would not recommend this at all. Mr. Dixon said the work has been completed.



Mr. Knowles pointed out this was damage from the hurricane and there was insurance money in the coffers to pay for this.

**6. Ralph Strong Road Sidewalk Project FDOT LAP Agreement**

Curtis Young, Interim Public Works Director, appeared before the Board to explain this item.

He explained the sidewalk will run from US 90 to Crossroads Academy.

**7. Florida Department of Health, Bureau of EMS Matching Grant**

Chief Maddox, GCES Chief, appeared remotely. He explained this was a matching grant in which the County would be responsible for 25%. They had funded in the budget \$18,000 because of some uncertainty as to what would be needed.

**8. St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Change Order Number One**

Allan Meeks re-appeared before the Board regarding this item. He said they were re-allocating funds with this project and explained it.

**9. Bid Award for the Massey Building Roof and Structural Repair**

Item will be tabled tonight.

**10. Terms and Conditions Agreement between Butterfly Network, Inc. and Gadsden County Emergency Services**

Chief Maddox re-appeared remotely and explained this item.

**11. FCI Contract**

Mr. Dixon appeared to explain this item. He said he spoke with FCI and FCI has given a start date and they agreed to buy-back any unused devices. They have agreed to a closing date of February 21, 2022.

He said they emailed the document out to the Commissioners.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE WORKSHOP ENDED AT 5:55 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JANUARY 21, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Sean Pittman, County Attorney**  
                          **Opal McKinney-Williams, County Attorney**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney – appeared remotely**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Hannah Pope, Clerk’s Office**

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the Special Meeting, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**Amendments and approval of Agenda**

Mr. Dixon asked to move Item 5 to Item 2; to pull Item 2-Public Hearing- Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2020-005 to amend Section 7001.1, by repealing the ‘Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights’ (LDR 2020-001) and reschedule the item for the next Board meeting on February 2, 2021. He explained it was because of the crisis the County had and the need to close the County offices due to threats during the Presidential Inauguration and the time constraints on re-advertising, they were moving this item. He stated he would like to add 6a – Approval to Confirm the Assistant County Administrator and add 6b – Approval for AIG TankGuard Renewal Application on Policy FPL007512097.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**Awards, Presentations and Appearances**

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

- 1. Approval and Signatures for Special Assessment Liens State Housing Initiative Partnership Program (SHIP) (Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program)**

**Items Pulled for Discussion**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

***Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.***

***If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email***

***[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.***

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

Chair Holt read aloud the Covid statement.

Marion Lasley submitted an email and Chair Holt read it aloud.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**2. ~~PUBLIC HEARING (Legislative) Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2020-005 to amend Section 7001.1, by repealing the ‘Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights’ (LDR 2020-02)~~**

Pulled

**2. Addendum to Agreement for Legal Services (Moved to Item 2)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated the Addendum would add Opal McKinney-Williams to the Agreement to provide legal services.

Commissioner Viegbesie pointed out there might be Citizens requesting to be heard.

Chair Holt stated she would get to that in a minute. She then read aloud the COVID-19 statement. She later went back to “Citizens Requesting to Be Heard”.

**Sean Pittman, President and CEO of Pittman Law Group**, appeared before the Board. He stated this item would make an amendment to add Opal McKinney-Williams to provide legal services to the County. To do so technically, they would need to add her to the original contract and this amendment would do so.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.**

Chair Holt said to Mr. Pittman that she had mentioned to him the wording that it would be “one or” and the word “and” meant a lot. Mr. Pittman explained each attorney had an hourly amount next to their name of the hourly rate that they charged.

Chair Holt explained she was saying if there was an issue, the way the wording was could be an issue if they went over the 50 hours; the wording would matter if you said at 50 hours that all would receive but it would be only paying for the one that was doing the work.

Mr. Pittman said she was correct.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**3. Approval of the Security Force Southeast, LLC Contract Extension**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval to continue the contract for one year. He said the fiscal impact would be \$32.95 a month for the monitoring rate and was budgeted.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**4. Appointment to the Northwest Florida Business Development County, Inc. d/b/a Opportunity Florida Board**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and stated this was to appoint a representative to serve on the Opportunity Florida Board. He stated it was an economic development engine that included Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, Walton North and Washington counties. Each Commission shall appoint one individual to represent their county.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE NOMINATED COMMISSIONER NESMITH TO BE THE REPRESENTATIVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**5. Addendum to Agreement for Legal Services** (Moved to Item 2)

**6. Discussion and Approval of the Extension of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and said it was for discussion and approval from the Board regarding the extension of Family First Coronavirus Response Act.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

Chair Holt asked for more information regarding this item because people were not getting the information.

Mr. Dixon said this would provide:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay due to the employee being quarantined
- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay due to having to care for an individual being quarantined;
- Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) at two-thirds the employee's rate of pay (such that the employee has been employed for at least 30 days) to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Chair Holt said this was the perfect way to get the information out.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**6a Approval to Confirm the Assistant County Administrator**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board confirmation of the employment of the Assistant County Administrator, Georgette Daniels, currently employed with Miami Beach. He stated she had an extensive background in Finance and Budget and would bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise along with her knowledge of what was happening in Washington with the CARES Act.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if he had evaluated and was comfortable with this person and this was who he believed could work with the team and Mr. Dixon said yes.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the timeframe she was to start. Mr. Dixon stated early February.

Commissioner Green said he was glad to see this. He said he did a little research of his own and felt this was a great move and a great addition to the team.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Mr. Dixon wanted the Board to understand this meant a lot; they had four that interviewed and all were outstanding and he was trying to get them here as fast as he could. He added that “the calmness, the focus that you bring to these meetings really allows me to do my job really well and attract folks”.

**6b Approval for AIG TankGuard Renewal Application on Policy FPL007512097**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval for the renewal application agreement for the insurance policy on fuel tanks located at the Sheriff’s Office, Jail and Public Works. He stated the policy had been floating for a while and needed to get done to make sure the tanks stay insured.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**7. Updates**

The Clerk’s Office was not asked for any update.

**County Administrator**

**8. Updates**

**County Attorney**

**9. Updates**

Mr. Pittman thanked them for their confidence in adding another attorney to their team. He congratulated Mr. Knowles on the birth of their daughter.

Commissioner Viegbesie pointed out Clerk Updates was overlooked and Chair Holt said the Clerk not present and was why she did not address Clerk's issue.

**Discussion by Commissioners**

**10. Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he wanted to have the Attorney give a brief synopsis of the Clerk's email, what had transpired and the outcome. He also asked for a copy of bids and RFP qualifications of what must be done for bids and RFP's; he wanted all the steps and processes that had to be done.

He said he heard some rumblings and read the letter the Clerk sent out, was awe struck because in his humble opinion, they have some competent attorneys that would pick that up and it could not be true. They were saying the corporation did not have all his "ducks in a row" and wanted to know if it was true on record so they could move forward.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner Nesmith said to discuss briefly what Commissioner Hinson mentioned, he was sure everyone was aware of the letter from the Clerk. He said there was quite a bit of chatter in the community; he had received calls from citizens concerned not only with that information but other dialogue that took place as a result of that letter. He thought they needed to stay on top of the agreement as they move forward. He added there were several residents in his district that was not aware of this service and they need to come up with a plan or process to inform the community of this available resource.

He also thanked the Administrator for meeting with him earlier to address some of his concerns.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green welcomed Ms. McKinney-Williams.

He said he wanted transparency and wanted people to know what was going on. Things have transpired regarding the contract and he also received multiple calls. He wanted to see FCI back on the agenda at their next meeting, not for pulling it, but so they could add transparency and hoped the Clerk would be in attendance or someone on his behalf that could represent him to have all levels of communication and clarity as it related to this contract that has seemed to be such a debacle in so many different areas. He said everyone was concerned and was a matter of importance in his view.

He also encouraged citizens to come to the meeting or send in their concerns so they could be addressed in a professional manner.

**Commissioner Anthony O. Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he also received calls from citizens and wished the Clerk was here today to help them understand the last part of the Memo with regards to the non-existence of that particular entity they were in contract with. He also called the attorney for his legal opinion regarding the validity to the statutes that were referenced. The Attorney found two corporations; one was FCI, Inc. with a dot and other is FCI, Inc with no dot. He said both

companies could not exist with the Department of State and FCI dissolved one of the corporations. He looked at the contract and it was signed with the corporation having a “dot”, which was the valid one. The attorney gave his legal opinion as to what the issue was and hoped the Clerk was present so the conversation could be had but since he was not, he hoped he would be present in the future so the differences could be discussed and resolved.

Commissioner Hinson said they had two attorneys here, could they expound on this.

Mr. Pittman addressed the Board and said to the third issue, it was their opinion it was a non-issue. The contract between FCI and the County was legal, they contracted with a legal entity and there was some issue with the period behind the “inc” but even in a situation where there is a typographical error, it was not material as far as their opinion was concerned. If the commission wanted to talk more about the Clerk’s memo, they would continue but that was a repeated and lingering issue that he was hearing.

Commissioner Green asked about CARES Act money and if they knew when they would receive another draw-down from the CARES Act funding.

Mr. Dixon said it was not one pot, there was “a whole lot of pots of money”; the draw-downs were happening continuously. He added they might be in a large pot of money or might be a small pot; it was based on when the State was reviewing, once it was reviewed, they send it down.

Commissioner Green stated he knew it was going into General Funds; however, would they still make readily available some of the funds to people that have been impacted.

Mr. Dixon said according to their figures, they will have money at the end of the program that they may re-allocate to a program they were working now to try to fashion out and address some of those needs.

Chair Holt said only 12 counties in the State received all of their funds from the Federal Government; the other counties had to draw down funds. Gadsden County has never received all of the CARES Act money and when the Governor was here, she asked him what happened when small counties could not draw down and he advised her to get with Secretary Jarred Moskowitz (Director of FDEM) about the draw-down. She did and he said he had a way they could get the money and he sent back memos about the draw-down. She said some counties lost their money because they could not draw it down. She said the citizens were thinking the County received all the money but that was not the case; they were waiting on the third phase. Mr. Dixon said there was a second phase of CARES program coming and most places will be a direct benefit-counties under 250,000 will not, which meant they would have to go through the State process again but it may not be as difficult to go through and may not require as much documentation. He said they would have to apply to the State again.

Chair Holt said the documentation has to be there. If anyone really wanted to know what was paid, they could do a public records request at the Courthouse and could then see what has been paid out. She added the Board did not give out or receive one penny of money, the County contracted with Integrity that checked the applications.

**PPP Loans**

She stated the Board did not do loans. She further stated people could go to their financial institutions and apply for a loan.

Commissioner Hinson said he was glad she was talking about honesty and truth; he thought they had honest people on Board. He asked if they have to re-bid the CARES Program again? He said there had been rumblings across the county and street committee talking how the County paid GCDC \$240,000 and talking big about one contract.

Chair Holt said they would need to be in a workshop to determine how to go forward. She added that right now, there was no money to discuss because there was no draw-down.

Chair Holt added that she knew they spend taxpayer's money but the CARES Act money came from the federal government; Gadsden County did not have a "dog in that fight". The County accepted what they could get from the federal government and was trying to figure out how they could get more money.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only comment at this point was in relation to the Clerk's memo and wanted the Clerk to be present to answer questions and wanted to ask of the attorney regarding the memo. Due to a meeting scheduled after this meeting, he said he would hold back his questions with regard to the merit in each of those aspects of that memo. He said what he heard in response to the memo was the Clerk had some kind of over-reach with regards to the validity of the contract and the provider of the service, whether it was a defunct business or an existing business but there were other aspects of the memo that has legal ramifications and wanted the attorney to provide a legal opinion of the statutes that were stated. He added that he hoped the Clerk would be present at least to explain himself because the Commissioner did not think every aspect of that memo was an over-reach.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the Administrator if there was a balance on the CARES Act money. Mr. Dixon said yes and he would make that available. Commissioner NeSmith asked if other counties did not receive their money and had we applied for those funds and was told yes.

Mr. Dixon responded the County submitted a request for \$2.7 Million over and above the amount that they were granted just in case they wanted to give out more money and the justification was already there in case they wanted to re-allocate those counties' money. He clarified that the County was set up to receive \$7.9 Million and sent \$2.7 Million additional dollars of information in case they wanted to give out more money.

Chair Holt said they justified that by showing what they had been spending and it was county-wide. She reiterated that PPP loans were out there; they just had to apply.

Commissioner Hinson said he spoke with healthcare officials regarding vaccines throughout County. Chair Holt said for him to address that with the Administrator.

**Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4**



Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
January 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:59 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JANUARY 26, 2021 AT 5:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ;

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2 – arrived at 5:05 p.m.  
Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerks Office

**1. Welcome**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone at 5:05 p.m.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S Flag.

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered the workshop at 5:05 p.m.*

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

***Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.***

***If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email***

***[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.***

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Presentation of the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan Process (Diane Quigley, Growth Management Director)**

Ms. Quigley started by explaining her role in the county as the Growth Management Director. Ms. Quigley stated that the purpose of the workshop was to familiarize the Board with the comprehensive plan, future land use map, and the planning functions. She explained that the comprehensive plan should contain information that allows for growth based on population projections for a 10-year period, adhere to polices set, and must be adopted by jurisdiction. The comprehensive plan must contain the following elements such as capital improvement, future land use, transportation, general water procedures, general waste procedures, conservation, recreation, housing, and intergovernmental coordination. Also, that these projects need to be consistent with the growth of the county.

Ms. Quigley stated that the future land use map identifies types and locations of land uses on how the county is planned to grow over time. All amendments to the future land use map must

be in accordance with state regulations. This is developed to show how the county plans to grow over time.

Ms. Quigley stated that the land development code is regulated by state statute. She stated after there is an update to the comprehensive plan the Land Development Code must be updated as well. The Land Development Code specifically governs when something new comes in whether it is residential or commercial and sets the physical restrictions. The Land Development Code outlines the details of the subdivision of land, design and location of structures, landscaping, how to protect the environment, parking, and sidewalks. Ms. Quigley stated that the Land Development Code is more detailed because of all of those regulations. Also, it addresses how residential and non-residential development applications are processed in the county.

When there is a development, they have to look at the big picture considerations for the comprehensive plan and look at compatibility with surrounding communities, mitigating nuisances, aesthetics, safety, improving the economic growth rate, noise, traffic, and other land use to make sure they work for the county.

The Planning Department is responsible for maintaining the comprehensive plan and the Land Development Code. The Planning Department is responsible for preparation of documents that come before the Board of County Commissioners, working with the public, facilitating the Planning Commission meetings, and working with the Planning Commission to elicit recommendation for the Board of County Commissioner's consideration.

The planning commission has 12 members who make recommendations to the Board based off of proposed changes. The Planning Commission review the work of the county staff, check to make sure land development regulations are met, and work with the county staff to address issues of public concern.

The comprehensive plan updates include an amendment to the future land use element of the text which was adopted in 2016. There have been no wholesale comprehensive plan updates since 1994 and there have only been small changes to the comprehensive plan. County employees are currently collecting data and information for making updates to the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Quigley stated that regarding data and information staff obtained the county profile from the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). The EDR is from census date and what it tells staff is the current population, estimated population, and other demographic information. The EDR shows that Gadsden County is the 43<sup>rd</sup> most populous county, 0.2% of Florida's population, and that the land area is 516.3 square miles which is 57<sup>th</sup> out of 67 counties in the State of Florida.

The Historical population of Gadsden County is as follows; it decreased between 1980 and 1990 by 1.3%, it increased between 1990 and 2000 by 9.7%, and it slowed to 2.9% between 200 and 2010. The staff is anticipating the 2020 census data to see how the county has increased or decreased. Based on the projections from the 2010 census the population is estimated to decrease just slightly because the population has been decreasing over the past few years. The forecasted population from the EDR is estimated to increase by 2.5% over the next 20 year. Ms.

Quigley stated that the more businesses that come to Gadsden County the population will change and that these are just predictions.

Ms. Quigley stated the housing units are net total and does not account for loss of housing units or rehabilitation; which includes those that have been affected by hurricane Michael. Ms. Quigley stated that most of these housing units are rentals and new housing according to the 2010 census. Also, in updates to the comprehensive plan, a housing study needs to be done so there is a comparison of the housing units since hurricane Michael, covid-19, and other changes that this county has seen.

The Apalachee Regional Planning Council looked at the surrounding panhandle communities and the only counties to have population increase are Franklin, Wakulla, and Leon. This showed that Gadsden county has the highest poverty and unemployment in surrounding areas.

The Gadsden County Development Council (GCDC) goals are to attract and retain businesses, promote partnerships, and create new jobs for the county. The GCDC did a study that inventoried the areas that are the sites for business. Ms. Quigley suggested that when modifying the comprehensive plan that the land use allows for more business and commercial land use.

Ms. Quigley stated that urban land lots can be broken down into very small lots because of municipal water and sewer. That the larger lots are in places where wells and septic tanks are needed so the lots cannot be broken down into smaller units. Agriculture is the main use for land in the county; this allows for one dwelling for different acreage sizes and zones. Ms. Quigley stated that agriculture is 65% of county land use. That commercial zoning is used in neighborhoods, professional, office centers, public service areas, yet it is mainly outside of cities centers.

Mr. Knowles asked for clarification on coloring of the commercial map. Ms. Quigley answered that the red on the map is zoned for commercial use.

Ms. Quigley stated that industrial light and heavy only makes 0.52% of the land use which is the lowest in the county. That mining is 3.5% and silviculture is 5.69% which are other resource biased on activities in the county.

Ms. Quigley put together steps to updating the comprehensive plan on a schedule. This includes going out to the public to see what changes are wanted in future land use, housing and other growth opportunities. The estimated costs of the projects can be offset by grants by DEO. Ms. Quigley stated that changes to larger lots involves going out to see if they need changing, informing land owners, and workshops before they can be brought before the board to be changed.

Ms. Quigley stated that some benefits are a streamline commercial development, create more housing for workforce and increased densities near urbanized areas with infrastructure. That some negative impacts are change the characters of some communities, increase property tax, and increase property values. There are some major issues which includes lack of municipal water, municipal sewer, not being able to allow smaller parcels, and lack of roads.

Ms. Quigley stated that encouraging subdivision communities instead of just subdividing into large parcels would benefit citizens from being landlocked. This would elevate issues that the citizens of Gadsden county have with getting water, electricity, and sewer access in non-municipal areas. The Land Development Code allows for large parcels to be divided into acre lots which can cause the parcel to be landlocked or have issues getting water, electrical, and sewer access.

Zoning allows for subdividing into subcategories and provides land development regulations.

### **3. Discussion and Direction**

Chair Holt stated that in areas like Friendship, Coonbottom, and Hardaway. families had all moved together so there was no urban planning done on that land. Then people in those areas did not understand the legal terms that were set in place for improvement. So, this placed urban development as a second thought. Chair Holt continued to explained areas history on development.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated this is an issue that is present in his district among farmers and those who inherit land. Commissioner Viegbesie stated that there is a family who are having issues with the ability to spit up inherited land that was left to multiple members of the family. They are having issues with creating roads within the inherited land. Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he would like for there to be something the county could do to educate the public on how to handle these situations.

Commissioner Green stated that he was grandfathered into land that was owned by family along with brothers and sisters. Commissioner Green stated that with the help of Mr. Dixon he got to see a large portion of undeveloped land. Also, that this starts the conversation for land changes that can help the citizens of Gadsden County. That information was brought to the Board of County Commissioners attention to start a conversation on how to inform the citizens of Gadsden County. Commissioner Green stated that there needs to be development off of I-10 since Gadsden county is at the bottom of the property level.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that he had several questions. He asked Chair Holt if there was water and sewer lines at the interchange off of I-10 in Midway.

Chair Holt answered yes there is.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Chair Holt if it were the same for Quincy.

Chair Holt answered yes, and that she believed that they had been placed there in 2006-2007. She stated that the water comes from Talquin Electric and the sewer services are provided by the City of Quincy.

Commissioner NeSmith asked do they need additional infrastructure for that area to be developed.

Chair Holt stated that they did not unless they wanted to update the sewage lines.

Mr. Dixon stated that historically that they did the same thing at 267 is what they did in Midway on the city's sewer lines regarding the development of infrastructure near I-10. He stated that the county tried to get the city of Greensboro to extend their infrastructure to I-10 and so the county invested those resources into Gretna.

Chair Holt stated working with the municipalities can lead to county development as well. Chair Holt stated that she wants to look at funding for infrastructure development and look into working with the cities to increase infrastructure. She stated that there is no infrastructure at the Chattahoochee exit.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the Chattahoochee I-10 exit was county property.

Chair Holt answered yes it was.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that he wants to know what plans that are being looked at for the planning sessions that the board is addressing in the future.

Chair Holt answered that they have to look at both the comprehensive plan and the strategic plan so they know what money needs to be addressed. She stated that the community could have maps in businesses that allow for community involvement for acquiring new businesses.

Ms. Quigley stated that she had done strategic planning before and that the comprehensive plan is part of the strategic plan. She also stated that the county is extremely behind on the comprehensive planning.

Commissioner Green asked Ms. Quigley about the where the comprehensive plans funding is coming from. Ms. Quigley stated that there is already money in the budget for some of the comprehensive plan, yet the bigger steps of the comprehensive plan need grant funding.

Mr. Dixon stated that the process no longer fits the community. The process becomes complicated and that the county cannot just work off of just grants without additional help. That in the past the plans were done to get people to the farms. That the county has more options for businesses that are willing to come to Gadsden County yet the infrastructure is not there to accommodate them.

Commissioner Green stated that process does not fit the community and that means that the board of county commissioners must change the policies to fit the community.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that Mr. Knowles was asked to pull all of the county ordinances that are impeding growth.

Mr. Knowles stated that was all of them.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that the Board of County Commissioners need to have a workshop to look at all of them. He also stated that the comprehensive plan and strategic plan planning needed to be done in partnership so that the comprehensive plan can be done on an incremental pace.

Chair Holt asked that if someone needed work done right now what was the process.

Ms. Quigley answered that it needs to go through Building and Zoning.

Chair Holt asked the price of the process.

Ms. Quigley stated that it depends on that situation. She stated that law clerks are a possibility to help with the situations.

Mr. Dixon state that this is a problem with land rich, cash poor situations that the county is facing. He asked how we could help the citizens of the county.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Ms. Quigley what if a member of a family refuses to sign papers, what would be the solution. Also, regarding the heir and probate issue the law clerks is a wonderful thing but before COVID-19 there was a workshop scheduled for this issue. First Baptist Church and New Bethel were just two of the locations across the county that was where citizens could be invited to receive legal aid. This could be readdressed as soon as COVID-19 leaves. After his statement he readdressed his question.

Ms. Quigley stated that she sends them to Mr. Knowles.

Mr. Knowles answered that you would have to go to partition which causes the immediate sale of the property. This is a problem because the families could sue one another due to the partition. Yet, the problem is that this does not happen because the families do not have the money to go through the legal system.

Mr. Dixon stated a there is the FLAP Program (Florida Legal Assistance Program) in the courthouse for legal help on Tuesdays. Mr. Dixon stated that he wanted to make it a part of every workshop on Tuesday so it could be available to the citizens.

Mr. Knowles stated that FLAP aids in everything but criminal proceedings.

Commissioner Green stated that he would like to see the workshop happen even before COVID-19 leaves. He stated that they need to invite the churches to invite their members so the public can address their concerns. He asked about the DEO grant timeline.

Ms. Quigley stated that there are several different time lines.

Mr. Dixon added they are starting the processes and that there are different programs that they are applying to.

Ms. Quigley stated that there are grants that would aid in the damage from hurricane Michael that would be for housing units.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that there was a workshop for the comprehensive plan for that had contacts for grants that were in the past and that staff should look into those contacts.

Chair Holt stated that they needed to look at grandfathering in some of the communities, hire consultants, and have workshops for the communities. Start looking at the GCDC sites for development along I-10 and highway 90. Also, looking at utilities for development and for community businesses such as county's stores. She stated that many can not reopen once changed because of zoning issues.

Commissioner Hinson stated do we have proper infrastructure near midway. He stated that there is only minimal infrastructure around the interstate and that those holes need to be patched. Like how Mariana did not seek instant gratification with their projects.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 6:39 pm*

Commissioner Hinson stated that some projects can take up to 6-12 years.

Mr. Cunningham stated that grandfathering in property and heir property that are all over the county are issues. That houses are not on the correct property is another issue that the county is facing. These are just legal issues that need to be straightened up in the county because it is in multiple areas.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 6:41 pm*

Mr. Dixon stated that one of the things that are being looked at is future land use and how it would change the categories. Also, if it is our choice to change the property and not the citizens what do we do about tax codes. Those kinds of things cause issues with change.

Chair Holt stated that it is all in working it out.

Commissioner Hinson stated that the board should study the issues so that they would be prepared for the meetings. That infrastructure is important for the economic development and not to give money to the businesses but place it into infrastructure. Commissioner Hinson asked when are they going to discuss when they are going to talk about CARES Act funding.

Mr. Dixon stated that they were going to look at it in January and now it is going to be in February.

Commissioner Hinson stated that he would love to have a meeting again on that funding.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the estimated costs and other issues that have not been addressed. He asked why is there costs on the other side, was it because in-house staff could not do the job?

Ms. Quigley answered they had three planners and there were consultants that could help with those issues.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if it were more fiscally sound to...

Mr. Dixon stated that it would take staff another 12 years.



Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a schedule for these changes.

Mr. Dixon stated that commissioners need to stay in their seats so that stuff can get done. That staff can do issues in 12+ years without other responsibilities or duties.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated blueprint 2000 is where Leon County and Tallahassee worked on the plan together and that now every year, they work on the 5-year plan. That strategic plans on what the citizens would want and that Gadsden County should base its templates off of them and other counties.

Commissioner Hinson stated the issue in Leon County and Gadsden County have blue print 2020 on what the citizens want.

Chair Holt stated that we should look at other venues so that it can be socially distanced so there could be more public involvement.

Mr. Dixon stated that the commissioners need to do the work to get money needed by working with departments to get grants.

Chair Holt stated that they need to work on annexing the roads as well. So, citizens do not have to go back in forth between the cities and the county to get stuff done.

Ms. Quigley wanted clarification on that they should look into getting law clerks for family and heir properties, getting DEO grants, and look at the Land Development Code so they could possibly loosen those up. Then start putting together the workshops with communities and the commissioners.

Chair Holt thanked Ms. Quigley and let them know when the community workshops are planned.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 7:15 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 2, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon stated he would like to add Item 3A-Approval of CareerSource Bylaws and Item 6a-Settlement of Final Settlement Agreement.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
  - September 25, 2020 – Emergency Meeting
  - November 19, 2020 – Special Meeting
  - December 1, 2020 – Regular Meeting
  - December 15, 2020 – Regular Meeting
  - January 5, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- 3. Approval of Letter of Support for the Liberty County BOCC to Support their efforts to obtain State Owned Property Located in Tate’s Hell**
- 3a Approval of the Bylaws of the Big Bend Jobs & Education Council, Inc.**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.**

**If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email**

**[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.**

Chair Holt read aloud the statement regarding Citizens that wished to speak on non-agendaed items.

Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, - General concerns

Les Epperson, 5491 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy – Citizens Zoning

Rosemary Fodor, 5491 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy

Stanley Sims, appeared before the Board. He asked the Board to develop a minority economic council and for them to come up with a strategic plan.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**4. PUBLIC HEARING-(Legislative) Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2020-005 to amend Section 7001.1, by repealing the ‘Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights’ (LDR 2020-02)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for consideration for a recommendation to adopt Ordinance 2020-005 amending Section 7001.1 by repealing the Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights, Chapter 7, Development Orders, Development Permits and Development Agreements.

**Diane Quigley., Growth Management Director**, appeared before the Board. On May, 2010, BOCC adopted the Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights (CBOR). She explained the current CBOR in the Land Development Code applied to Comprehensive Plan Amendments, major land development reviews including but not limited to variances, special exception uses, major site plans and major subdivisions in Gadsden County. It requires a mandated citizen participation meeting, a neighborhood participation meeting as well as a second public meeting for Comprehensive Plan Amendment submittals. Additionally, the CBOR requires a super majority (4 out of 5) vote of the Board for approval. Since then, the amendment and/or repeal of the CBOR has been discussed by Planning and BOCC at numerous workshops and public hearings without a consensus vote to repeal or amend. On December 7, 2020, the Planning Commission held a workshop to discuss the proposed Ordinance and whether the entire CBOR should be deleted including the requirement of a community meeting. On January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Planning Commission voted 9-2 to recommend deletion of the CBOR (Subsection 7001.1) in its entirety. They said the reasonings were:

- The citizens of Gadsden County did not want limitations on development;
- The CBOR did not provide a clear benefit;
- That the “super majority” vote requirement should go;
- The CBOR was a hinderance to creating jobs, economic growth, etc.;

- While there may be merits to having a community meeting on some projects, they would like to start over with a clean slate and re-develop some of the text for the Land Development Code;
- Want to see a new and less complex version of the CBOR which would afford citizens basic rights to be heard and have access to government was discussed.

She explained this was a legislative procedure and public notice requirements were met by advertising in the Tallahassee Democrat and the three local papers. She listed the options the Board had to vote on as follows:

- 1) Adopt Ordinance 2020-005 deleting Section 7001.1, Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights (CBOR);
- 2) Do not adopt Ordinance 2020-005 resulting in keeping Section 7001.1, Citizens Growth Management and Planning Bill of Rights; and
- 3) Board Direction.

She stated the County Administrator recommended Option Number 1.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and she had emails to be read. (She did not read the emails in their entirety as some were lengthy. They will be attached at the end of the Meeting Minutes.)

**Don Stewart, 102 Timber Run, Havana, FL 32333.** Chair Holt read aloud a portion of his email and it is below in its entirety.

Honorable Commissioners,

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide my input.

As we have seen on the national level, beliefs are very powerful motivators, even when they are not supported by evidence. For the sake of the two new commissioners a brief review of the beliefs and the evidence about the CBOR is in order.

Over the past two years, some of you have heard and have supported the belief that the CBOR was a hindrance to attracting business and jobs. Yet, in the ten plus years of CBOR there were only two instances that were verifiable. One was a dog breeding business and the other was an RV park. Neither of which were going to result in many, if any jobs. The other example that was repeatedly brought up was the Family Dollar Distribution Center that is in Jackson County AND was built 6 years before the CBOR was even enacted. Last March I testified before the Commission that according to Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce's David Gardner, "We are still studying the impact of the CBOR, but as now, we have yet to see any hard and fast data that suggests that it significantly impacts economic development in Gadsden County." Still this economic development killing story about the CBOR has persisted.

There were statements made at a BCC meeting and a Planning Commission meeting in January that no benefits of the CBOR can be found. That is also not supported by my observations. Over the last few years I have observed how the CBOR has motivated citizens to get involved in the development decisions in their communities. One example is the relocation of the Robert F. Monroe School to Blue Star Highway near Lake Yvette and across from Lanier Road. Citizens attended the mandated CBOR meeting, had their questions and concerns addressed, the project was subsequently approved and the school was welcomed to the neighborhood. In two other cases, a developer of Dollar General Stores proposed a DG at the corner of Old Federal Road and CR267 and later another one on Old Bainbridge Road. Because of the mandated Citizen Participation meetings, the neighbors of those proposed projects told the developer and the County that they would like DG to find better locations for the stores. The developer dropped the Old Federal Road proposal and it's been over a year since the Old Bainbridge road meeting and they have not proceeded with that project. By learning of opposition early on the developer saved further development costs. All of these examples are in my mind benefits and how CBOR is designed to work. And you might say, but the folks would have found out about it by notification in the newspaper of the Planning Commission meeting and the County Commission meeting. But not everyone subscribes to the local papers and by that time the Developer has expended more money for planning, design and fees, for the project and also may then have to address issues brought up at the planning commission meeting which could have been resolved earlier or they could have been convinced that it was not wise to pursue.

What about the bigger perceived bugaboo of the CBOR, the Super Majority? I want to remind the veteran commissioners and point out to the new ones, if it hasn't already occurred to them, by eliminating the Super Majority, you are allowing the very real possibility that just 3 Commissioners could approve a development in your district that you and your constituents might not want. And I found evidence in the May 17, 2011 BCC minutes, during the first attempt to repeal the CBOR, that prior to the ordinance, that had happened on more than one occasion. As a citizen and as a commissioner I would think that would be a worrisome possibility. As a commissioner come the next election your constituents might blame you even though you couldn't... do... anything... about it. And I want to remind any citizens listening that despite the pronouncements from the Commission that they represent all of Gadsden County, the reality is that you can hold accountable only one of them at the ballot box. The other four are not accountable to you.

But my experience with this issue over the last 3 plus years and my observation that the newest version of the Planning Commission that y'all appointed all but one member voted 9-2 to repeal the CBOR in its entirety. And I expect that you would tend to want to accept their recommendation. I get it. So, this tells me that y'all will not likely be

persuaded by my arguments, especially about the Super Majority. So, I have one request and one recommendation. The request is that you keep the Citizen notification and participation for Comprehensive Plan Amendments, Future Land Use changes, major Site plans, and major Subdivisions. Citizens should continue to have a right to know early on and participate in land development decisions that potentially affect their lives and their property.

If you are dead set on eliminating the Super Majority then I propose this compromise for the sake of accountability to the voters. Change the ordinance such that if only 3 commissioners vote for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Future Land Use change, major Site plan, or major Subdivision, one of the three must be the Commissioner representing the people that will be affected by the change. That way you have at least some accountability and fairness with simple majority rule.

In conclusion I am recommending option 3, Board Direction.

**Herb Sheheane, 1455 Cane Creek Road, Quincy, FL 32351.** Chair Holt read aloud his email and it is below in its entirety.

“Gentlemen,  
I am writing you to urge you to keep the Citizen Bill of Rights in Gadsden County. I am a landowner in Gadsden County, District 3, and respectfully ask that you not alter/change this important document. We property owners have a right to know what changes neighboring landowners are considering that could have an impact on our property.  
I would appreciate your support of maintaining this important landowner policy.”

**Hugh Stephens, 701 Woodward Road, Quincy, FL 32352.** Chair Holt read aloud a portion of his email. It is below in its entirety.

“Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners:  
I have previously written to but again by way of introduction my name is Hugh Stephens and I reside in District 2. I have resided on the Woodward Road for many years. I previously had the honor of serving on the Gadsden County Planning Commission for 10 years.  
I am writing this to ask and to urge you to KEEP the Citizen's Bill of Rights pertaining to land use and development.  
As a prior Planning Commissioner and before the Citizen's Bill of Rights, I saw many instances where citizens were not even aware that adjoining land use was going to be changed and used for another purpose. In many instances these changes would adversely affect the land owners property, value and/or their way of life. On a personal note this almost happened to my Mother years ago. The land owners and others (not from Gadsden County) wanted to do a major development with maximum density on property that joined hers. We had to learn all this without any prior type of notification. Later the land was developed and with our input consistent with the land adjoining and near this property.  
The Citizen's Bill of Rights does **protect your constituents** by allowing them to know that land near or adjoining theirs will have a land use change that could drastically affect them. This allows our residents time to do research and provide their input to you our County Commissioners before the change is made.

I realize the Property Bill of Rights does require extra steps in a land use change but I would request that you far **outweigh** that by protecting your constituents and allowing them to provide their input to you on changes that could affect them. Many times I have seen where some of these land use changes are being requested by individuals/companies that have no ties to Gadsden County. Their only intent is to come in and make a fast dollar and then leave the residents and our County Government to deal with any residual issues such as traffic patterns, hazardous intersections, road maintenance, infrastructure effects and in some cases local law enforcement. I urge you to KEEP THE CITIZEN BILL OF RIGHTS. I think it is a very significant protection for all of your constituents who currently own property or will purchase property in our fine county.

I only regret that I cannot personally appear before you and express my recommendations in person, but please consider this as my personal urgent appeal to each of you. Please KEEP THE CITIZEN BILL OF RIGHTS!  
Thank you.”

She stated she had a Petition that stated “Retain Our Planning & Zoning ‘Citizens’ Bill of Rights” (The petition itself was not attached). She stated the Petition had 600 signatures in favor of keeping the CBOR.

**Les Epperson, 5491 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, FL** – Citizens Zoning – appeared before Board and said he found it interesting in all the years he spent developing and selling property, the Planning Commission wanted to suspend notification to citizens. He stated Chair Holt was his commissioner and was the only one he could complain to because the other four were not elected in his district and if they dropped it back to three commissioners, it meant there were three that he could not vote for but they could decide what happened in his neighborhood. He asked if they were going to change anything, change it so the Commissioner they were doing the re-zoning in, had to vote (inaudible) because then they would have repercussions. He asked why they wanted to take away citizens’ rights; it seemed to be working. He said he had developed all over Leon County and understood Planning and Zoning and it was important to have regulations and that neighbors hear about it.

Chair Holt stated before they had CBOR, they had a notification process in place; they notified within a certain perimeter around the property; sent out notifications and let people know what was going on with their property.

**Rosemary Fodor, 5491 Bainbridge Highway, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. She said in the notification process, she related to the past year when Dollar General wanted to place a store on the Bainbridge Highway. When she went door to door, she was told that the residents did not get notification and thought it was “just a white envelope” and she shared the letter, they had no clue. She said there needed to be a change and the community needs to develop but need to know. She added that “what goes on in that community, not everybody knows because you all have your own little quadrants. Come together and be one where everybody is heard and everybody can work it out for the better in this County because it’s a great place to live.”

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL**, - General concerns – appeared before the Board. He said he was very concerned about this issue. He said he thought there was a misnomer involved. When you label something “Citizens’ Bill of Rights” it should be very

specific about how the citizens would benefit from such rights and he had read nothing in it that gave him any particular understand of any rights that were afforded to him as a result of said instrument. He said it had been in place for more than 10 years and had not seen or heard anyone say anything specific about how this particular legislation has improved life in Gadsden County or made the process easier when it came to economic development. He said there were other ways to accomplish what they want to accomplish about the notification to citizens when there would be development in the neighborhood. He said that was done long before there was ever a CBOR and got along great without it and will get along even better as they move forward to abolish it. He further stated the greatest thing needed in the County was economic development, they needed to grow industry and find jobs that paid a living wage. He said there was no other county that has such restrictive requirements like this. He asked the Board to vote in favor of getting rid of this legislation, the misnomer they call CBOR.

On another note, he said he was present when the Legislative Delegation had their meeting the other night and was highly disappointed that the County did not have a prioritized list that they could have given to the legislative representatives and said those were the things to be worked on in priority order.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he would like to ask questions of Ms. Quigley.

He said there were some concerns that have been expressed regarding citizens participation in the CBOR if the Ordinance was adopted. She explained it would not remove all the public notices and how the hearings for Type 2, special exceptions, comprehensive plan amendments. The Land Development Code still provided for that. The CBOR adds a community meeting up-front in addition to the public hearing as well as a second community meeting at the end for comprehensive plan amendments; it would add two additional meetings. Currently, the Land Development Code requires two public hearings, which are held at the Planning Commission meeting and at the BOCC meeting. Advertisement would still go out; in a smaller distance of 1000 feet for some cases, not all and would still be in place. She said this would remove the community meeting up front, a second meeting for comp plan amendments in the end and removing the super majority vote. Commissioner Viegbesie said his understanding was this met the requirement and Ms. Quigley stated yes. He said citizen participation was not being taken out, it was in the Land Use and Land Development Code and she said correct. In the Land Development Code for Comprehensive Plan amendments, major land development reviews, special exceptions, major site plans and major subdivisions would still require to have a public hearing at the Planning Commission and BOCC and to advertise.

Commissioner Green said in layman's terms, as Mr. Sims stated, the land was ready and the Commissioners and citizens want to develop the land. He said they were not trying to take away anyone's rights, they just want to make sure the growth process was more simplified.

Commissioner NeSmith said, as the Board knew, as he was seeking his position, all the citizens of his district continued to express the need for economic development in the County. He said that would not happen if they continue to provide additional impediment and cause the corporations to go to other communities. He stated they had to move forward with economic development and open the County for business and be as "business friendly" as they could be. To do that, they needed to eliminate any barriers that impede the growth.



Commissioner Hinson said first, there was a 9-2 vote for this in the Planning Commission. He remembered with Peavy came about the tower in the Havana area because they could not get good service. He said there was one commissioner to vote against it and would have only taken one more to vote against it and tower would not be there. He agreed the citizens had to be notified. He further explained his position by stating there was a situation on Strong Road where a company had closed and another company decided to purchase the building and one commissioner voted against it. If one more had voted against it, that business would not have gone in. He commented the biggest issue was the super-majority vote and even 1000 Friends of Florida was in agreement with this. Gadsden County was the only County in Florida that restricted citizens without a super majority vote. He stated he strongly agreed with the Planning Commission.

Marion Lasley zoomed into the meeting. Her comments were as follows:

“If a project is a good project in the right location with proper infrastructure, it should be easy to get unanimous approval from the Commissioners. However, it is these projects that often need special leniency to our already minimal rules and the land use changes that alter the nature of the neighborhood that need to afford more discussion with the affected landowners, homeowners, renters and tax payers.

The citizens who live within ½ mile of these proposed developments need to have the opportunity to learn about the pros and cons of these high impact developments before the first public hearing. With this additional pre-hearing meeting, the citizens will have unlimited time to learn of the pros and cons of the development and ask unlimited questions of the developer or applicant. They would not be restricted to limiting their comments and or questions to the 3-minute rule. This would inform and possibly garner support for the project and it would present issues that need to be resolved or adjusted to provide support or consensus in the neighborhood.

We are not talking about your neighbor putting in another homesite; We are talking about land use changes to a higher density that change the nature of the neighborhood, subdivisions and commercial and industrial businesses with impacts to road ingress and egress, that increase traffic and have noise, odor and water drainage issues. We, the neighbors, need to have as much information as possible on these projects that will affect our property values, our lifetime investment and our quality of life.

Allow the citizens the opportunity to continue to be informed of development around them. We need this information before the projects are presented to the Planning Commission public hearing. If this is our first opportunity for input, by this time in the application process, a conceptual AND a preliminary plat can be heard at this initial meeting!! At this point, the developer/applicant is virtually assured of approval as they have “QUOTE: invested so much already END QUOTE”. During this meeting, a citizen has only 3 minutes to question and defend the health, safety and welfare of their property investment. This is unfair and counterproductive to a thriving community.

To remove the CBOR without retaining the community meeting option makes it seem that Developments have a far greater value to the Board than the public taxpaying homeowner’s value. I’m sure you want to keep our government

processes open and welcoming to its citizens to maintain the population in the County. Think of the citizens and afford us the right to keep having these pre-development community meetings. Thank you. “

Chair Holt said she had been a commissioner the longest and they had notifications before they had the CBOR. They notified within a certain perimeter around the properties. She added that when people were not notified, it was the company that was notifying the people as what happened with the business on Strong Road. When they sent out the notifications, they notified the property owners and not people that lived in the apartments. She said they were trying to get prospective companies here; no other county required a super majority vote to change the zoning. She further stated they had to become a viable prospective site for the companies they were trying to recruit.

Chair Holt then asked the will of the Board.

Mr. Epperson asked if he could say one more thing and Chair Holt stated it was time to vote.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE OPTION THAT WAS RECOMMENDED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A COMMENT.**

Commissioner Hinson asked the Administrator and said maybe staff could answer. How would this impact homeowners when it came time to divide property? Mr. Dixon said there was no impact on the homeowner from that perspective.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE ASKED FOR A ROLL CALL VOTE.**

<b>COMMISSIONER GREEN</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER NESMITH</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER HINSON</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>CHAIR HOLT</b>	<b>YES</b>

**MOTION PASSED 5-0 BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Chair Holt said to clarify a little more, the Board can decide and what she used to do and can do as a Commissioner, when she knew something was, coming go out and ask if they want a meeting.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked that his comment be entered for the record with regard to this item. All five of them voted in affirmation and anyone of them could, if they think there is something they need to bring back up with regard on how this vote was adversely affecting the community, could bring that up and re-design an Ordinance that would be in addition to the Land Development Code. He added that just because this had been voted in, it could be brought back and modified based on how it was affecting the County.

Chair Holt said “there’s no reason to bring this item back, you can add as many meetings as you want. You don’t have to have an audience.”

Mr. Dixon said the Planning Commissioner will address this issue again and send any recommendations they have.

Ms. Quigley said to clarify, this was not on all residential property; only for commercial, special exceptions and large major site plans and major developments. She said it would be for really large developments and mostly commercial developments or any special exceptions.

Mr. Dixon said this really addressed speed and time. Businesses like Hoover took more than a year to get approved and now puts the County in a whole new ball-game dealing with industry.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **5. CARES Act Spending Plan**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated the Property Appraiser's Office was requesting to be added to the CARES Program Spend Plan for COVID-related reimbursable expenses. He further stated the Property Appraiser and Tax Collector submitted a request on September 1, 2020 to the Interim County Manager to be included in the CARES Program and Commissioner Holt spoke then about \$19,000 being needed to erect a shield between the employees and customers. She thought there was come funding in the CARES Act money that was put aside under the Administrator. There was no motion carried by the Board and since then, both the Property Appraiser and Tax Collector felt it was in the best interest of the employees, taxpayers and the County to move forward with the construction of the sneeze guard.

**Reginald Cunningham, Property Appraiser**, appeared before the Board. He stated this item was discussed in a workshop and never went to a vote and therefore was not included on the Spend Plan. The amount they were asking for also included other items that were installed in the Tax Collectors Office.

Chair Holt asked the total amount he was looking for and he stated \$109,602.40. She then asked the Administrator if there was funding left for that.

Mr. Dixon said it would come from what was left-over from the current spending plan and the Clerk might know exactly what the number might be.

Mr. Dixon asked the Clerk what the amount was and the Clerk said it was a moving number. In his last memo, he explained they had been approved for Phase III spending reimbursement at \$1.2 Million and was now up to \$1.7 Million but they have not received that money yet. That much has been confirmed and they had to reimburse the General Fund and have been approved for enough to reimburse that. He said there will be money left over, approximately \$600-700,000 at this point after reimbursing the General Fund; but was a moving number. He added there should be money to cover this expenditure.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Cunningham how this was funded before and he stated it was not. They added the sneeze guard and other items when the pandemic came and they had to construct something to protect the employees and was what a lot of the expense was. He said with the data collection system, it is a 1987 system and they cannot do anything remotely with it.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this request was for COVID or for something that was very needed for the operation of his office; because if it was not something needed right now, the County was having to go through this process of draw-down and suggested they look at a future budget amendment because the Property Appraiser's is a revenue generating office for the County. If it was something they needed right now, did not know how they would be able to accommodate, but if needed for the future for effective and efficient operations, he would suggest upon the draw-down, they should, when that money goes into general revenue, look at making a budget amendment to accommodate.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if he was asking for additional funds or to be included in the Spending Plan and the amount included the Tax Collector also. Mr. Cunningham said this was to only approve his sneeze guard that he constructed and thought he had already paid for it. He said he did not need to be reimbursed now.

Commissioner Green said the total would not be the whole \$109,602.40 and he asked the timeframe he was expecting to be reimbursed.

Mr. Cunningham stated the initial timeframe was back in September when the request was first made; they were planning to use that money to buy a server that was needed.

Chair Holt said the amount was approximately \$95,069.40.

Commissioner Hinson said he always ask every meeting when they were going to have a meeting regarding the CARES Act to take care of issues for the citizens. He said he was promised they would have a meeting in January and it was now February. He said he had a citizen call him in tears and thought before they entertained any needs for anyone, they needed to take care of the citizens first.

Chair Holt asked the Administrator when they could expect to have a meeting regarding the CARES Act.

Mr. Dixon said they always knew this was a moving process that they were not in control of and would not cull until the end of February and knew they might have a good hold on it. As the Clerk just stated, the situation was moving and soon as they get a good hold on what the number would be, the meeting would be had about what to do next. He said there was an understanding on the number but did not have a good hold of it yet.

Chair Holt asked if they were to get an update at the beginning of the next meeting, was that possible? Mr. Dixon stated yes. She asked if they could have Integrity, the Clerk and everyone else that has an interest in it in the room at 4:00 at the next meeting. Mr. Dixon said they already have a 4:00 meeting scheduled on FDOT and Grants workshop on roads. Chair Holt said it would not be then because they had to follow the schedule of FDOT. Mr. Dixon said a meeting could be scheduled at Board request.

Commissioner Green said they were there now and Chair Holt stated to bring it up under Commissioners' Comments. Mr. Dixon stated they could have an update for them at the next meeting. Chair Holt said they could still have a Workshop on a Thursday. Commissioner Green said he concurred with Commissioner Hinson they needed a meeting, not just an update in

reference to being proactive when they do receive the money. He said in listening to Commissioner Hinson's comments, he was proactive for citizens as well as business owners and knew the impact that the virus has had, but wanted to be clear in the money that was being asked for, this was things that had to be done that was for the citizens to protect them and was COVID-related.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the CARES fund was still being drawn down.

The Clerk said with Phase 1, they sent \$1.9 Million upfront; in Phase 2 they sent money upfront that totaled \$3.5 Million and the County had to spend that money. They said Phase 3 was reimbursable but they had not spent Phase 1 and 2 and what they were drawing down from the reimbursable now, was payroll for law enforcement, EMS and that was complicated. He said they then went ahead and did some Phase 3 spending and they had to front that with the General Fund. He said they were entitled up to \$4.3 Million reimbursement for Phase 3. He further stated they were approved for \$1.7 Million that they will receive for Phase 3 that will go into the Fund. However, they had to cover the money that was fronted in spending Phase 3 that was funded with the General Fund to that has to go back first. Whatever was left, they will have to spend and could be the difference from the \$4.3 minus the \$1.1 or less because they have only approved the \$1.7 of the \$4.3 and have only received a fraction of that. He explained that was why it was called a "moving number" because they were still reviewing some things that had to be submitted by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, to determine if the County would be reimbursed. He said they had been doing so a little at the time and the number was up to \$1.7 Million and could go as high as \$4.3 Million, but we did not know that yet. He said they knew they would receive at least \$1.7 Million and was putting that back to cover what was fronted in Phase 3 spending, the \$1.1 Million and left about \$600,000 that they were pretty sure the County would have in reimbursements for Phase 3, but how much more, he was uncertain of that amount yet. He said they were informing us as they review and approve submitted items.

Mr. Cunningham said for sake of clarity, he brought this to the Board in September and the only thing he was requesting, was for it to be included in the Spending Plan. He said they were a County agency and would like to be included as well, because they brought it to the Board in May, it went to June and after all that, they still were not on the Spend Plan. However, for the sake of what was needed now, they need two servers and will use the money that will be reimbursed to them, that was promised to them if they put the sneeze guard in to purchase the servers.

Commissioner NeSmith pointed out there were two of them that was not here in September. He asked if a commitment was made and Mr. Cunningham said was not a commitment; it was when the pandemic situation first started, they were told whatever was spent for the offices, they would be reimbursed for COVID-related items.

Chair Holt said she told the Sheriff and everyone else, they may be reimbursed and may not; because when you deal with Federal and State government, you work by their timeline. FEMA said they were paying for stuff and the County was still waiting on a little of it.

Commissioner Nesmith asked the money spent for the sneezeguard and other COVID-related items totaled what?

Mr. Cunningham said he was looking for reimbursement for the initial COVID barriers and the permanent COVID barriers that were installed and that would help him purchase the needed servers and the rest of the items to be included in the Spend Plan.

Commissioner Viegbesie moved to approve the Property Appraiser's request to be added to the CARES Act spending plan but did not understand amount asking for right now. Chair Holt said to do the approval, he would be added.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ADD THE PROPERTY APPRAISER TO THE SPEND PLAN AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said it was a travesty to even consider putting money in anyone's hands because they needed to be sensitive to the residents and small business people. He stated he has been asking for a meeting regarding the CARES money.

Commissioner Green said he was not asking for \$109,000, and only agreed to give him something was because it was for the protection of the citizens to why he had to do this, he was not asking for the money tonight, but to be a part of the conversation when they do have the conversation. Also, he understood every county, business and citizen has not benefited from the CARES Act money and we were privileged and hope when do meet, come up with better plan for the citizens.

Commissioner Hinson said he concurred with everything Commissioner Green said, but where he was coming from, don't think about giving anyone a dime, have a meeting first for citizens and small business. All he was saying was to put cash in the citizens hands.

Chair Holt said Mr. Cunningham wanted to be added to the Spend list and they all had questions.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE.**

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON STATED HE VOTED IN FAVOR OF THIS SO HE COULD BRING IT BACK AT A LATER DATE.**

**6. Agreement between the Gadsden County Clerk and Property Appraiser**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said the County Clerk was requesting there be an Interlocal Agreement per Florida Statute Chapter 163 between the Property Appraiser's Office and the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Cunningham said over the past 9 years, the Clerk's office has provided bookkeeping services. Before that time, there was a young lady that provided the services and because of same, they would have to do a budget amendment to Department of Revenue and was why it was in front of them today.

Mr. Thomas said this arrangement has saved the County 100's of thousands of dollars and every year they have been able to return money back to BOCC. He said he came into this year underfunded; with CARES, have had to spend hundreds of hours, BOCC hired Integrity to do the

initial process and things that were approved are sent to the Clerk's Office and have to be audited and processed; he has the same staff, they have spent hundreds of hours doing COVID/CARES Act processing, had 3 out with COVID and put audit preparation behind, was a department that was already stressed and under-funded and this was a way to insure the County was able to receive all the services they need to receive from the Clerk's Office. People have worked really hard and they will continue to do that, will need to work overtime to be able to get audit out; the Property Appraiser is a constitutional officer and is required to keep his books and there is a separate audit for him and have always helped ensure he gets a good audit and it has been a good arrangement and the County has benefited as a result of this. This money will come from the General Fund; they have a budgeted line item that is reserved for Contingency, there is \$50,000 in it and they would not be going into Fund Balance.

Chair Holt asked if Mr. Dixon had any ideas for the \$50,000. Mr. Dixon said any other time would have to come up in the budget cycle and can't disagree, as much as he would like to. The Clerk had been nice enough to provide a line item and COVID has changed things for everyone and at this time, just trying to get through and had no objection.

Commissioner Nesmith asked what they were voting for. Chair Holt read the options aloud.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Mr. Knowles asked the Clerk if this required a formal budget amendment process and have a subsequent public hearing and approval. The Clerk stated yes.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**6a Execution of Final Settlement Agreement**

Mr. Knowles said they had an executive session at an earlier meeting and he was asking for ratification of the settlement agreements.

Commissioner Nesmith asked if this was a settlement that was brought to the attention of the previous Board and Mr. Knowles stated yes.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**7. Updates**

Mr. Thomas stated he understood he was asked to be sure to be at the meeting tonight because they wanted to discuss his memo. Chair Holt said no, they were through discussing that. Mr. Thomas said good because his attorney has advised to not go into any details about that but he wanted to put them on notice that he sticks by his Memo, they have grave concerns that the contract puts the County at risk. The Clerk's attorney has advised the Clerk to not pay any invoices based on that contract at this time as it is currently constructed; the spending plan was contrary to Florida law and would put the County at great financial risk and his attorney has

advised the Clerk to not make payments based on that contract as currently construed at this time and he was not getting into any details about it because there may be litigation.

Chair Holt announced the Clerk could not discuss it and recognized Commissioner Green.

Commissioner Green said he could not discuss it but...

Chair Holt said to talk to their attorney, that was usually how it was handled.

### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **8. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said the State of the County Address would be coming up on Friday at 9:45;

The FDOT Grant workshop with Dewberry will be February 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

The BOCC retreat will be Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> from 9 am – 4 pm at the Extension office and will have a couple of facilitators there.

Understood that they gave shots today to 65+ at St. James; on Saturday they met their goal on shots at Old Jerusalem. He said they were running ahead and looking to come out with a new campaign regarding COVID; it was not going away and they had to get the rates down in the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the 4:00 workshops were putting pressure on him coming into the end of the semester and asked if could be pushed to a little later and stated his classes on Tuesday and Thursday ended at 4:15 p.m.

Mr. Dixon said they would go with the will of the Board.

Chair Holt said unless something would take two hours, otherwise felt it could be adjusted.

Commissioner NeSmith said the Administrator mentioned they were making good choices in keeping the citizens safe, was there anything they need to do that they have not done to keep the citizens safe? Mr. Dixon responded they would be coming back with an education information program.

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

#### **9 Updates**

Mr. Knowles said he had spoken with the Chair prior to meeting and wanted to say the Chamber was open for business and citizens were welcomed to attend the meetings.

He said he received a letter from Derick Elias' attorney regarding a complaint that he may or may not have against the County and it was self-explanatory. He asked the Commissioners to call with any questions. Commissioner Viegbesie stated when he read the letter, there were allegations of a violation of Florida Statutes §286.011, which was the Sunshine Law alleging the commission...



Chair Holt interjected and stated they could not discuss it and she saw it in the letter as well.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

#### **10. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

##### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson felt it would be great if they could purchase N-95 masks for all employees because of the new variants of the virus and was told it could not come through the N-95 or KN-95 masks.

He stated he brought this up before regarding a bonus of \$250.00 for employees, thought they needed to consider that and for the emergency workers as well, Public Works and EMS, as they have been on the streets sacrificing their lives, leaving family behind and should be rewarded.

He thanked each Board member for working as hard as they can.

He also stated he had no clue what the Clerk said, it was hard to hear him.

He asked to give Ms. McGriff and Ms. Simmons a Proclamation for turning 104 and Commissioner Green made the second. The Board voted 5-0 by voice vote to approve.

##### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thought there were certain things that needed to be done in the County to meet the optimal ability to thrive. In order to attract business to the County, it was imperative that the County look like it was inviting and wanted to thank Mr. Dixon; he stated he has called him countless times regarding trash on the side of the roads.

Chair Holt said she and the Administrator has talked about large item pick-up and they need to work on marketing a plan for heavy item pick-up. She added the need to encourage citizens to take those items to the land fill.

Commissioner Viegbesie said “Love where you live, Keep Gadsden beautiful”.

##### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said he had to join the choir with this conversation. He wanted to stress to take pride in where you live. He also added that he hoped they could find resources to put street lights in his district for the sake of safety.

##### **Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

##### **Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said one thing that would help with businesses was if they had a County flyer regarding wearing of masks. She added they were going to have to look again at their Comprehensive Plan as the Administrator said. There were a lot of concerns regarding property and what the process/costs factors were.

She told Commissioner Viegbesie she loved his phrase.

She said she received three different calls about people partying in different areas of county.

She mentioned she was hoping and suggested they could put up a flag for every COVID-related death in the County and hoped they could put up a bell that could be rung at the Courthouse.

She said she had been up there since '02 and this was one of best commissions she has worked with and was a pleasure to work with ones that wanted to learn.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:23 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 2, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1- appeared remotely  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerk’s Office

**1. Welcome**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the workshop at 4:00 p.m.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence then lead in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadscountycl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadscountycl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Gadsden County Volunteer Fire Department Funding Presentation (Keith Maddox, Chief, EMS)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item for the Board. Chief Maddox has laid out the process of the contracts, process and different fire departments for the commission.

Chief Maddox stated that this was to help in the Board’s decision to fund the Volunteer Fire Departments.

There are 15 total Fire departments in Gadsden County. Out of the 15 departments there are only 4 Professional Fire Departments. There are 6 of the 11 Volunteer Fire Departments that are not-municipal in unincorporated zones. There are a few paid positions within the municipalities that are connected to dispatch, officer, or other forms of public safety. The Quincy Fire Department is the main professional fire department for the county. The Florida State Hospital Fire Department will only come off the property to aid in extreme cases. The Forestry Fire Department responds to primarily forest fires. The Gadsden County Emergency Services are primarily supportive and administrative. They have some paid fire fighters but they have limited equipment because they are primary mission is advanced medical care.

That the current distribution of the of how the individual departments receive funds. The is a Consumer Price Increase (CPI) that is given annually. The recommendation is to continue with current funding, maintain the CPI increases, possibly fund major equipment needs in the budgetary process.

Chief Maddox stated that looking toward the future they should be phasing in equipment that is needed such as a Pumper tanker that performs a dual role. Pumper tankers would be deployed in areas that do not have adequate hydrant coverage. A pumper tanker carries a large amount of water yet it can function as an engine.

Chief Maddox recommended standardization of equipment. The safety packs would include air packs, bunker gear, and NFIRS reporting software. This would allow for assistance between the departments. For the unincorporated areas, there is not good data for those areas which hinders grants so they would utilize new reporting software and replacing the legacy equipment.

Some of the issues the departments are facing are bringing in new volunteers, retaining volunteers, facilitation of minimum training classes, and outreach programs in the high schools to promote firefighting and volunteer work and educate about professional career opportunities.

Consider language mandating all county funds be kept in a separate account and not intermingled with other funds. Require all unexpended funds at the end of the fiscal year be carried forward into the departments upcoming budget or forfeited back to the County. Also, consider capping the amount of funds that can be carried forward.

Some of the Volunteer Departments have concerns of the municipality's management of County funding for the volunteers. Other concerns are about obtaining life safety equipment, reduction in number of volunteers, and lack of access to training.

Future actions to improve fire response in the County is integration of interchangeable equipment, facilitation of training, improve cooperation between departments, increase the air filling systems, and bunker gear cleaning systems.  
There is a need for more special washers and dryers to get the potential carcinogens out and need a special pipe to keep from degradating the equipment that is used.

There are FEMA grants that are for different types of fire aid. There are the Firehouse grants which the County does not have to match any of the funds. Then there is the SAFER grant that allows Fire Departments to put fire safety personnel in the public to give the County time to cover the cost.

*Commissioner Viegbesie exited the workshop at 4:19 p.m.*

*Commissioner Viegbesie reentered the workshop at 4:20 p.m.*

Chair Holt asked Chief Maddox if there had been any information that had been left out. Chief Maddox stated that they are working on a obtaining a training tower, safety equipment, bunker gear, and air packs.

Chief Maddox introduced the volunteers for the different fire departments.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Chief Maddox if there was a fire station missing from the financial report. He did not want any fire station left out and asked if it was being used for other purposes. Chief Maddox stated that this was the most up-to-date information.

Commissioner Green asked did they know the amount of grant funding the County received for the volunteers.

Chief Maddox stated that he did not have that on hand but he would get them that information. Commissioner Green stated that he wanted to know how they were going to get the program for high school students developed.

Chief Maddox stated that they are talking with Tallahassee Community College and Chipola College for development of those programs.

Chair Holt asked if there was an option for class credits for students if they attended those programs.

Chief Maddox stated that they do not have that option at this time.

Chair Holt stated that it would be good for training and recruitment. Chair Holt asked if there were any scholarships available for students if they participated.

Chief Maddox answered not at this time.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the Chief's funding recommendations and asked if he recommended the County continue the funding at the current rate. Chief Maddox answered yes, yet there are other needs may occur though. Commissioner NeSmith asked if there would be more information regarding this issue before budget discussions. Chief Maddox answered yes, that the stations are putting together a list of the major items that need to be addressed. Commissioner NeSmith asked Chief Maddox about the CPI.

Mr. Dixon explained that the CPI gives them an idea of the price of equipment with the rate of inflation. Mr. Dixon stated that this is the basic funding for the year and that the Fire Departments still need the same equipment even if they don't get the same amount of calls each year. That they need to get some software to keep up with the number of calls to keep cost to calls ratio. They need find where the best place to invest in such as new gear and trucks. The County is to committed to fight the same fire.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the request for funding from the different departments. Chief Maddox stated that they will get all of that information and then meet with the County Administrator's Office. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they would need more money based off the needs of the different departments. Chief Maddox stated that they could deploy as an agency, Gadsden County Emergency Services to centrally locate for all the departments or may realize that there was an individual need that could benefit all of the departments. Commissioner NeSmith asked if legacy equipment was a nice way to say old or outdated equipment and Chief Maddox said it was. Chief Maddox stated that they need to clear definitive plans in phasing in the new equipment. This is expensive equipment so it has to be phased in so it can be done as fiscally responsible as possible. This is to prepare so there is not a gap in life saving equipment.

Chair Holt wanted to know about the needs in training certifications.

Chief Maddox stated that training volunteers' numbers may not be exact now on the report. Every department has a set of volunteers that have not met minimum standards and need the training.

Chair Holt asked about price to get them to the proper certifications. Chief Maddox stated that the price varied by who put on the training. Chair Holt stated that up-to-date training would look good for grants. She also asked for an inventory of the equipment by where they are in the County, when they were purchased, and how often they are used. Also, how many calls did the department receive in 2020. Chief Maddox stated that he gets this information from the Fire Marshal. He stated that this information is not very valid since some departments could not get the reporting systems running. He believes that the number of calls was around 3000 for the County. Chair Holt asked for the price of software. Chief Maddox said it could be several thousand dollars for the software to update all departments. There was something that they were working on that may be a solution already in play.

Chair Holt asked would it be cumbersome to have all calls go through 911 and would it solve the problem. Mr. Dixon said it would be easier, but that 911 dispatchers would have to call the individual fire departments. Chair Holt asked do they not have the same radio system for all departments. Chief Maddox stated did not know if all of them had signed on at this time. Chair Holt asked about how many trucks are in the County and what was the price for new trucks. Chief Maddox stated that it was based on the supply of hydrants in the areas. Tankers are an art and science because of lack of hydrants rural area. That is another type of training that is required for this county.

Assistant Chief Dan Hunter from the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department was called upon to speak. He distributed the 2020 report to the Board. The report showed the wants and needs of the department. Asst. Chief Hunter echoed the importance of high school outreach stating that he was in a similar program that was for a professional level position not just volunteer. He also stated that Greensboro has a need for volunteers. They do not have people to operate on fires and more than one department is called out to meet requirements. The department provided coverage to areas outside of their municipality. Asst. Chief Hunter stated since Greensboro covers 14 miles of I-10 that most of their calls are on the interstate regarding vehicular accidents. Advances in technology have made their jobs easier and there is pressing needs in communications. The department was looking at \$1,100 alone in portable radios. They have to have radios for each volunteer.

Commissioner Green asked what was being done to invite and promote new volunteers. Asst. Chief Hunter stated that in recruitment they are using social media, face to face engagement, and the local newspaper. He stated for retention they are building a community and that it is a family within the group of volunteers.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that in the needs list was tanker repairs and asked if it was currently working.

Asst. Chief Hunter stated that it worked but was not working properly. He stated that 20 years of use for a fire truck was the equivalent of 40 years of use on any other vehicle. There have been minor repairs made to the tanker to keep it operational.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Chair Holt about a comment she made regarding the radios. Chair Holt answered that the County has a contract with Motorola for towers and radios so that all emergency services would be on the same system. The contract was for \$2.5 million dollars. Commissioner NeSmith asked if hand radios are currently being used for EMS. Chief Maddox answered yes. Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were handhelds for all of the departments. Mr. Dixon stated that system was not online yet. Chief Maddox stated that they have an allotment of handhelds. This is a by department need and it comes down to what they can afford. Commissioner NeSmith asked how many handhelds are allotted in the contract that was signed. Chair Holt stated that those are for multiple emergency services and that this issue should be included in an update meeting for the radio contract. This way all emergency services have that information.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the tires that were listed in the needs request. Asst. Chief Hunter stated that they are nearing replacement. There is a Department of Transportation requirement on when they need to be replaced and they are nearing that requirement. Commissioner NeSmith asked if these are the tires on trucks. Asst. Chief Hunter answered yes. He also stated that the tanker truck has ten tires and brush truck has six.

Mr. Dixon stated that they need to know how they were spending the money once it was allocated. They needed to get ahold of that information for further consideration. He stated that it is easy to determine the funding for those who are outside of municipalities since they are not funded by both the municipalities and the County. Asst. Chief Hunter stated that there are recurring expenditures in the document such as insurance, repairs, utilities, maintenance, and fuel.

Commissioner Hinson did not have any questions.

Chair Holt introduced Mr. Jim Roberts from the Mt. Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department.

*Commissioner Green exited the workshop at 5:05 p.m.*

Mr. Roberts stated that their departments call volume in 2019 was 75 calls and that the call volume in 2020 was 156 calls. The Department runs primary fire yet they also handle traffic incidents and downed trees. This Department has the lowest annual income from the County.

*Commissioner Green reentered the workshop at 5:08 p.m.*

Mr. Roberts stated that they spent more money than was in their budget. To supplement the County allotment this Department holds fundraisers and have had a Community Day. They just installed a Flag pole for the station. Mr. Roberts also stated that there is a large need for equipment and standardized equipment for inter-department cooperation. He thanked the Board for the radio system. Also, that training is important for the volunteers and it needs to be volunteer friendly.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he wanted an update on the radio system. They need an update on the agenda as soon as possible.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Chief Maddox since he is in constant communication with the departments, do they all have budgets to give to the County Administrator.

Chief Maddox stated that they are trying to get that information to the County Administrator when they get it.

Commissioner NeSmith asked would that budget be broken down for that year.

Chief Maddox stated that would be a smart idea and that he will get with the County Administrator.

Chief Maddox stated that all of the fire departments let EMS crews work with them to help cover the area because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair Holt asked who owned the Mt. Pleasant Volunteer Fire Department.

Chief Ed Cullifer stated that the Fire Department owns the land and the County owns the building. He also stated that there is a 99-year lease and that lease started 20 years ago.

Chair Holt asked where the funding was coming from for the departments.

**Jeff Price, Sr. Management and Budget Analyst**, said it is coming from Small County Surtax.

Chair Holt stated that when looking at equipment needs, priorities need to be set. The Board needs a list of payments that are going out from the departments. That would allow for production to be shown for grants.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked when submitting their budget requests to make it line item and they could increase or decrease item by item and it would be helpful to the board.

Chair Holt stated that she wanted to see where all of the departments are located.

**3. Review and Discuss January 19, 2021, Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda (All)**

There was no discussion on this agenda item.



Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
February 2, 2021-Workshop

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:25 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A CARES WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 11, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerk's Office

**WELCOME**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the workshop at 4:33 p.m.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Chair Holt started reading the above statement when IT trouble occurred and there was an echo in the room. Once it was corrected, she then read the statement in full.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Gadsden County CARES Program Spend Plan Line Item**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and Fredericka Hamilton with Integrity appeared before the Board to speak on the issue.

Ms. Hamilton stated that all of the information was current as of February 9, 2021. Item 2 was an overview of all programs that County Commissioners CARES Assistance program developed and the dollar amount associated with each program.

Commissioner Green asked about the balances. Ms. Hamilton said it would be a balance left over in that line item available to these or other programs once all the funds have been drawn down to the County. She said the \$7.9 Million that was awarded to the County has been processed and the only amount that was in process currently was \$131,530.15. Chair Holt asked that the categories be broken down by amounts.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
February 11, 2021 – CARES II Workshop

- Broadband program totaled \$1,765,000.00
- Gadsden County Sheriff's Office 803,000.00
- Municipalities Pass-through Program 400,000.00
- Planning, Administration, Technology,  
Fraud Prevention, Compliance Monitoring  
and Outreach 795,000.00 received and \$779,600.00 paid

Commissioner Nesmith asked about the Municipalities Pass-through, the money had been received, had it been disbursed and she said yes. He asked about the \$803,000 to the Sheriff's money if it had been received and disbursed as well and she said yes.

She continued reading the programs and the money associated with each one.

- County Public Health Expenses Program \$1,604,316.00 received and \$926,055.12 paid

*Commissioner Viegbesie arrived at 4:43 p.m.*

Commissioner NeSmith asked out of the \$1,604,316.00 received, had the balance already been encumbered and Ms. Hamilton said yes.

She continued to read.

- Small Business Assistance Program 1,520,000.00 received and \$1,371,500.00 paid
- Resident Assistance Program 1,080,000.00 provided \$562,789.95 to 270 residents

She then explained the chart that showed the status of the Spend Plan.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the balance and asked if that money had been encumbered and she stated yes.

Commissioner Green asked with the money available for the Resident Assistance programs, could that money still be utilized for residents or did they have to create another program for those funds. She said there will be more discussion about that item further in the presentation. She then explained the breakdown of the line items. She also stated that included was an actual breakdown provided by the Clerk's Office that showed the breakdown.

Chair Holt said when they were discussing before about the drawdown, on the Federal level when they start the second CARES Act money, the cities and towns did not get money. The reason behind that was it went to residents and they put a hold on evictions and those people had to get paid.

Commissioner Hinson asked for clarification, the total was \$6,623,345.07 and he saw another total for the Gadsden County CARES Allocation was \$7,967,316.00. He asked what the true total was. Ms. Hamilton said \$7,967,316.00 was the funding award the County was provided from the State for the CARES Program.

Commissioner Green asked if that was what was available and she said yes.

Chair Holt stated of the money received, the Clerk stated that money needed to be put back in the General Fund. Mr. Dixon said that was included and according to what he understood they loaned the account money and paid it back and it was a wash.

Mr. Dixon said they searched around and this was a new concept. A lot of the people around were tied to the same programs they were. He said they tried to cherry-pick based on the Commissioners comments and their needs. He reached out to Ms. Tuggerson from Tallahassee and she submitted a proposal. He said they would not start the program until they were assured what that number was. He then talked about the Roll out program and said they would create a savings account and that would be approximately half of the \$1.3 Million. He added they knew CARES II money was coming but did not know the details of it. He then explained the “roll-out” program.

He said the first thing was to conduct a survey, how did the first program work, why didn't it work. He said they had a lot of people in the residential program and did not receive funding. He said there was a lot of money left over. He said they needed to determine if people did not apply, was afraid to apply, could not apply, couldn't get technology, etc. because that would determine how they do future programs. He stated they were going to “front-load” this and made sure it was spread out across the County in multiple jurisdictions happening at the same time. He said they needed to make sure people had the resources to get into the program. If their job was to make sure they give away money to people that needed it, make sure they do that. Their job was to not keep people out of the program; it was to get people into the program until the money ran out. He discussed how to make sure they were available to give the money out and special emphasis would be placed on notifying the individuals that did not have access to social media; they heard that over and over again. Get the information out to people that did not get the information the first time. The first thing was utilities, instead of asking the County for a utility grant, why not place it with the cities and let them send to the County anyone that qualified for it. Food Assistance, they know who was insecure so why not put some with the food banks and maybe create a voucher per household, first come, first serve.

Commissioner Green said nonprofits was a concern to him. They could utilize some of their programs.

Mr. Dixon said most all the groups were members of the Health Council; they have used them before to stand up testing facilities and sites. He said while the Health Department might could do the shots, along with EMS, the other logistics have to be done. He said they needed to make them as professional as possible. Advertising was something that has to happen. They need to stand those groups up now and may have to county-wide.

Chair Holt said she was looking at generalized documents they could have for the public.

Mr. Dixon said a lot of it was about support systems to help get things done.

Commissioner Green stated that was where most of the commotion came from with the complaints because of a lack of understanding. He said there had to be a process and every county had its own process.

Mr. Dixon said next was the Landlord Program and that should be Landlord/Residents. He said they saw in the last phase landlords who were reluctant to help tenants with their rent, to sign documents for the tenant. They knew they had a lot of renters and needed to put special emphasis on whatever program they had.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to make sure that they were not double dipping. They needed to make sure that the landlord did not receive money and then also receive money from the tenant.

Commissioner Green understood what Commissioner Hinson was saying. He said multiple landlords would be paid because you had individual citizens who live in individual properties. He used apartments as an example, landlords will be paid for the renters.

Commissioner Hinson read off the amounts that the different cities received and they needed to look out for the citizens.

Commissioner Green stated that it was the same thing. It was possible because 1 person may have properties in different cities and each resident should be granted that opportunity if they qualified, regardless of who their landlord was. He could see where the frustration would come if just one person was benefiting and the citizen was not getting anything out of the deal. Chair Holt stated that the two programs, the one for housing and one for the CARES Act and money for HUD was coming from the CARES Act also. Ms. Hamilton's group and Ms. Burns group will compare notes to make sure they were not double dipping.

Mr. Dixon stated the goal was not to give to those people that were funded through the initial CARES program. They understood there was a second CARES program coming and they want them to find the first group initially funded and give to them because they were still in peril. The pandemic has lasted longer than they anticipated.

Commissioner Green asked for the sake of clarity, who has kept the records of ones that have applied in the past. He wanted to make sure they were being proactive by way of communicating with everyone that applied. Chair Holt stated that was a lot of the complaints but if they worked it out better this time, there will be more people on the ground and more that will know where people live.

Commissioner Viegbesie there was a concern expressed about guiding against double-dipping, which was the concern that Commissioner Hinson had. The question to Integrity was will there be any question in the questionnaire that will guide against the landlord taking from State, then the County, and then from the city. The suggestion was to include such question and if they said no and was found out different, then so be it.

Commissioner Hinson said a lot of residents were intimidated by the process. They need to get the process fixed first or they will be in the same situation. He asked who would be rating the people and determining who would qualify.

Chair Holt stated they need to work out some of these issues before the money came down and may need more workshops so they will be ready.

Mr. Dixon stated that some of the issues were hard to get at. There are “backyard” barbers in business that do not have records. So, if they give food vouchers, how do they do it? They need to make sure they honor the County’s businesses.

Commissioner Hinson if they need to put the people first, people have been put out of business for months. They should weaken the restrictions on small businesses, the car washers, etc. He said the Board and Administrator was putting restrictions on the citizens.

Chair Holt stated that standardized documents could help them get qualified. They need more workshops and maybe could get a checkpoint to see what needs to be put in place.

Commissioner Green asked in the regular meetings could there be regular updates on things that were being implemented so the citizens know that they were the top priority.

Mr. Dixon stated that the large businesses with employees of 25 or more were not part of the first grant. They need to decide if they want to include them in this opportunity. They understand they will have to do their own broadband at some point and that point was now for the future. They need to be moving toward that issue. He said non-profit relief grants, the non-profits that have been working during COVID-19 were excluded in the previous funding cycle and asked if they wanted to consider them and to what extent. Youth leadership, they knew kids were stuck in the house, know they were remote learning, and also knew that was not great for their mental health or their parents. In being creative, could they look at how to help them through this. He asked that they please submit any additional ideas.

Chair Holt said utility providers were able to get funding through CARES, such as Talquin. Mr. Dixon asked for that information. She said there will be a Zoom meeting on Monday for rural counties and minority communities.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a physical copy of the small business application and the residential application and asked for a copy of both. He also asked if there was a general date for the money. Mr. Dixon stated they had no control over that. Commissioner NeSmith said even if they came up with perimeters in the next month for distribution did not necessarily mean they could have the funds to distribute. Mr. Dixon stated they would be ready to go.

Mr. Stanley Sims, 1320 Avondale Way, Tallahassee, FL addressed the Board. He stated that the same concerns that they and the constituents have, they had in Leon County. He said they needed to have a strategic plan in place and the Administrator has had the foresight to get individuals who have experience in this. It is important for the Board set policies. CARES money was not like money from heaven and was limited. Not only are we clean but Gadsden can go green.

Commissioner Green stated that this was true.

Commissioner Hinson stated that he was not unapologetic for helping the people. He asked who set the rules for the amount of money the citizens received?

**3. Gadsden County CARES Program Project Items Submitted to FL DEM/FL CARES by the County Clerk’s/Finance Office**

**4. Gadsden County CARES Program Spend Plan Line-Item Balances**

**5. Status of Non-CARES Projects:**

- a. First phase of HUD CBDG Grants
- b. Upcoming Economic Resiliency and Infrastructure Grants

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:56 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON FEBRUARY 16, 2021 AT 4:30  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerks Office

**1. Welcome**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the Florida Department of Transportation Grants workshop at 4:30 p.m.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Mr. Dixon read the COVID-19 statement aloud.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. SCRAP / SCOP / CIGP Presentation (Justin Ford, P.E., Dewberry)**

Mr. Dixon stated for general housekeeping, they had to cancel the regular 6:00 p.m. Board meeting due to an advertisement issue. He added that adequate measures have been put in place to make sure it does not happen again. The items are being added to the next regular meeting agenda.

Commissioner Green stated that he would like to see a Proclamation to Ms. Dee Jackson and others for Black History Month.

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said Justin Ford with Dewberry Engineering was present. He explained Dewberry was the County's engineer of record and they were given the contract beginning October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2020 with an automatic extension. In September the Board re-upped the contract. He said the services they provide are roadway and



bridge design, stormwater and flood plain management, project planning and management, survey services, environmental services, site planning and design, traffic planning, permitting local, State and Federal, architectural services and general engineering services. He said the contract maybe canceled on a 30-day notice. He said they will be giving the Commissioners a list of contracts in the next couple of weeks with due dates and times.

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered at 4:41 pm*

**Justin Ford, Dewberry Engineering**, appeared before the Board and stated that every year they turn in applications to FDOT for various programs to get grant funding for paving, widening and resurfacing, safety projects and various things for the County. He listed the acronyms that the State likes to use and explained B-SCOP (Small County Outreach Program-Bridges) is a sub-program for bridges. The SCOP program (Small County Outreach Program) is the largest and main one that is used. The grant can be used for most road ways because it is used for all types of projects. Under normal circumstances it is a 75% grant with a 25% match but because we are a rural area of opportunity, the County gets 25% waived and it becomes a 100% grant program. He recommended breaking it into phases.

SCRAP program (Small County Road Assistance Program) is a resurfacing only so it was not for dirt roads. Smaller projects are funded through this.

CIGP (County Incentive Grant Program) has to be justified to the State that it will alleviate traffic off the State highway system and has to be connected to a state or federal highway within the County. He added it was very hard to get this for the County.

LAP (Local Agency Program) was more of an umbrella. Any grant received through LAP is going to have federal funds associated with that grant and most are related to safety improvements. He added it could be used for safe routes for schools. There is a Community traffic safety team that meets to talk about traffic safety on the roads. He said there were a lot of restrictions and the County has to be Lap certified, which they are, in order to manage and pursue these funds.

County paving history for the last five years has been 103 roads, 79.42 miles, and \$13 Million dollars spent. Ongoing projects are 5 roads, 30.37 miles, and \$10 Million. There is an attached list of the roads that have been done. Since 2010, the County has done \$31 Million of paving worth of road improvement. He showed a map that had the breakdown of where the work has been and has not been done in the County. There are not many records of pre-2000 work. The blue lines on the map was currently in progress.

Each year they apply for grants through the various programs and with each year, the number of applications they can turn in changes a little, depending on the expected budget. They apply for grants based off of the state budgets. In 2019 there were 5 roads that had been applied for and 3 have been funded. In 2020, they turned in two SCRAP, three SCOP, one CIGP, and four B-SCOP applications. Three of those have been funded. This is not bridge replacement, that is another program. This is to hold over and for repairs to be done to the bridge.

Spoooner Road is in District 5, Cochran Road runs across Districts 3 and 4, Fairbanks Ferry Road is in District 1, Ben Bostick Road is in District 4, Hardaway Highway runs in Districts 3 and 4, and Withlacoochee Bridge is in District 2. In 2020, they applied for them in April, found out in January (2021) what was awarded. Funds can have a five-year window. They do not have any that are

funded 5 years out. Ben Bostick is funded under 2024 for construction and \$1.755 Million was allocated for the road. DOT sends a JPA (Joint Participation Agreement) to allow them to move forward with the work. They get that out pretty quickly.

**The submission.** Each commissioner gives 2-3 roads from each district to Dewberry and Staff. They look at different factors to submit for funding. The commission last year elected to roll the same list forward. He said they have ranked the roads for funding.

The applications are due March 12, 2021. At the first March meeting, they have to have a signed Resolution for the commissioners to vote on. There is a total of six applications for the county: five roads and one bridge. The selection is up to the commissioners. DOT rides the roads to see if the Board selected roads that meet the criteria for grants.

**3. SCRAP / SCOP / CIGP Criteria (Justin Ford, P.E., Dewberry)**

**4. Questions/Comments (ALL)**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about the roads that have already been approved. Mr. Ford said the ones in blue have been funded. Mr. Ford stated the ones in blue and tan have been funded. The evaluations have already been. Commissioner Viegbesie asked he furnish the Commissioners with the actual starting date for the roads so the Commissioners could inform the constituents in the district.

Commissioner Green asked what year the matrix was done. Mr. Ford stated 2019 was the last time they did the evaluation. Commissioner Green stated it could make sense if they could follow through with the list, but there may be roads that have had more damage or been driven more than normal that may need to be evaluated. Mr. Ford stated even if they rolled this forward, there are some that he would expect to be on the new list.

Commissioner NeSmith said going back to the evaluation matrix, were they submitted by commissioners and Mr. Ford stated yes. Commissioner Nesmith stated to the Chair they may need to look at other resources to get the roads paved because he knew in his district, there were a significant number of roads that needed attention.

Chair Holt explained the history to answer this question. Since the County is so small, it does not have the tax base to fund their roads. These programs were set aside for the Counties. She was not sure there was a way to get any more money from the State. She was hoping to get federal funding for infrastructure funding. Hurricane Michael added more problems to the roads. She said re-evaluation was up to the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that going on the history that Chair Holt just spoke of, in order to get local roads paved the Board decided to float a bond. They gave priority to some districts. Some districts were overlooked because of those findings. In the second phase, they decided it should be distributed equally. Those did not have roads have not been prioritized. All the districts did not get the money starting at the same level. All the revenue from tax may go down tremendously because of cars changing. He said the economy was changing and they needed to take that into consideration. He said other counties transportation mode was going to renewable energy and Gadsden County needed to seriously consider how they could begin to gradually move into renewable energy.

Chair Holt stated they were able to get \$10 Million but the understanding was Districts 1, 2, and 5 had more people on the east side of the County. They agreed to do that. The next bond was going to pave districts 3 and 4. When that bond came in, it was a new Board and they decided to split it equally.

Mr. Dixon stated that prior to floating the bond, there was no funding mechanism to pave roads. The County was paying \$500,000 a year only paving 1 mile in each District every year. He said they were moving faster than a lot of other counties. He said they had 600 miles of dirt road and now they have less than 50 miles of dirt road. The matrix makes it a science-based decision, not a political one. Mr. Young's team is here to look at the roads. He added they may end up with the same five roads but it gives the Commissioners an opportunity to at least look and see the process.

Mr. Ford stated that there were other funding opportunities available as well. This is not his expertise but look to professionals who could help. He said he felt Hurricane Sally did more damage to the roads but the wind from Hurricane Michael took trees down that loosened the soil, which washed out the roads. He said they were working with FEMA now to get monies to make repairs. But in addition to the repairs associated with that, they will have an opportunity for HMGP (Hazard Mitigation Grant Program) that was a FEMA grant that is regulated or passed through the State Department of Emergency Management that could be applied for. He recommended if there are some dirt roads that wash out on a regular basis, apply through that grant program to mitigate those roads. The State recognized that it is a flawed system. He said they were focused on the DOT grants because of the time frame but there were other opportunities out there.

Chair Holt asked if he could compile the public dirt roads by district. She said it would be easier for the Commissioners to see where they were and how long they were. Mr. Ford said the County actually got \$20,000 to do a road way inventory of every road in the county. He said they met today and will be bringing that proposal back to the County to allow them to utilize that money to complete the inventory of every road in the County and would give them what they were asking for.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he was the Board representative on CRTPA (Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency).

*Chair Holt stepped out at 5:32 p.m.*

He is the one to get the information for the Gadsden county area and to speak for the County. He said the money was there but not enough votes.

*Chair Holt returned at 5:33 p.m.*

If the matrix does not match, the County will not get funded. He said they have a five-year work program and was about to put together the next five years. He said the most pressing roads should be on the list and asked they give him the list of those roads. He said he pushed for a cross walk on Pat Thomas Parkway and was pushing for a reduction in the matrix for the funding qualifications. He also said Point Milligan was asking for a traffic light.

Commissioner Green asked with the lack of participation from other municipalities, did that prohibit the County from getting funding and Commissioner Viegbesie said no, it was based off voting. Gadsden County only has one vote but two was better than one.

Mr. Dixon commented on the weighted voting. He said there was hundreds of millions of dollars and most of it was staying in Tallahassee. It was by population. Commissioner Viegbesie stated they were not bashing Tallahassee but they have the blue print funds. They can match the funds. This also gave them an upper hand over the other counties.

Chair Holt stated they need to get this done because of the close turnaround time.

Mr. Ford stated the Disaster Recovery CDBG grants do not count against the total numbers. He said outside of Hurricane Michael, every year the County could apply for a Community Development Block Grant through various programs and under the Neighborhood Revitalization program, smaller streets could be paved. Chair Holt stated in looking at roads that are auxiliary road is not even a mile it might be cost effective to pave those when they were in the area to pave the bigger road.

Commissioner Nesmith stated as they move toward the environment of the County being open for business, there are certain elements in sending that message they needed to make sure were in place. He said one was addressing the issue with the blight and trash. He said now there was emphasis on cleaning up the County and that they were open for economic development and was hopeful more businesses would look at that as a place to do business. He said it was imperative that they fix the bridges and have the infrastructure to entice them to come. He said they needed to use any means necessary to get them here. They need to approach all the roads because that was a part of infrastructure. If they see our infrastructure in the roads could not be travelled, that impacts the quality of life of the individual that was coming with that company. He thanked Mr. Ford for informing them of the alternative resources and asked of the Administrator, any and all available resources they he was aware of, to please bring that to the Board's attention. He said time was of the essence.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that although he asked for those roads, they should go to Dewberry so they can put them on the Gadsden County Transportation plan for them to be considered by FDOT. It had to be in the Road Improvement plan and he could bring it to their attention.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they had paid off the bonds.

Mr. Dixon said yes, to the first and was not sure of the second bond.

Chair Holt said they could bring that information back and see where they were with it. She said this information was very important. She said she would like to see something on Highway 90 and Bostick Road and knew the safety team has looked at certain roads for calming devices.

Mr. Ford said that was a DOT road and the County does not have the jurisdiction or ability to change anything about that issue. They have recognized the issue at that location and there is so much traffic. Mr. Dixon said just because DOT has the information did not mean they will do

anything, they do not want to slow down traffic. If the numbers are not there, they will not do anything. He also said putting up a traffic light was super expensive.

Chair Holt said to look at the gas tax they were getting from Flying J. They have a matrix they use regarding accidents, etc.

Mr. Ford said they talked about keeping politics out of the selection process, but that situation was one where politics was needed to get results. They have tried to go through the numbers and matrix, evaluation and have not gotten there.

Commissioner Green said he heard the question regarding traffic lights and asked who they would contact regarding the traffic lights. He said for instance, the traffic light at the corner of Jefferson and Adams takes forever to change.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated there was a note he made from CRTPA's meeting earlier in the day regarding how they obtained crash or fatality data from law enforcement for those intersections. Mr. Ford stated there was a website for that information. It generally was year behind for, they do not generally release new crashes. He said there was someone in his office that has access to that site and he could get the information pulled. He was unsure if Public Works had access to the site.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Mr. Ford about the Attapulcus Highway. He said they currently have \$3.6 Million to resurface that road. When it was approved, they decided to widen the road and add shoulders. He asked today about the additional request. FDOT told him they had requested a letter from the County that explained the need for the additional funding. He asked where they were in regards to the additional funding. Mr. Ford stated he did not know they were waiting on a letter. Right now, they had the design funding, construction would come later this year or next year. When the design was received, it did not have the paved shoulders in the grant. They went back to DOT and asked if they would allow them to design at no additional costs and put the paved shoulders in the project under that premise and they agreed they would evaluate the construction costs once the design was completed. He said it was 60% done and they anticipated having the design completed around April or May. He thought they were waiting on the final design to see what the ultimate quantities and estimated costs would be so they would know where they stood. Once they finish the design, it would be more accurate. Commissioner Viegbesie said the award for that project should be 2021 and construction should be completed in 2022. Mr. Ford said he would reach out to them tomorrow. Chair Holt said if they do the widening, that would increase the amount. How would that affect the County in having that road chosen. Mr. Ford stated more than likely, if it was gotten in early enough and they could program it, they would modify the amount. If that did not happen, they would do a supplemental agreement. That was done on a fairly regular basis.

Chair Holt said to Commissioner NeSmith, when he received his list of dirt roads for him to come in and lobby to get them paved. She said she had requests from two different groups to adopt a road; Martin Luther King/Barack Obama Blvd by Gadsden County FAMU Alumni and the Men of Gadsden County, Inc.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he was going to suggest they implement the reinstatement of the Adopt A Road program. He said if they were going to adopt the "Keep Gadsden County

Beautiful” they needed to reinstitute actively the road adoption plan. He said to give them pride to keep the County clean. Chair Holt said that way they had someone to help monitor and look at beautification money. She said there were certain funds they could get through FDOT if they applied for the grants and were able to get them. She said they should start pushing that.

Commissioner Nesmith thanked them for bringing up the Adopt-A-Road program and stated he had participated in the clean-up and asked from Pat Thomas Parkway to Barack Obama, was that County and Chair Holt stated that was city. She said they want to adopt that road, it starts in the city and ends in the County.

Chair Holt stated they had talked about looking at clean up. She said one suggestion was if they were going to put the schedule out for pick-up of large items, they should not encourage people to put stuff by the road before or after that date. Mr. Dixon said they will put that schedule out and adhere to that schedule. They were serious about keeping the streets clean and it will take all of them to come together to keep the roads clean. They want businesses to come.

Mr. Ford said he needed each Commissioner to give him two to three roads to evaluate and they will bring the top five back ready to proceed. Mr. Dixon said if it was their choice, Mr. Young and his staff would help them to decide to help Mr. Ford. He wanted them to be a part of the situation and part of the solution. Chair Holt said also the call volume on some of the roads were an issue. People do not just ride on fair weather. She added they were working on getting these things taken care of, it may not be fast, but they were in a better stride now than before.

Mr. Dixon introduced Ms. Georgette Daniels, who is the new Assistant County Administrator. She said she was happy to be here and looked forward to the job.

**5. Review and Discuss the February 16, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 6:14 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**IN A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 2, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the Disaster Recovery Workshop at 4:30. She asked if there were any requests from citizens to be heard and Mr. Dixon said no. She said she would like to add that citizens were able to come to the meetings, especially if they had long items they wanted read, they could come make those announcements at the podium.

**1. Opening Comments (Chairwoman Brenda Holt)**

Chair Holt stated that they needed to work together to get prepared for the next round of funding.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda. If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadscdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadscdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours. The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.

There were no citizens requesting to be heard.

**3. CARES Act Efforts & Progress -Since July 2020 (Gary Yates, Integrity Group)**

Mr. Dixon stated that staff asked the Integrity Group to come and speak on the disaster relief efforts.

Mr. Dixon introduced Mr. Tim Moore from Integrity Group. Mr. Moore stated that as a company have been helping State and local governments as well as other areas for the past 12 years.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 4:41 pm*

He explained the existing agreement began in October 2019 under the Disaster Response Services. The contract began on March 18, 2020 and the contract is for five years with 3 years and 2 one-year renewals. He said they have a strong bench of professionals.

Mr. Moore introduced Gary Yates.

Mr. Yates revisited what the group has done.

**3a. Administration & Distribution of CARES Act Allocation of \$7,967,316.00.**

Mr. Yates stated that the original spend plan was implemented with \$7,967,316.00.

**3b. Multiple workshops and meetings regarding Spending Plan and Grant Eligibility & Documentation Requirements**

He explained they have had multiple workshops and meetings and prepared the original spend plan and it was transmitted to Division of Emergency Management. He said they implemented and was responsible for operating the Gadsden Grant program, focusing on the business community and residents. He said the County approved and paid out 202 business grants totaling \$1,371,500.00 and awarded 279 resident grants totaling \$562,789.95. The number of approvals was up to par with surrounding communities. They were meeting compliance regulations and had 10 people working on the applications. Fredericka Hamilton has been working on documentation. He said they were sitting with a residual of approximately \$1.3 Million dollars still to be awarded and they will be getting into the new appropriations.

Chair Holt stated on the funding that would be coming in the future, they should look more at the process so the Commissioners would have input.

Mr. Yates stated they looked forward to that and felt they learned a lot more over the past 6 months than they thought they would learn, good and bad. They can be better focused on what were the best guidelines and requirements, etc. He said they welcome the idea of working with the Commission.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they were focusing on the CARES Act or FEMA, if they were doing them separate or would both be in this workshop.

Mr. Dixon stated they would be going over multiple items that Integrity Group will be associated with.

Commissioner Hinson stated that it could be confusing to the people. He asked if they were talking about the money that has already come in or what has been recovered from FEMA.

Chair Holt stated this was not FEMA money. Mr. Dixon stated this was on the CARES Act.

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered the workshop at 4:50 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon asked Mr. Yates to talk about what the RFQ allowed for Integrity Group to do. Mr. Yates congratulated the County on developing a comprehensive request for proposal that talked about disaster recovery of all fields such as FEMA, HUD, and other mitigation and other Federal forces of disaster recovery. He said it was written to include anything that was related to a declared disaster. The Pandemic was one of the most historic and largest declared disaster in the United States and was a very comprehensive approach. They submitted a proposal that was evaluated by an evaluation team.



**3c. Implementation and operation of Gadsden Grant Program.**

**i. Business Community & Resident.**

**ii. Close focus on compliance with Federal/State Regulations.**

**iii. Deployed team (technology, paper processing, compliance, approval & submission for payment).**

**3d. Reporting to and requesting funding from FDEM.**

**3e. Several updates of Spending Plan as program progressed.**

**4. New CARES Funding for County (Eric Miller, Integrity Group)**

Eric Miller appeared before the Board and stated he was here to talk about new funding which is \$1.3 million. He said it was no longer considered CARES Act money because it was now County money. He said this money could be used for a new grant programs that will not be as strict. He said Gadsden County may want to defer programs until the State of Florida announces its relief opportunities from the \$850 Million that the State Now had in its possession to cover rental and utilities assistance. A possible goal of the County may be to get businesses qualified for future grant funding. He added by making sure businesses had proper documentation with the Department of State and line business owners up with a tax accountant and conduct workshops on proper business documentation to make sure that the business owners meet criteria for pre-qualification. The suggested plan could be to set up stations county-wide in each district, perhaps in libraries and certificates could be provided to business owners certifying they meet criteria for immediate relief CARES Act funding assistance. He said Mr. Dixon had requested that The Integrity Group do a sample survey of random resident assistance and small business assistance funding award recipients and applicants that did not qualify for earlier funding awards for whatever reasons. The Integrity Group would contact individuals via email addresses provided on the application and give such applicants the opportunity to provide feedback on the pros and cons of the process and to allow them to receive and report back to the Board the feedback on their experience.

**4a. Emergency Rent & Utilities**

He said the 26 largest counties in Florida received \$513 Million in funding directly from the U. S. Treasury and the State of Florida received \$871 Million. The Governor announced that \$850 Million will be dispersed to 41 smaller counties through the Department of Children and Families. Applicants in Gadsden County would have to apply through Department of Children and Families for the rental and utilities assistance. They have reached out to them but do not have details on how it will be administered or the timeline.

**4b. New CARES funding directly to County.**

In addition to the emergency rent and utilities funding, the new CARES Act II funding will provide \$350 Billion to state and local governments nationwide. The money will go directly to the county and Gadsden County will be awarded \$8.93 Million and not through the State. This money can be used for lost revenue and to qualifying nonprofits. Non-entitlement cities will receive their funds through the State of Florida. The County will not be required to funnel their

money out to the cities. The municipalities in Gadsden County would have to go through the State and the County would have to go through the U.S. Treasury for funds.

**5. CDBG-DR Grant Pursuit (Sheree Keeler, Integrity Group)**

Sheree Keeler with Integrity appeared before the Board stated that currently there are four (4) different grants for the County. One is for Hurricane Michael Recovery. She stated that four grants were prepared and only 3 was sent out because of issues with getting the hospital grant completed. The Multi-purpose complex application valued at \$9 Million; the EMS facility update and renovations valued at \$2 Million and radio towers construction valued at \$500,000. DEO has not decided regarding the grants but Integrity was staying in constant contact with them and will let staff know when they hear something. Integrity Group was now working on getting CDBG COVID-19 funds that will be for small cities and counties in responding to, preparing for and mitigating COVID. She said a workshop was scheduled for the following Tuesday night where they will get an in-depth review of the grants. She said there was a CDBG grant open for small town revitalization and was an economic recovery grant which requires partnership with businesses for commercialization upgrades.

Commissioner Hinson stated they could not hear what she was saying.

**5a. Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR \$735 million (ten most impacted counties).**

It was announced on February 2<sup>nd</sup> that Florida had been awarded mitigation funds for the counties impacted by Hurricane Michael. Deo had not issued any specifications or grant cycle begin date yet or when applications were due. Integrity will advise staff as soon as possible on that topic.

Commissioner Green asked if the workshop was for Integrity.

Mr. Dixon stated it was for the commission to agree to apply for the grant.

Commissioner Nesmith asked the date for the workshop and Mr. Dixon answered March 10, 2021 at 6 p.m.

Commissioner Green asked about the workshop projections for the grants and the Chair answered yes.

**5b. Grant proposals have been submitted to Florida Department of Economic Opportunity.**

**5c. Grants now being developed, Economic Development & Infrastructure.**

**6. FEMA Public Assistance Program (Fredericka Hamilton)**

Fredricka Hamilton with Integrity appeared before the Board and stated that FEMA has a funding source available to communities as it related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program offered 100% federal funding and meant there was no local or state match requirement. The funds can be used to supplement the CARES dollars the County has been using. There is also the ability to request for advances on the dollars.

**6a. Developing project worksheets for COVID expenses.**

**i. Now 100% Federal, no local/state match.**

**ii. Indication of faster payments.**

**iii. Complement/Supplement CARES funding.**

**7. General discussion (All Participants)**

Chair Holt asked how long was the contract and Mr. Dixon said five years. Mr. Miller further explained it was three (3) years with two 1-year renewals.

Commissioner Green asked if they were focusing their energy on making sure they simplified the process. He has heard a lot of citizen talking about the complicated process. He said there were some residents still in jeopardy with their property and could they still apply?

Mr. Dixon stated that the residual pot of money was designed for those who did not receive money in the first pot. He said they were meeting with Integrity and Tuggerson and 30 days before they let the program start, they will dispatch teams to certain places where potential applicants, business or otherwise, can come in and get information checked to see if they meet the qualifications. They were trying to get funding to those who did not receive funding. He said there will still be people that will not get qualified. He added they would have to bring things back to the Board and then make decisions on who would qualify. He said they will do the application process up front and help them through it. He added the money was coming and they hoped to get people up and running and empower them.

Commissioner Green said if he recalled, there were 2-3 people who worked in that department and asked if they could add more people. Mr. Dixon stated that was the pre-process and there were now 5-10 people in that queue to help with the process.

Commissioner Hinson said there was \$1 Million set aside for the hospital. Could they prorate the money and give half to the businesses and half to the citizens? He asked where that money was located.

Ms. Hamilton stated when the plan was revised, she provided a spreadsheet to the Board showing where the dollars were re-appropriated and was presented in that revised spend plan. She said she could provide that if needed.

Commissioner Hinson asked where it re-appropriated. Chair Holt stated she thought it was moved to broadband.

Commissioner Hinson stated that they might could re-review the on how the citizens could re-apply.

Mr. Dixon stated that the workshop on the 10<sup>th</sup> was for CDBG and COVID-19 shelter.

Mr. Dixon stated that opportunities were there but nothing was shelf ready. Chair Holt stated they could meet more often, once they get the programs started, they have to have them ready.

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If people qualified before, do they qualify now for the next round. Mr. Dixon stated that would be up to the Board. He said everyone was expected to re-apply for the new pot of money.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he understood the eligibility for the CARES Act had federal requirements that people had to qualify for and the residual was determined by the County. They could then begin to work on what the eligibility should be to make it more flexible. For the COVID-19 relief bill that was \$1.9 Trillion would have its separate requirements. They need things in place and shelf ready projects for them to apply for the money and need to have a unified mind for specific, shelf ready projects that was good for Gadsden County as a whole.

Chair Holt stated they have said the same thing over and over again. She said they put people out there that was able to contact people that before was not able to get the information so they can look at what citizens need. They need more meetings and get outside ideas. She asked if there were any questions about the presentation.

Commissioner Hinson asked who was in control of the \$1.3 Million to get that money out. He said they also had the Figgers contract out there for \$1.7 Million and the needed to make sure they satisfied that first. He said based on what Integrity said, rules had changed.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they had the \$1.3 yet. Mr. Dixon stated they were waiting on that money. He stated they had been meeting with Integrity, Tuggerson and other groups. They will roll out the program as fast as they could. The County office was not built for this and they were trying to do it as fast as they could. There were no program development people and it was intense work. He added, inworking with Integrity and the other groups, they will present the Board with the package needed and what could be sent to other folks that would represent the needs of Gadsden County.

Commissioner NeSmith asked there was a number of grants that have been submitted. Mr. Dixon stated there were four (4) applications and all have been submitted but they have not heard from them yet. Commissioner NeSmith asked what the limitation were that could be applied for. Mr. Dixon said they charge every time they were asked to write one.

Mr. Yates stated that the CDBG-DR grants come from \$735 Million that was appropriated by Washington after Hurricane Michael. Some have been available and they submitted three (3) large projects that was still pending review but was moving slow. The economic grants were due April 16<sup>th</sup> and they had some ideas they hoped to develop with Staff to bring to the Board to get approval for them to submit to DEO get the HUD money. They want to come up with a list of projects that was good for Gadsden County and some may go to HUD, some could be shelf-ready for that money coming down the pipe. He said the good thing was, everything they do will be federally funded and their fees were added to the grant application and there was no local match or investment on the CDBG. Also, the good news for FEMA was it was also 100% federally funded and no local match required.

Mr. Dixon stated that was if that was the only projects they wanted to do. There were other projects they will want to do and they need to put money aside for engineers and architects to develop those programs.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if an application was not funded, did Integrity Group get paid.

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Mr. Yates stated if they do not receive the grant, Integrity Group does not get paid. Mr. Dixon stated that they get the money but do not have staff in place to manage it.

Chair Holt asked how could they get funding for the hospital. Mr. Yates stated they were not able to get all the agreements in place but was still something that was on Ms. Keeler's drawing board. He was hoping they could still make it a winning proposal. Chair Holt stated if they could pull that off it would affect everyone in the County, it would affect healthcare and drive the healthcare status and the economy would take off. She said they needed a lot of input. She told the Administrator they needed applications and needed to have them on the website. She added they also needed to look at a workshop.

Mr. Yates stated there was a lot of interest in broadband. He said Ms. Keeler was "hot on the hill" and there was a \$7 Billion appropriation that was in the December bill the President signed and they were setting up an office in Washington. They will be closely monitoring that for funding and it was intended for rural communities and broadband.

Chair Holt said they were asked what they wanted and the mobile unit was a definite. She said everything related to health care and economic development and this was their opportunity.

Mr. Dixon stated that he did not want to get caught up in grant applications, that was like "pie in the sky", whether they were talking about county-wide broadband, etc. He said the County needed to take control of the county's future, if the grants came, good. Even with broadband the still had to have a plan for the county. They could not wait for the grant to come to have a plan.

Chair stated that money was given on how much work was done previously. She said shelters have to be put in place and there was a place needed for COVID and when hurricanes come.

Mr. Dixon stated that on the agenda for the regular meeting has a Ratification memo, Approval of Minutes, approval of the livestock shelter/4H program, Resolution of Recognition of Red Cross month, Approval of Adopt a Road agreement with Men of Gadsden, Inc. and Approval of a Proclamation for the 100 year anniversary for the University of Florida North Florida Research and Education Center; under General business has an Approval of COVID-19 public service campaign, have a Legislative Advocacy Service and Public Relations Services for the lobbyist, the Road inventory that was discussed at the previous workshop and the Task Order was being presented, and the replacement of the roof for senior citizen building. He said they were pulling the St. Hebron Walk and Bike trail that did not require the Board's approval since they had approved that in a previous meeting and the Grant Resolution for the roads to be submitted will be pulled.

Mr. Knowles stated that the Emergency Debris Removal contract will being added to the meeting.

Mr. Dixon stated the upcoming events Wednesday March 10,2021 is the CDBG workshop, Tuesday March 16, 2021 at 4:30 is the pre-BOCC Meeting and Gadsden County Development Council overview, on Wednesday March 17, 2021 is Legislative Day at the Capitol and Tuesday, March 23, 2021 is the follow-up to the Board retreat. He said they would also be adding a Proclamation honoring the National Association of Women in Construction.

Commissioner Hinson stated that he could not hear what the County Attorney said and Mr. Knowles repeated that item.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they were pulling item 12 and Mr. Dixon answered yes.

**8. Closing (Chairwoman Holt)**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:49 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 2, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Hannah Pope, Clerk’s Office**

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6:02 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he would like to add a Proclamation for National Association of Women in Construction, pull Item 12-St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use and add Item 13a-Debris Removal contract.

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**National Association of Women in Construction**

Chair Holt presented a Proclamation to Kerwyn Wilson, President of the Tallahassee Chapter in honor of the National Association of Women in Construction and she spoke a few words.

**CONSENT**

Commissioner NeSmith disclosed he was a member of the organization Men of Gadsden, Inc. associated with Item 5.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN.**

- 1.     Ratification Memo**
  
- 2.     Approval of Minutes**
  - **September 11, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **October 2, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 4, 2020- Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 15, 2020-Workshop**
  - **December 22, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **February 2, 2021-Regular Meeting**

3. **Approval of the West Florida Livestock Show**
4. **Approval of a Resolution in Recognition of Red Cross Month**
5. **Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with Men of Gadsden, Inc. for Barack Obama Blvd.**
6. **Approval of a Proclamation of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Florida's North Florida Research and Education Center**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Chair Holt read aloud the COVID statement.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** - Miscellaneous – appeared before the Board. He said he wanted to speak on behalf of M.G.C.B. Inc. that he represented as well as other citizens that have called him about concerns relative to the broadband issue. He knew it had been a challenging time for everybody and has received calls from upset citizens. He said he was here tonight to ask them to work through whatever the issues were to resolve the issue in best way that was most favorable to meeting the needs of the citizens. He said he had read the contracts, at least four or five previous or revised versions of the contracts-and read the minutes from meetings discussing the contracts and the formation of them. He felt it was a good idea for commissioners to review minutes of previous meetings to ensure they do not make statements or take positions that were totally contradictory to their previous positions without reasonable cause. He said he was convinced that with patience, perseverance and prayer, the dispute could be settled to the best interests of the citizens. He asked them to keep in mind they represent many citizens who may seem to be voiceless and quietly suffering under the disadvantages imposed upon them through no fault of their own was often the least, last, the left out and looked over and asked they continue to work hard for the people they serve. He asked them to be patient as this issue was worked out and resolved.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

7. **Approval of the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and said it was for the approval to add the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID to the current CARES Act spending plan.



He stated to date, the County had its partner, the Gadsden County Health Council (GCHC) have already successfully invested \$65,000 in COVID-19 targeted campaigning and this would be a continuation of the funds for the inclusion of the vaccination component of this already effective campaign. He added they were asking the County to become part of a unified message and was asking for \$25,000 and for the Board to approve Option 1.

**Ron Sachs** appeared before the Board. Mr. Sachs thanked the Board for the opportunity to appear before them tonight and spoke on the campaign.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested he considered a number of members of the religious community and pastors to help reach out to their members concerning this and to encourage them to take the vaccine.

Commissioner Hinson said he did not know Mr. Sachs personally, but his issue was he tried to go into the hardest communities in the County. He felt they needed to start reinvesting back into this community.

Commissioner Green said for clarity, this did not cover just Gadsden County and Mr. Sachs said correct.

Mr. Sachs said he was very sensitive to Commissioner Hinson's comments but this media market was very cost effective.

Commissioner Green said he did understand where Commissioner Hinson was coming from. He also had a question about the funding source and understood it could come from the general fund or CARES Act funding and felt they should utilize the CARES funding.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only request was the voices and faces in the religious community be used and hoped Mr. Sachs would consider using the Church leadership from Gadsden County to help people feel more comfortable about the safety of the vaccine.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if this was a continuation and Mr. Sachs said yes. They received money for COVID is Real campaign of \$65,000. This was a new campaign.

Mr. Dixon said the County did not have a tv or radio market and they felt this was the best way to reach and educate people.

Chair Holt said they knew what the population looked like and there was a need to invest something and they have to take the initiative to look after the people in the countryside. She agreed with Commissioner Hinson's comment of the need of local people to be a voice.

Commissioner Viegbesie said \$25,000 to be a part of this regional plan and meant they were moving towards a regional collaboration and at the right time he would make a motion to approve.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THERE WERE QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Green asked the longevity of the marketing plan. Mr. Sachs said the campaign was expected to go through the middle of the summer and felt some of the funders would consider expanding it. He said a lot would rely on their ability to negotiate bonus values, additional air time and space with media organizations, etc.

Commissioner Hinson said again, this was very strategic and he had no doubt of the marketing skills. He said he would not stop because they were helping somebody and they need to come up with a plan.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented for direction or action regarding Gadsden County's Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Mr. Dixon continued and said they were looking to extend the contract for Lawson & Associates and currently the County did not have a lobbyist.

Commissioner Hinson had a question. He stated they set aside \$40,000, he was talking to a consultant and told them of the need for more resources.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the County had a lobbying firm and was told the County HAD a lobbying firm with Lawson and Associates. He asked if there had been reports and Chair Holt said not to the Board but to her because she called them every week.

Commissioner Green he was going to ask their accomplishments from the previous lobbyists they had and how has the County benefited from and what they were going by. He said if they had nothing to go by or anything from the services where the County had benefited, his option would be for Option 2 but would like to be given the opportunity to know what the firm has accomplished that benefited the County.

Chair Holt said this has been a very unusual last three years; they have been in and out with cities, putting monies together going after a list of items they wanted and there was confusion as to the list. She said the lobbyist met to settle it and then it was the Senator at that time told her what the problems were with that and some fell back on the County. That was two years ago and last year the problem came in that some things the cities wanted to pull out, the County stayed and Commissioner Taylor suggested they go ahead with the same list of agenda items they had the year before. Somehow that did not make it to the Delegation or the Delegation said there was a concern. The Lobbyist told Chair Holt that everyone had to be on the same page. She said everything would start the next week and there was not a lot of time. She added that the cities decided they did not want to work on a compiled list this year because of all the confusion in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in politics, you've got to play if you want to win and no-one here has skillsets to play the game of lobbying. He said the position Commissioner Green has taken was what he had written in his notes. The process to follow should be the County Procurement process but now they did not have the time. Session has already started today. The current provider is Lawson & Associates, and they all knew that his height was not just physiological and he has connections. He added that \$25,000 was actually a "pro-bono" fee and he was going to vote in support of retaining them for this year.

Commissioner Green said it made sense to move forward for the sake of time but sked when this item could this be placed back on the Agenda so that if they did not see the productivity they were expecting from the lobbyist services. He said they could add this to the agenda in the upcoming months to talk about lobbying for the next year.

Commissioner Hinson said this disturbed him a little...Chair asked for him to let them vote on this. He asked for some respect. They just approved \$25,000 and few months ago gave them \$65,000. He said they needed to change their mindset.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked for point of clarity, Commissioner Green made the comment a few minutes ago and asked if he would consider adding the beginning of the development of the Legislative Agenda for next session, even if they had to add workshops to develop to work on the Legislative Agenda for the next session.

Chair Holt asked when they would start budget and that would determine the kind of lobbyists they would get. Mr. Dixon said they would start as soon as possible and would try to start in late April. He also said they would make sure they get reports from the lobbyists on a regular basis. He said they would be active, be progressive and assertive as they possibly could be. Chair Holt added they would always tell you to have things ready in July the year before.

**9. Approval for Gadsden Road Inventory Professional Engineering Services Task Order**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the task order for Dewberry as the engineer to provide professional services for the Gadsden Road Inventory Project for Gadsden County.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. District 5 Striping Project Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval o award the District 5 Striping 5 Project to Emerald Coast Striping in the amount of \$71,064.00.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Quincy Senior Services Roof Replacement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for the Simon Scott Senior Services Building Roof replacement contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie had a question and asked if there would be a guarantee of no change order of this item in the future.

Mr. Knowles said there is an amendment clause that requires written approval if they go over a certain amount.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Hinson had a comment and asked what type of roof was approved? He added that certain types of materials made it hard to get service on cellphones.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use**  
**ITEM PULLED**

**13. Approval of FDOT Grant Resolution**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of Resolution Number 2021-011 and for authorization for staff to submit the 2021 FDOT SCRAP, SCOP and CIGP applications.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13a Approval for Debris Removal**

Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the disaster debris contract for debris removal.

Chair Holt asked for fiscal impact and Mr. Knowles there was no fiscal impact said this was two new contractors

Chair Holt asked if any of the contractors had a history and they need to have one under contract. She asked for some information on the contractors.

Mr. Dixon said the Asst. Administrator comes from "hurricane alley".

**Georgette Daniels, Asst. County Administrator**, appeared before Board. And stated that Miami used Ashbritt. After Hurricane Irma, the State and Homeland Security put measures in place to prevent price gouging.

Commissioner Hinson asked if this was added today. Mr. Knowles said no, he tried to add this to the last agenda and the meeting was canceled. Commissioner Hinson said this was already approved and was bringing the contract back for ratification. Commissioner Hinson said after Hurricane Michael, very few locals got contracts. He added that it sounded like an easy motion but did impact our community and lot of people lost money in 2018. He said they needed to look into this before voting on this.

Chair Holt said they added a clause to the contract for minority carve-out.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were retaining a service provider. If they wait until a hurricane comes, they may not be able to be competitive. Fortunately, when Hurricane Michael hit, they had a contractor under contract. He added he did not believe local sub-contractors would have heavy equipment to move trees, etc. He also said he had no problem with tabling this item so it could be read thoroughly so no-one had heartburn.

Commissioner Green asked if this item had been bid and was going to concur for local workers. He also stated he was going to ask if they could look at this at the next meeting.

Mr. Knowles said on page 13 was language utilizing and hiring local workers.

Chair Holt said she had no problem waiting until the next meeting and discussing this.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TABLING.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

#### **14. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **15. Updates**

Mr. Dixon gave upcoming dates for the calendar:

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 p.m. was the public meeting for the CDBG Program;  
Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30 is Pre-BOCC Meeting and Gadsden Development Council;  
Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> is the Legislative Day at the Capitol

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this was the FAC Legislative Day and Mr. Dixon said yes. Commissioner Viegbesie informed them he had registered but was doing his virtual.

He added Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> was a tentative date from 4:00 -8:00 p.m. for the follow-up for the retreat that was held earlier.

Chair Holt said the Board needed to come up with ideas on the funding they were looking to get.

Mr. Dixon then said for clarity, they kept talking about the \$65,000 from the Board (for the COVID public service campaign), the first \$40,000 came from the Gadsden County Health Council.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

#### **16 Updates**

Mr. Knowles thanked everyone for the well wishes on the birth of their daughter.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

### **17. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

#### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he had phone calls about the Senior Citizens funding and they said they were having issues about receiving their funding and he thought the Board had approved funding for all of them. Mr. Dixon said he would check it out.

He said he also talked with Representative Al Lawson today and was told the Board needed to look into finding one major project they could come together for.

#### **CARES Act**

He said they need to put a date tonight and have a workshop. He said he knew all the money has not come in yet but at least they could look at how to distribute it.

He said the reason he was so passionate about the project, in 2018 they were giving subcontractors \$7,000/day to pick up debris and a lot of people lost a lot of money because they never got the opportunity.

#### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Board for an awesome retreat they had on Saturday and he was looking forward to feedback.

#### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said, as Commissioner NeSmith had stated, the week-end went well and he was excited about the 23<sup>rd</sup> for the continuation of what they started.

He added they had a good board and was very excited about working with the Board.

#### **Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was going to mention when the Administrator was making his comments. They need to plan in advance and asked that Mr. Dixon request that the County be able to submit on time a request to be included in the FAC Calendar.

He stated he also wanted to add marketing pictures from the County. He said he would like to have a picture of the County on his virtual Zoom rather than anything else in the background and wanted to use something that would highlight Gadsden County.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative**

He said he was glad they were working on this. The School Board has a motor home that was currently sitting somewhere and did not understand why they could not reach out to the school district to collaborate with them in using the motor home and work with the Health Council and the Churches to reach different areas of the County to furnish vaccinations to eligible citizens.

**Library**

He was contacted by a citizen about participation in library reciprocity, meaning if someone had a library card from Gadsden County, there was a reciprocity of agreement or arrangement that most libraries have that your card would be accepted for use in their county and their card would be accepted for use in our libraries. He asked if that could be explored.

He said they needed to work toward renewable energy with their fleets. He added that in their budgetary process, they needed to look into renewable energy to get away from gas.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said they needed to do research before they come back to the next meeting.

Mr. Dixon said when he does not give dates certain, it was not because he did not understand, they did not have that kind of staff that can do that job.

Chair Holt said when they give staff the opportunity to do research, they need to do their research as well.

She said she was still trying to figure out how to do a clean-up campaign. Mr. Dixon said they would be bringing them a copy of a plan.

She said they needed to plan a trip to look at some projects, maybe a virtual trip, but needed to plan on looking at some of the things they keep talking about.

She then stated when the cities are annexing, they need to annex the roads as well.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested for Mr. Dixon and the Public Works Director to look at when resurfacing the roads, was there somewhere where the millings are stored?

**Curtis Young, Interim Public Works Director**, appeared before the Board. He said they have done that in the past and when they could, they give the County millings and they could be reused. He explained there were two pits they can store the millings at. Mr. Young said it also depended on if the road was milled.

Chair Holt said it may also depend on what their bid was too. There are times the State keeps the millings.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:55 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**



**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 2, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Hannah Pope, Clerk’s Office**

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6:02 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he would like to add a Proclamation for National Association of Women in Construction, pull Item 12-St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use and add Item 13a-Debris Removal contract.

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**National Association of Women in Construction**

Chair Holt presented a Proclamation to Kerwyn Wilson, President of the Tallahassee Chapter in honor of the National Association of Women in Construction and she spoke a few words.

**CONSENT**

Commissioner NeSmith disclosed he was a member of the organization Men of Gadsden, Inc. associated with Item 5.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN.**

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
  - **September 11, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **October 2, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 4, 2020- Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 15, 2020-Workshop**
  - **December 22, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **February 2, 2021-Regular Meeting**

3. **Approval of the West Florida Livestock Show**
4. **Approval of a Resolution in Recognition of Red Cross Month**
5. **Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with Men of Gadsden, Inc. for Barack Obama Blvd.**
6. **Approval of a Proclamation of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Florida’s North Florida Research and Education Center**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Chair Holt read aloud the COVID statement.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** - Miscellaneous – appeared before the Board. He said he wanted to speak on behalf of M.G.C.B. Inc. that he represented as well as other citizens that have called him about concerns relative to the broadband issue. He knew it had been a challenging time for everybody and has received calls from upset citizens. He said he was here tonight to ask them to work through whatever the issues were to resolve the issue in best way that was most favorable to meeting the needs of the citizens. He said he had read the contracts, at least four or five previous or revised versions of the contracts-and read the minutes from meetings discussing the contracts and the formation of them. He felt it was a good idea for commissioners to review minutes of previous meetings to ensure they do not make statements or take positions that were totally contradictory to their previous positions without reasonable cause. He said he was convinced that with patience, perseverance and prayer, the dispute could be settled to the best interests of the citizens. He asked them to keep in mind they represent many citizens who may seem to be voiceless and quietly suffering under the disadvantages imposed upon them through no fault of their own was often the least, last, the left out and looked over and asked they continue to work hard for the people they serve. He asked them to be patient as this issue was worked out and resolved.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

7. **Approval of the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and said it was for the approval to add the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID to the current CARES Act spending plan.

He stated to date, the County had its partner, the Gadsden County Health Council (GCHC) have already successfully invested \$65,000 in COVID-19 targeted campaigning and this would be a continuation of the funds for the inclusion of the vaccination component of this already effective campaign. He added they were asking the County to become part of a unified message and was asking for \$25,000 and for the Board to approve Option 1.

**Ron Sachs** appeared before the Board. Mr. Sachs thanked the Board for the opportunity to appear before them tonight and spoke on the campaign.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested he considered a number of members of the religious community and pastors to help reach out to their members concerning this and to encourage them to take the vaccine.

Commissioner Hinson said he did not know Mr. Sachs personally, but his issue was he tried to go into the hardest communities in the County. He felt they needed to start reinvesting back into this community.

Commissioner Green said for clarity, this did not cover just Gadsden County and Mr. Sachs said correct.

Mr. Sachs said he was very sensitive to Commissioner Hinson's comments but this media market was very cost effective.

Commissioner Green said he did understand where Commissioner Hinson was coming from. He also had a question about the funding source and understood it could come from the general fund or CARES Act funding and felt they should utilize the CARES funding.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only request was the voices and faces in the religious community be used and hoped Mr. Sachs would consider using the Church leadership from Gadsden County to help people feel more comfortable about the safety of the vaccine.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if this was a continuation and Mr. Sachs said yes. They received money for COVID is Real campaign of \$65,000. This was a new campaign.

Mr. Dixon said the County did not have a tv or radio market and they felt this was the best way to reach and educate people.

Chair Holt said they knew what the population looked like and there was a need to invest something and they have to take the initiative to look after the people in the countryside. She agreed with Commissioner Hinson's comment of the need of local people to be a voice.

Commissioner Viegbesie said \$25,000 to be a part of this regional plan and meant they were moving towards a regional collaboration and at the right time he would make a motion to approve.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THERE WERE QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Green asked the longevity of the marketing plan. Mr. Sachs said the campaign was expected to go through the middle of the summer and felt some of the funders would consider expanding it. He said a lot would rely on their ability to negotiate bonus values, additional air time and space with media organizations, etc.

Commissioner Hinson said again, this was very strategic and he had no doubt of the marketing skills. He said he would not stop because they were helping somebody and they need to come up with a plan.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented for direction or action regarding Gadsden County's Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Mr. Dixon continued and said they were looking to extend the contract for Lawson & Associates and currently the County did not have a lobbyist.

Commissioner Hinson had a question. He stated they set aside \$40,000, he was talking to a consultant and told them of the need for more resources.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the County had a lobbying firm and was told the County HAD a lobbying firm with Lawson and Associates. He asked if there had been reports and Chair Holt said not to the Board but to her because she called them every week.

Commissioner Green he was going to ask their accomplishments from the previous lobbyists they had and how has the County benefited from and what they were going by. He said if they had nothing to go by or anything from the services where the County had benefited, his option would be for Option 2 but would like to be given the opportunity to know what the firm has accomplished that benefited the County.

Chair Holt said this has been a very unusual last three years; they have been in and out with cities, putting monies together going after a list of items they wanted and there was confusion as to the list. She said the lobbyist met to settle it and then it was the Senator at that time told her what the problems were with that and some fell back on the County. That was two years ago and last year the problem came in that some things the cities wanted to pull out, the County stayed and Commissioner Taylor suggested they go ahead with the same list of agenda items they had the year before. Somehow that did not make it to the Delegation or the Delegation said there was a concern. The Lobbyist told Chair Holt that everyone had to be on the same page. She said everything would start the next week and there was not a lot of time. She added that the cities decided they did not want to work on a compiled list this year because of all the confusion in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in politics, you've got to play if you want to win and no-one here has skillsets to play the game of lobbying. He said the position Commissioner Green has taken was what he had written in his notes. The process to follow should be the County Procurement process but now they did not have the time. Session has already started today. The current provider is Lawson & Associates, and they all knew that his height was not just physiological and he has connections. He added that \$25,000 was actually a "pro-bono" fee and he was going to vote in support of retaining them for this year.

Commissioner Green said it made sense to move forward for the sake of time but sked when this item could this be placed back on the Agenda so that if they did not see the productivity they were expecting from the lobbyist services. He said they could add this to the agenda in the upcoming months to talk about lobbying for the next year.

Commissioner Hinson said this disturbed him a little...Chair asked for him to let them vote on this. He asked for some respect. They just approved \$25,000 and few months ago gave them \$65,000. He said they needed to change their mindset.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked for point of clarity, Commissioner Green made the comment a few minutes ago and asked if he would consider adding the beginning of the development of the Legislative Agenda for next session, even if they had to add workshops to develop to work on the Legislative Agenda for the next session.

Chair Holt asked when they would start budget and that would determine the kind of lobbyists they would get. Mr. Dixon said they would start as soon as possible and would try to start in late April. He also said they would make sure they get reports from the lobbyists on a regular basis. He said they would be active, be progressive and assertive as they possibly could be. Chair Holt added they would always tell you to have things ready in July the year before.

**9. Approval for Gadsden Road Inventory Professional Engineering Services Task Order**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the task order for Dewberry as the engineer to provide professional services for the Gadsden Road Inventory Project for Gadsden County.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. District 5 Striping Project Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval o award the District 5 Striping 5 Project to Emerald Coast Striping in the amount of \$71,064.00.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Quincy Senior Services Roof Replacement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for the Simon Scott Senior Services Building Roof replacement contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie had a question and asked if there would be a guarantee of no change order of this item in the future.

Mr. Knowles said there is an amendment clause that requires written approval if they go over a certain amount.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Hinson had a comment and asked what type of roof was approved? He added that certain types of materials made it hard to get service on cellphones.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use**  
**ITEM PULLED**

**13. Approval of FDOT Grant Resolution**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of Resolution Number 2021-011 and for authorization for staff to submit the 2021 FDOT SCRAP, SCOP and CIGP applications.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13a Approval for Debris Removal**

Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the disaster debris contract for debris removal.

Chair Holt asked for fiscal impact and Mr. Knowles there was no fiscal impact said this was two new contractors

Chair Holt asked if any of the contractors had a history and they need to have one under contract. She asked for some information on the contractors.

Mr. Dixon said the Asst. Administrator comes from "hurricane alley".

**Georgette Daniels, Asst. County Administrator**, appeared before Board. And stated that Miami used Ashbritt. After Hurricane Irma, the State and Homeland Security put measures in place to prevent price gouging.

Commissioner Hinson asked if this was added today. Mr. Knowles said no, he tried to add this to the last agenda and the meeting was canceled. Commissioner Hinson said this was already approved and was bringing the contract back for ratification. Commissioner Hinson said after Hurricane Michael, very few locals got contracts. He added that it sounded like an easy motion but did impact our community and lot of people lost money in 2018. He said they needed to look into this before voting on this.

Chair Holt said they added a clause to the contract for minority carve-out.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were retaining a service provider. If they wait until a hurricane comes, they may not be able to be competitive. Fortunately, when Hurricane Michael hit, they had a contractor under contract. He added he did not believe local sub-contractors would have heavy equipment to move trees, etc. He also said he had no problem with tabling this item so it could be read thoroughly so no-one had heartburn.

Commissioner Green asked if this item had been bid and was going to concur for local workers. He also stated he was going to ask if they could look at this at the next meeting.

Mr. Knowles said on page 13 was language utilizing and hiring local workers.

Chair Holt said she had no problem waiting until the next meeting and discussing this.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TABLING.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

#### **14. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **15. Updates**

Mr. Dixon gave upcoming dates for the calendar:

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 p.m. was the public meeting for the CDBG Program;  
Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30 is Pre-BOCC Meeting and Gadsden Development Council;  
Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> is the Legislative Day at the Capitol

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this was the FAC Legislative Day and Mr. Dixon said yes. Commissioner Viegbesie informed them he had registered but was doing his virtual.

He added Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> was a tentative date from 4:00 -8:00 p.m. for the follow-up for the retreat that was held earlier.

Chair Holt said the Board needed to come up with ideas on the funding they were looking to get.

Mr. Dixon then said for clarity, they kept talking about the \$65,000 from the Board (for the COVID public service campaign), the first \$40,000 came from the Gadsden County Health Council.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

#### **16 Updates**

Mr. Knowles thanked everyone for the well wishes on the birth of their daughter.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

### **17. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

#### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he had phone calls about the Senior Citizens funding and they said they were having issues about receiving their funding and he thought the Board had approved funding for all of them. Mr. Dixon said he would check it out.

He said he also talked with Representative Al Lawson today and was told the Board needed to look into finding one major project they could come together for.

#### **CARES Act**

He said they need to put a date tonight and have a workshop. He said he knew all the money has not come in yet but at least they could look at how to distribute it.

He said the reason he was so passionate about the project, in 2018 they were giving subcontractors \$7,000/day to pick up debris and a lot of people lost a lot of money because they never got the opportunity.

#### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Board for an awesome retreat they had on Saturday and he was looking forward to feedback.

#### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said, as Commissioner NeSmith had stated, the week-end went well and he was excited about the 23<sup>rd</sup> for the continuation of what they started.

He added they had a good board and was very excited about working with the Board.

#### **Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was going to mention when the Administrator was making his comments. They need to plan in advance and asked that Mr. Dixon request that the County be able to submit on time a request to be included in the FAC Calendar.

He stated he also wanted to add marketing pictures from the County. He said he would like to have a picture of the County on his virtual Zoom rather than anything else in the background and wanted to use something that would highlight Gadsden County.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative**

He said he was glad they were working on this. The School Board has a motor home that was currently sitting somewhere and did not understand why they could not reach out to the school district to collaborate with them in using the motor home and work with the Health Council and the Churches to reach different areas of the County to furnish vaccinations to eligible citizens.



**Library**

He was contacted by a citizen about participation in library reciprocity, meaning if someone had a library card from Gadsden County, there was a reciprocity of agreement or arrangement that most libraries have that your card would be accepted for use in their county and their card would be accepted for use in our libraries. He asked if that could be explored.

He said they needed to work toward renewable energy with their fleets. He added that in their budgetary process, they needed to look into renewable energy to get away from gas.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said they needed to do research before they come back to the next meeting.

Mr. Dixon said when he does not give dates certain, it was not because he did not understand, they did not have that kind of staff that can do that job.

Chair Holt said when they give staff the opportunity to do research, they need to do their research as well.

She said she was still trying to figure out how to do a clean-up campaign. Mr. Dixon said they would be bringing them a copy of a plan.

She said they needed to plan a trip to look at some projects, maybe a virtual trip, but needed to plan on looking at some of the things they keep talking about.

She then stated when the cities are annexing, they need to annex the roads as well.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested for Mr. Dixon and the Public Works Director to look at when resurfacing the roads, was there somewhere where the millings are stored?

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**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

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**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 10, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Commissioner Green read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**1. PUBLIC HEARING-State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Small Cities Program Public Hearing #1**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This is a cost reimbursement item, meaning the monies had to be spent and would then be reimbursed.

**Sheree Keeler, The Integrity Group**, appeared before the Board and gave an overview of this item.

She explained it was a requirement of the CDBG for a public hearing. The purpose of program is to provide funding opportunity for small cities and counties statewide to:

Prepare for, prevent, or respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19.

She explained the grant cycle opened February 1, 2021; pre-application is due March 15, 2021 the final application is anticipated to be due Summer 2021, pending DEO announcement, and applicants may submit one (1) application for one (1) activity. There is no match requirement.

She explained the eligible applicants: 46 Counties with less than 200,000 residents in the unincorporated areas; 205 cities with less than 50,000 people that have not accepted special entitlement status and have not opted to join an entitlement program; 252 total number of Small Cities and Counties eligible to compete for CDBG-CV funds (including the Cities of Quincy, Havana and Midway).

**Eligible Activities:**

All activities must prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus and have a:  
Direct effect-Costs directly associated with coronavirus prevention, preparation, or response;  
and  
Indirect effect-Economic and housing market disruptions.

Examples of Eligible Activities:

Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or installation of public works, facilities, and site or other improvements:

- Rehabilitate a facility for testing, diagnosis or treatment. Reconstruction of roads/sidewalks (expansion) to allow for social distancing.
- Acquire and rehabilitate, or construct, a group living facility that may be used to centralize patients undergoing treatment.
- Installation of wiring, fiber optic cables, and permanently affixed equipment such as receivers for areas to receive broadband/internet access.

Rehabilitation of buildings and improvements:

- Rehabilitate a senior center, community center or homeless shelter by replacing the HVAC system and/or installing air purification system.
- Acquisition and/or rehabilitation of a building to expand capacity of homeless shelters to accommodate social distancing and isolation.
- Installation of Wi-Fi routers/extenders in affordable housing buildings for LMI residents.

Assistance to Businesses:

Provision of assistance to private, for profit entities, when appropriate to carry out an economic development project.

- Provide grants to support new businesses or business expansion to create jobs and manufacture medical supplies necessary to respond to infectious disease.

Provision of assistance to microenterprises

- Provide technical assistance, grants and other financial assistance to establish, stabilize and expand microenterprises that provide medical, food delivery, cleaning, and other services to support home health and quarantine.

Public Services

Provision of assistance to primarily low- and moderate-income persons.

She went over the planning and stated there were two types: Planning only grants and Project planning.

She then listed the Pre-application Requirements and they must be submitted no later than Monday, March 15, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. Also, the requested information must be attached to the application. She also explained there were procedures in place to ensure the cost has not or will not be paid by another source when it provides financial assistance with CDBG-CV funds. Have to have duplication of Benefits Policy to ensure not double-dipping.

LMI Tracts and Block Numbers (Low and Moderate Income) Summary data for Gadsden County. She explained that 58.3% of the population was LMI and the poverty rate is 19% and was higher than the average for the State of Florida; median household income is approximately \$41,401.00; the unemployment rate is 4.1% and the language spoken at home other than English is 10%.

She said Citizen Participation was very important and they wanted to make sure citizens have an opportunity to know about the program and provide input.

She said the Application Evaluation was critical and they were looking at:

- Readiness to proceed, being shovel-ready;
- LMI Impact;
- COVID-19 Economic Impact to the Community;
- Applicants Experience, Past Performance and Organizational Capacity;
- Need and Justification-project outcome must address the needs identified; and
- Cost reasonableness and feasibility of Project.

One project being looked at was Stevens School and making it a COVID shelter. Requirements are Gadsden County not have resources to construct the facility; does not have available low-to-moderate income housing that can be dedicated to LMI or homeless COVID positive individuals; hotels/motels that are willing to provide rooms for COVID individuals; and schools currently provide disaster sheltering for weather related disaster events and are not suitable for COVID sheltering.

Commissioner Green said he was excited about this opportunity. He asked if they had everything they needed to have in preparation to make sure they were granted or awarded this grant. Mr. Dixon said this meeting was part of that.

Commissioner Viegbesie made a statement of commendation for getting them to where they were currently and felt this was a very good thing.

Commissioner Hinson added to what Commissioner Viegbesie said. He asked the interest rate. Mr. Dixon said the consultation rate was \$17,785; if the County does not get it, they would not pay it. He asked the going rate in neighboring counties.

Mr. Dixon said he was not sure.

Commissioner Hinson asked what the 8% was and Mr. Dixon said that was the administrative fees they could charge.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the amount of money they were asking for.

Ms. Keeler explained page 32 had everything broken down on how it had to be submitted.

Mr. Dixon said there were two distinct things; there was writing the grant and presenting grant and if the grant is granted, there was management of grant and that would allow up to \$50,000 for staff to oversee the grant.

Commissioner Hinson said who would be person that received the \$50,000, would it be staff or another company.

Mr. Dixon said he hoped they were moving toward developing in-house management of grants where they could. But some grants were so specific they would have to see when they got there as to how they would be managed.

Chair Holt said this has been something she has been trying to do for the past three to four years. She added it was a good idea but they would need to go after more funding. Also, there were economic development grants that could be gotten. She added that this was a great project.

Chair Holt asked if Mr. Dixon was able to get with FAMU on what work they had already done and Mr. Dixon said they were reaching out but up to now they had not been able to.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Viegbesie stated they had not asked for comments from the public. Chair Holt asked and there were none.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN RESTATED HIS MOTION AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 10, 2021 – Special Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:40 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A PRE-MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY,  
FLORIDA HELD ON MARCH 16, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the pre-meeting workshop, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Commissioner NeSmith read the COVID-19 statement aloud for the Chair.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Review and Discuss the March 16, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda**

Mr. Dixon introduced the items on the Consent Agenda and Chair Holt asked if there were any questions. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were in the regular Board meeting. Chair Holt explained they were reviewing the agenda before the regular 6:00 p.m. meeting to get clarity and to ask any needed questions before the Meeting.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they were going to be having the pre-meetings to review the agenda, what was the purpose of having individual meetings with the Administrator and taking up their time to ask questions that he would normally bring department heads to the pre-meeting to explain.

Chair Holt said the pre-meeting was not just for Commissioners, it was advertised to the public and the public could also ask questions on the items. If they have questions, it would still give the Administrator and staff an opportunity to bring it to the 6:00p.m. meeting. She observed this in Orange County.

Commissioner Green said the pre-meeting was great but he concurred with Commissioner Viegbesie in reference to this was time consuming as well. If they do meet with the



Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 16, 2021-Pre-Meeting Workshop

Administrator in private and citizens did have questions, they could always contact the Commissioners and ask questions and could go back and answer their questions. He added he was under the impression they were here just for a workshop.

Chair Holt said this was a workshop but not normally what happens. Normally they come into the 4:30 meeting; anything they needed to know, any documentations, they have aides because they were a larger county. They did not have to ask questions at all but if a citizen wanted to comment or had a question, they could do that and would not put the Administrator or staff on the spot. She also said it was this was not a regular meeting and if they could not make it, it was understandable. She said this should make the meeting faster because if they had questions it could be addressed before the 6:00 meeting.

Mr. Dixon said they also needed to add item 4a-Approval of Ashbritt, Inc. for Emergency Debris Management Services.

Mr. Knowles said to also to discuss the Governor's Executive Order regarding fines on masks.

Mr. Hinson said he had reservations regarding Ashbritt. He felt that item needed to be advertised properly.

Mr. Knowles explained it was brought to them back in October and had already been voted on- the only thing changed was to add where Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted in terms of minority participation and local involvement. It has already been bid, RFP'd, two companies selected and had hard copies at the last meeting. He offered to answer any questions.

Commissioner Hinson said he had the same reservations at the last meeting and it should be advertised, it was not about getting hard copy, the citizens should have chance to ask questions. He said he could not support an item that may be catastrophic to the County.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Knowles to address the changes that Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted in the contract.

Mr. Knowles started to explain and Commissioner Hinson interrupted and said it was not about explaining, the problem he had was bringing an item to the Board five minutes before the meeting last time and now again. Citizens had not had a chance to see it beforehand.

Chair Holt asked if the contract addressed the concerns that the commissioners had and Mr. Knowles said yes. He said the original contract concern was minority participation. Mr. Knowles also explained it was not a new item, it was before them in October, just never executed because of items Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Taylor wanted minority participation and local utilization to be added. The other reason for bringing it, the County did not have a debris removal contractor and wanted to make sure the contract was signed because they did not want to be caught once hurricane season started.

Chair Holt said the Commissioner's concern was about it being added to the agenda today and the way it was added last time. Mr. Knowles explained this was bringing it back and adding the provisions that were previously asked to be added.

Mr. Dixon said it could be added to the next agenda.

**Oak Grove Substation Special Exception and Conceptual and Preliminary Site Plan**

Mr. Dixon explained the two Public Hearing items that was asking for special exception and running concurrently. They were both for a sub-station and Ms. Jeglie would be addressing that.

Jill Jeglie, Senior Planner, appeared before the Board and gave a brief description of the item.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 4:51 p.m.*

**Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with M.R. Moore Chapter #21 for Pt. Milligan Road**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and there was no discussion.

**CR 65 (Attapulcus Hwy) SCOP Supplemental Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and there was no discussion.

**Approval of the 5F Music Event**

Mr. Dixon said this event was scheduled to take place in May and they have scaled back significantly with COVID and agreed to abide by CDC regulations. They have tried to be a good partner with the County and have agreed to everything the County has asked of them for the event.

Chair Holt said it would be a good time to bring their Events policy back so they could look at what might need to be answered with it came to events in the County.

Mr. Dixon stated tomorrow was Legislative Day at the Capitol with the Association of Counties and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> was the second part of the Board retreat from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**2. Gadsden County Development Council Report to the Board of County Commissioners to include grand funding ROI, site readiness, talent development, and business engagement strategies resulting in business growth and attraction**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated Mr. Antonio Jefferson was present.

**Antonio Jefferson, Chair of GCDC**, appeared before the Board. He thanked the Board for their commitment over the years and gave a background of accomplished things over the years.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 4:58 p.m.*

**Beth Cicchetti, Executive Director**, appeared before the Board and gave an update of the accomplishments over the years.

Chair Holt said GCDC was established by the Board of County Commissioners and was not a separate group that did not have ties to them like the Health Council. This was established to try to help with economic development.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented and suggested to the two new Commissioners, this was a very vital economic development partner in Gadsden County. He said the County could not

make money if they did not spend it and they needed to look at putting “life blood” into real economic development. They need to look at throwing some “life blood” into real economic development and work with GCDC. He added that Four Star Freightliner also took interns for mechanical engine repairs and two young guys was there from East Gadsden and was a very good chance of them getting employed upon completion.

Chair Holt said this was needed again and was not something they could meet individually on. They need hospitality, they needed to be welcoming to the companies; on the infrastructure part, everything needed to be looked at, electricity, gas, sewer; whatever was not there, they needed to have an idea about going after funding. She hoped they could have 10 more of these meetings.

Mr. Jefferson said one issue happening in legislature was Senate Bill 982 and House bill 6071 and asked them to please pass.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:59 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 29, 2021 AT 5:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerks Office

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Viegbesie called the meeting to Order at 5:00 pm. He then asked for a moment of silence and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Commissioner Viegbesie offered to read the above statement.

Chair Holt stated she thought since the Chambers were now open to the public, they were no longer accepting emails, so people were now able to come into the Chambers. She invited everyone to now come to the meetings. Mr. Dixon stated it was the will of the Board and it was still on the Agenda. She stated they would not be doing it this way any longer. There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Approval of Approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects Request to be Submitted for Gadsden County (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the agenda item and stated it was a continuation of a previous special meeting regarding the submission of programs to the Federal Government. He stated they had received two from the City of Midway and one from the City of Quincy.

He stated Ms. Dilworth was appearing virtually.

**Leslie Steele, Public Informations Officer (PIO)**, stated that she was not yet available via zoom.

**A. City of Midway, Florida (Septic to Sewer Project)**

Commissioner Hinson stated he was prepared to make a motion to approve and

Chair Holt suggested they see if there were any comments Ms. Dilworth would like to make.

(Ms. Dilworth had not joined the ZOOM meeting yet and Mr. Dixon suggested they continue with the City of Quincy's request.)

**B. City of Midway, Florida (Expansion of Eugene Lamb, Jr. Recreation Center for COVID and Emergency Preparedness)**

Dixon stated use the community center for emergency preparedness. The total is 3

**C. City of Quincy, Florida (The Quincy North Star Legacy Communities-Women Entrepreneurship Project)**

Mr. Charles Hayes appeared before the Board and stated that the City put together this project that was shovel-ready and was called the Quincy North Star Legacy Community and was a project that would help women in the local area that was affected by the pandemic. This program would assist them to obtain funding and help grow their business would help women and act as a hub to help them get started in businesses. He said the total amount of the project was \$75,000.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A SECOND. THE MOTION PASSED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE.**

They then addressed the City of Midway's request.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT POINTED OUT A COMMISSIONER ASKED FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THIS MATTER.**

Mr. Dixon introduced Midway's item and stated that in 2015, the City of Midway conducted a septic tank study. It presented the need for central sewer to retrofit the sewers and make way for more growth in Midway to move them from septic tanks to sewer systems. The cost for that would be \$40 Million.

The second item was for the expansion of the Eugene Lamb Community Center and a hurricane preparedness opportunity. They projected that the cost would be \$3.6 Million.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CITY OF MIDWAY'S PROJECTS A AND B AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

Mr. Dixon reminded them of the ribbon cutting scheduled for Hutchinson Ferry Road at 10:00 a.m. the next day.

Commissioner Hinson asked if anyone responded to the email received from FCI. Mr. Dixon stated they had not responded and that FCI was scheduled for the next agenda.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a workshop regarding that item.

Chair Holt asked what was scheduled for the workshop before the next regular meeting.

Mr. Dixon stated computer technology and Granicus.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could have a workshop before that.

Chair Holt asked if they could schedule that before the meeting that was already scheduled.

Commissioner Hinson said they could hold that meeting on Monday.

Mr. Knowles said it was reasonable notice for everything, whether it be a workshop or special meeting, at least 24-48 hours' notice.

Commissioner Hinson stated he felt they needed more time to discuss it, even with a workshop before the meeting, there were other items on the agenda. He also stated they had already voted on this item and it was a 4-1 vote to approve. He stated he would like to have a special meeting on Monday to discuss it, if anyone had issues, they could come to the special meeting and discuss it and not meet twice.

Chair Holt stated it was on the schedule for Tuesday. She asked if he wanted to meet Monday or Wednesday of the current week.

Mr. Dixon stated they would remove it from the Agenda for Tuesday's meeting and would notice it for Wednesday.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if that would be a workshop or meeting.

Chair Holt stated if they held an emergency meeting, it could be discussed and then voted on.

There was round-table discussion about advertising the meeting and when it would/could be held.

Chair Holt stated when things vary from the regular meeting, people complain. She said whatever the board decided would be what they would do.

Mr. Dixon said they would meet whatever notification needed to have the workshop/special meeting.

Commissioner Viegbesie said what the Administrator just stated was actually the comment he made for verification. There was a difference between and workshop and special meeting. If it was an item the Board was going to decide on after discussions, it needed to be a special meeting.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. MR. DIXON SAID THE MEETING WOULD BE AT 6:00 P.M. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 29, 2021 – Special Emergency Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 5:25 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners


ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk


**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 6, 2021, THE FOLLOWING  
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerk's Office

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

 Chair Holt welcomed everyone at 6:01 p.m., called the meeting to Order, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

 Mr. Dixon said he would like to add 9b-Approval of Capital Improvements of Revenue Bond; pull Items 5-Approval of Code Enforcement Lien Satisfaction (Parcel ID No, 3-11-22-4W-0000-00321-0700) and Item 13-Proposed Addendum to the FCI Contract.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

 **UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

1. Ratification Memo
2. Approval of Minutes
  - March 27, 2020-Emergency Meeting
  - July 24, 2020-Disaster Recovery Meeting
  - July 24, 2020-Emergency Meeting
  - July 29, 2020-Disaster Recovery Meeting
  - November 17, 2020-Regular Meeting
  - January 21, 2021-Regular Meeting
3. Approval and Signatures for Special Assessment Liens State Housing Initiative Partnership Program (SHIP) (Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program)
4. Approval and Signatures for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien



5. ~~Approval of Code Enforcement Lien Satisfaction (Parcel ID No. 3-11-22-4W-0000-00321-0700)~~  
Item Pulled
6. **Approval of Code Enforcement Lien Satisfaction**
7. **Approval of Amendment No. 1 to Agreement No. SC108 Small County Consolidated Waste Grant**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.



Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the COVID-19 statement.



**Bishop Willie Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He said all of Gadsden County was praying for their success. He encouraged them to always serve with a mind of humility and be committed to serve to the best of their ability and to always try to be humble and respectful toward one another.

**Don Stewart, 102 Timber Run, Havana, FL** Chair Holt read aloud his email.

“I had the pleasure to participate in the workshops and public hearings for the much needed proposed amendments to the Telecommunications Tower ordinance. I would like to offer my compliments to the Planning Commission, Ms. Quigley and Ms. Jeglie for a thorough and careful consideration of these changes and for carefully considering and accepting recommendations from industry representatives and citizens and striking a very good balance. Therefore I support this amended ordinance and recommend Option 1.”


**Marion Laslie, 5 Dante Court, Quincy, FL** Chair Holt read aloud her email.

“I hope you will support the Planning Commission’s recommendations as presented in the present code. Homeowners and land owners need to have notice of developments that might affect the value of their property. They need to be able to address the visual impacts that a cell tower would have on their landscape as seen from their homes. I understand the need for better access to digital information but do not think that residential property values need to be compromised to achieve this goal. There are many options still available for digital input such as the existing landline system, satellite service, an alternate provider that has better coverage and now the Figgers contract. We do not need our horizon covered with telecommunication towers every 3 miles because the industry desires fewer restrictions. A 5 mile separation was also discussed and is a good idea.

Please be reasonable in how you rewrite the codes and do not degrade the County's tax base by allowing industrial impacts to devalue our homes and property market value.  
Even more stringent setback allowances would protect the value of the County's tax base.  
Thank you"

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**


#### **8. PUBLIC HEARING-(Legislative) Consideration of Ordinance #2021-002 to adopt amendments to Subsection 2102, Section 5800 and Subsection 7201 and 7202 of the Land Development Code**

 Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval and adoption of Ordinance 2021-005 to approve amendments to Subsection 2102, Definitions, Section 5800 Communication Towers, and Subsections 7201 and 7202, Type I and Type II Procedures of the Gadsden County Land Development Code (LDC) pertaining to telecommunication towers.

 **Diane Quigley, AICP, Growth Management Director**, stated for the record the corrected Ordinance Number is 2021-002.


She stated this was a modification to their Land Development Code, specifically the Telecommunications Tower regulations. She said they heard the current code was found to be very restrictive. She gave a brief overview of the changes to the revised Ordinance.

She listed options for the Board to choose from.

 Chair Holt said for public's knowledge, the Agenda was out, the Commissioners are asked to meet with the Administrator if they have any questions before the meeting, there is a workshop before the 6:00 meeting and the items could be viewed on-line.

She announced this was a public hearing and asked if there were any comments from the public and there were none.


 Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the Planning and Zoning considered the possibility of radio interference and gave examples.

 Ms. Quigley said she had not heard accounts of such as he explained; they could only regulate the locations of the towers but could not regulate the frequencies, services, etc. They could encourage co-locations on towers.

Chair Holt asked if any other questions and there were none.


Mr. Dixon said there was a question in the workshop about LEO and EMS using existing towers for emergency management.

Chair Holt said the hurricane was so intense they had no communication because towers were out. She asked about using some of the towers for emergency management and felt they could do so and would require generators also.

 Commissioner NeSmith asked if they needed to include additional language to the current Ordinance. Mr. Knowles asked if they wanted to add that language to the current language. Mr. Knowles explained they could accept or reject the Planning Commission's recommendations and if they wanted to add or take away language, they could do that now. Mr. Dixon asked what the language would be.

Ms. Quigley said where possible, to encourage/require providers to consider...


Commissioner Green asked if they could vote for it contingent upon adding language and Mr. Knowles said if they went that way, he and Ms. Quigley could collaborate with language and then the Chair could sign.

 **COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE CONTINGENT ON THE ATTORNEY AND MS. QUIGLEY WORKING ON ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE AND CHAIR CAN THEN SIGN UPON SATISFACTORY CONSTRUCTION OF THE VERBAGE. CHAIR HOLT SAID TO AMEND FOR EMERGENCY USE. COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE AS AMENDED.**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**


**9. Approval of Lower Interest Rate for the USDA Loan**

Mr. Dixon deferred explanation of this item to Mr. Knowles.

 Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of the reduction of the interest rate regarding the project financing for the new Agricultural Extension Building. He added there was no fiscal impact on this item.


 **COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9b Board approval of the not to exceed \$675,000 Gadsden County, FL Capital Improvement Revenue Bond, Series 2021**

 Mr. Knowles explained this item and said it was for approval of a Resolution which would authorize and approve the not to exceed \$675,000 Gadsden County, Florida Capital Improvement Revenue Bond, Series 2021.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**


**10. Confirmation of a Planning Commissioner for Commission District One**

 Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and explained an existing member of the Planning Commission had recently resigned. Commissioner Hinson has recommended Mr. Eugene Sherman, III to fill that vacancy.

Mr. Eugene Sherman appeared before the Board.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH,  
THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Love Where You Live Campaign**

 Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He said the Commissioners have asked for months for ways to address trash on the streets around the County.

 **Leslie Steele, Public Information Officer**, appeared before the Board.

She said they were very excited about this agenda item and administration was launching an anti-litter campaign “Love Where You Live-Keep Gadsden County Beautiful” on June 20, 2021. The cost of the campaign for the remainder of this fiscal year is \$50,000 and more funds will be needed next year to stay beautiful. She explained they were currently in the pre-launch phase of the program. She added the County would start picking up bulky items beginning April 12<sup>th</sup> – May 13<sup>th</sup> in the unincorporated areas of the County. She stated they were re-launching the Adopt-A-Road program.

She said the Administrator and staff were taking the directives seriously from the Board and was working on setting times on Monday to pick up litter voluntarily during the work day.

She said they would like to launch the campaign on June 20<sup>th</sup> and the campaign deliverables would include billboard, radio commercials, social media, t-shirts, newspapers ads, roadway signs, yard signs, window clings, and the website content would be updated continuously as well as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.


She further stated that community partnerships were where everyone would play a role. The campaign would not be effective if there was not buy-ins from all the Constitutional Officers.


Public Works was working on a budget to bring back dumpsters in each district.


**Vehicle Wrap**


She added they would see if Big Bend Transit was interested in wrapping the Gadsden Express and will purchase more if others were interested.


The campaign was based on five key principals; it encourages personal responsibility and positive action, work in partnership with neighbors, take responsibility for keeping your own immediate area clean, raise awareness in education about prevention of littering and make it easy for people to not drop litter.

 Commissioner Viegbesie said he was elated with regards to what he had just seen. He said people have to be proud of where they live. His only suggestion was he was not in support of yard signs and would not encourage that. He would encourage permanent road signs to be added to stop signs, etc. He also added this would require financial support. He also loved the idea of wrapping the County vehicles.

 Commissioner Green said to not to be redundant, but he commended the Administrator and the PIO in making this a reality. He would also like to see bumper stickers added to the campaign.

 Commissioner Viegbesie said one thing he had asked for, he was in a lot of remote, virtual meetings and he has asked the IT Department to develop a background filter that would help develop and market the County easier.

 Commissioner NeSmith said he could not commend everyone enough for coming up with this campaign.


 Commissioner Hinson said he thought it was a great idea and asked if it was up for a vote tonight and was told yes. He felt before they jumped into it, with bulky item pick-up, they do that every year. He asked about Waste-Pro and what kind of contract they have with them and would it interfere with them.


Chair Holt asked if he wanted to put that on the Agenda and have them come regarding the contract. He said before they jump into it, they needed to make sure they were in compliance with Waste-Pro.


Mr. Dixon said this was just about the campaign. Bulky item pick-up was for a later discussion.

Chair Holt asked the will of the Board.

 **COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THIS PROJECT WITH A REVISION THAT ENSURED NON-CONFLICT WITH SERVICES OF TRASH PICK-UP WITH WASTE PRO SERVICES.**


 Ms. Steele said the \$50,000 they were requesting was for marketing and not the dumpsters. She said they were asking the Board to give \$50,000 to allow Sachs Media Group to make media buys to do the marketing plan.


 **COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AMENDED HIS MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF \$50,000 FOR THE MARKETING OF THIS CAMPAIGN AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT ADDED SHE WOULD LIKE TO SEE “DON’T LITTER” ADDED TO “LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE”. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A COMMENT.**

 Commissioner Hinson said he did not have heartburn with the company, but they paid \$65,000 to the same company a few months ago, paid them \$25,000 a few weeks ago and now they were paying them \$50,000 today. He added they had two full-time people that the County was paying to do marketing. He asked the logic in paying two full-time people and then pay a company for marketing?

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**12. Approval of AshBritt, Inc. for Emergency Debris Management Services**


 Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of entering into a contract with AshBritt, Inc. for emergency debris management services.


 Mr. Knowles said this was discussed in the 4:30 workshop. This was the first of two contracts being submitted for their approval for debris removal services. He explained there was no fiscal impact until such time as they were engaged and he explained the contract terms.

**Holly Raschein, AshBritt, Inc,** appeared remotely.


Chair Holt asked that they may have people that want to work during/after the hurricane. What would they have to do to be certified.

Ms. Raschein said they would love to use local contractors, they have a process and would love to have a number of local contractors that were pre-certified. She explained they could go to their website, [www.AshBritt.com](http://www.AshBritt.com) for the registration site.


 Commissioner Hinson asked them to look at page 2 of 22 where it stated “staff is recommending entering into a contract with two (2) companies” but the option was to approve the contract with one company.


 Mr. Knowles said the second contract will come before them, this contract was only for AshBritt. They will work in conjunction with each other.


Commissioner Hinson said he was unsure who the other company was, they should approve AshBritt and Ceres because it was on the agenda and Staff was recommending two companies. Also, when there is an emergency, the County Administrator was similar to a secretary, he no longer “ran the show”, the Chair would call the shots. He said also local participation was a “pet peeve” of his. The problem he had was all the minority participation was not local. He said with the word “encourages” did not mean they **had** to do business with local vendors.

 Chair Holt asked the attorney, the funds received would be federal and he responded yes, through FEMA usually. She said there was a percentage on minority contracts.


Mr. Knowles said the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 200.321 was where the “encouraged” language came from and was not a requirement within CFR that they do that. He said there is a separate clause that dealt with local participation. He said his only concern was if they mandated and then did not have anyone that could qualify or signed up, how would they execute the contract.

 **Casey Clayton** appeared before Board. He encouraged the Board to not require that language to mandate but to keep it “encouraged”. He said he was new to Gadsden County, worked with his brother and they have a small company that does cleaning and was trying to get into helping their community recover after storms. He felt it was great for anyone that was willing to work to have the opportunity to help their community.

 Commissioner Green said he thought Commissioner Hinson was intending for local participation, they just need to register at the website. He asked the Attorney if they could include environmental services as part of the vote tonight.

 Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Green eluded to his comment with local participation. Ms. Raschein eluded to it, they need to encourage local business owners to pre-qualify to meet the eligibility requirements in advance of a disaster.

 Mr. Dixon said if it was the will of the Board, Ms. Raschein has offered to help.


 Commissioner Hinson said in all fairness, he was not sure what was going on. Almost everyone he knew drove trucks and had bobcats.


Chair Holt said she understood what he was saying. Now they know better and will do better.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked what companies were primarily responsible for removing debris.

Chair Holt said they had D&J and JB Coxwell. D&J was a larger company and those type companies go from one disaster to another anywhere in the country. When the hurricane hit, they had no idea it would be that bad. When it did hit, they were lucky they had two companies already under contract.


Commissioner NeSmith asked if any local companies were able to partner and was told yes; they put ads in the newspaper. She added they were not prepared then, they were now getting prepared.

 Mr. Knowles explained he found in Section 5.11 of the contract, he found where it stated Utilizing Local Resources that “Contractor ‘shall...’” and when a contract stated shall, you were going to do it.

 Chair Holt explained the language where it stated “encouraged” for minorities but stated “shall” do it for local contractors.

 Chair Holt then asked the Attorney why the other contract was not brought forward. Mr. Knowles said he brought the prime contract forth first.

Chair Holt said they were voting on one contract at a time.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked if the language he just read was incorporated in the contract that they had the option of voting on tonight and he stated yes.

Chair Holt asked for the will of the Board.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT AS PROVIDED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson asked where the language was located and Mr. Knowles said in Section 5.11 and was on page 15 of 22.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

 commissioner Viegbesie said since the Ceres contract was ready to approve, and would like to make a motion to approve the contract contingent on providing it to the commissioners and if no concerns...

Mr. Knowles said he could bring it to the meeting the next day and Chair Holt said she would like to see it. Commissioner Viegbesie said it could be added to the Agenda for the next day and asked if he needed to make a motion.

**13. Proposed Addendum to the FCI Contract**


Item Pulled

**CLERK OF COURT**

**14. Updates**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**


**15. Updates**

 *Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:30 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said there would be a meeting tomorrow at 6:00 p.m. regarding the Figgers Communication contract.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**16. Updates**

 Mr. Knowles stated they were still working on the law clerk program and asked to put a workshop together at some point to discuss it in a little more detail and said they could piggyback that on any other workshop to get feedback from Commissioners.


*Commissioner Green returned at 7:32 p.m.*

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**17. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**



**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

 Commissioner Hinson thanked the Administrator and Public Works for providing great service to District 1 and said they were doing an awesome job. He also thanked the attorney for making the last item clear.


He said he would like to bring back as an agenda item the Summer Youth Employment and wanted to bring back 125 jobs. He said they could vote on it the next meeting. He added that mental health was a killer for a lot of people.


He also wanted to add Emergency Housing repairs, he said they had \$20,000 per district before the hurricane.


Chair Holt asked if he wanted to add that to the 4:30 workshop and he said yes and he would also like to vote for \$50,000 instead of \$20,000.

Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Dixon if they were already working on the summer youth program and he said yes.


Commissioner Hinson said he wanted 125 jobs in the summer youth program in 2 weeks.

 He said he had a Christmas gift given to him by the Clerk and he said all the money has been pulled down by the CARES Act, he thought \$3.7 Million and had \$1.3 remaining. He said the citizens were hurting heavily and bad. He would like the Board to discuss having half the money to go to the Residence Assistance program and the other half to the Small Business Assistance program. He also wanted to give people the opportunity to re-apply.

 Chair Holt said that would have to be workshopped and they had to plan that.

 Mr. Dixon said once they knew what the number was, they would bring it forward with the plan for the Board's perusal and it would be workshopped. He added that currently, there was no budget for summer youth, they were working with two big partners.


**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

 Commissioner NeSmith said dates were given and asked for dates of the campaign again. Mr. Dixon said they will get them to the Commissioners.

He said Commissioner Green made a comment earlier regarding the presentation for the website and felt it was very informative. They need a new website but like Commissioner Green said, they were talking about a lot of resources being dedicated to the creation of the website and making it interactive and thought they might need a workshop on how they were going to move forward on that and may need to get with the attorney to see if they needed to do an RFP on it.

Chair Holt she thought they were going to work that out and said she asked the attorney to look up what the State opinion was on using State Contracts.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

 Commissioner Green said he had his hand up when Commissioner Hinson was talking so passionately about the CARES Act funding and the Summer Youth Program because that was something he was hoping the Administrator would give his input to because he had a question. He did give some information in reference to monies they had and monies that they were already spending and was glad he did intervene and give his recommendation on the plans.


He added he would like to have a schedule of road-side cuttings in the districts.

He said he was pleased with the striping of the roads in his district.


He said he received a letter from Janice Harris-Simmons that coordinated the prayer last week and read it out loud.

He also said if someone had to bury a loved one due to COVID and it was on the death certificate, there was a possibility of receiving up to \$7,000 for assistance with funeral bills.


**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**


 Commissioner Viegbesie commended everyone for what they have been doing for the good of Gadsden County and added they should do nothing from selfishness or conceit but with humility of mind.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

 Chair Holt said she thought they were doing better with moving forward and they had to do so in a positive way.

She asked if they could get a list of cutting and striping for the districts.

 Commissioner Green said it was a pleasure to meet the new grant writer yesterday.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked if they had received follow-up information from Dr. Gabrielle Gabrielli yet. Mr. Dixon said they had received that and would be getting it out to the Commissioners

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
April 6, 2021-Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

 THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:57 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 7, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Hannah Pope, Clerk's Office

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Commissioner Green read aloud the COVID statement.

Chair Holt asked Board members to take note, they were now open to the public and if citizens wanted to send in comments to the email account, they will no longer be read in public. The public can now appear in person in chambers and it will allow the Board to move on with the Agenda.

Chair Holt then stated that Bishop Green wanted to speak.

**Motion to Approve the Agenda**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.**

Commissioner Viegbesie made a comment regarding Citizens Requesting to be Heard and felt by not reading what citizens sent in if they were unable to come, from his personal opinion, was impeding them from participating in the democratic process. If they were going to be effective of the democratic process, citizens who have a say should be given an opportunity to come either in person or in writing and what they have stated should be read into the record and let other citizens hear what that citizen had to say about their government. In his personal opinion, he thought they should continue what they were doing in order to improve and to increase democratic citizens participatory providence.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL**  
(Chair Holt never gave the citizens the opportunity to speak)

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Approval of Ceres Environmental Services for Emergency Debris Management Services**

Mr. Dixon stated they had the issue of Ceres Environmental Services being presented by the Attorney.

Mr. Knowles introduced the item and stated this was the second contract for their debris removal and was a very similar contract as was approved the previous night.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT.**

**2. Proposed Broadband Services Agreement Addendum**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and gave a brief synopsis. On January 5, 2021, BOCC voted to award FCI a broadband contract and from that, staff was directed to work with FCI to get the program up and running. Around the beginning of February, the County contacted FCI about the deliverables that were in the contract and requested verification of the devices they were to deliver to the County. In early February, the County arranged for the new Assistant County Administrator, Georgette Daniels, to visit their warehouse in South Florida. That opportunity was missed as representatives from FCI were out of town. The County reached out again in an attempt to verify the units up to 25,000, as required by the contract and was unable to do so a number of times. The County has been in constant conversation with them via Zoom and phone calls and have come to a point where they agreed to either bring the devices here or the County would go there to do a verification. All the opportunities were missed. The last meeting was held via Zoom and submitted an Addendum back and forth. He stated with everything that has been submitted, the County only had one issue and that was delivery and verification of the hotspots. To that point, if them bringing the devices here was a problem, the County offered to travel to where they were being stored. He said that was the only way the County could verify they had taken delivery of that product and then be able to submit then for payment. On February 19, 2021, FCI began distributing the hotspots. In consultation with the Attorney, the County issued a cease-and-desist letter, reached out to FCI on Saturday, subsequently met through Zoom, traded addendums on how they could resolve the situation as the contract stated “up to 25,000” and if they wanted to submit less than that, the County was willing to verify them and submit payment. He stated the County has done everything they knew to do to make the contract go and got no cooperation. He said they last spoke with the COO on March 16, 2021, again thought they had an understanding for verification and was prepared to go wherever they deemed necessary. They were making the arrangements; the County later got an email that he had met with his staff and did not think that was a good idea. At that point, in consultation with the County Attorney, they decided at that point, they had exhausted all avenues and decided to bring this issue back to the Board. Subsequently, documents have been submitted, including attestations for the second part of the contract. The first part of the contract was about delivery of the units and the County was prepared right now, if the Board granted them the opportunity to deliver the hotspots by Monday at 6:00 p.m., they County will be there to verify deliverables and to verify it was indeed what the County had purchased and

the contract can go forward. He added there was no animosity in the contract. The only issue was verification of delivery of the hotspots. He added the County was set and ready to do as the Board has directed, make this campaign go, but in order for the County to maintain their end of the contract, it was important for them to verify and take delivery. It was no different than verifying what was purchased from any other vendor.

Chair Holt said for them to consider from this today on. They have a signed contract by both parties. Move from now forward because then they were talking about remedies. She said the Administrator has said verify, contract says invoice, statements were made about areas of need where the internet was needed and they need a date certain.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he truly wanted this issue resolved and respectfully asked them to indulge him. He then made a disclaimer that he did not personally know nor had he ever met Mr. Figgers. He added his statements today were strictly on process and for clarification of his concerns.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

Mr. Attorney, I think the questions I have today I think will be directed to you for clarification and answers, if you (inaudible) for me to ask of you three or four questions. Do you want me to ask the three or four questions before you answer them or you want me to ask then one by one for you to answer them, then we will get there when we get there?

**Mr. Knowles**

Let's do one by one, Commissioner, dementia runs in my family and will give me an opportunity...

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

Mine to. First of all, to you my fellow citizens of Gadsden County, the Office of the County Clerk was created to carry out certain statutory duties & responsibilities.

Article V, Section 16 of the Florida Constitution states:

"There shall be in each county a Clerk of the Circuit Court who shall be selected pursuant to the provisions of Article VIII, Section 1 and Article VIII, Section 1(d) of the Florida Constitution and states:

"The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall be Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, the Auditor, the Recorder and Custodian of all county funds, which means the Clerk is the comptroller, the CFO.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, you see that the Florida Constitution, with its relevant Statutes, holds the Office of the Clerk responsible for its statutory actions.

Now, Mr. Attorney, here are my questions. But before I go through those questions, my understanding of the Office of the Clerk of the Court and his statutory requirements, did I state them wrong, if you think I did, please correct me."

**Mr. Knowles**

My understanding, Commissioner, I have no reason to doubt that.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

Now, here are my questions. From the item we have at hand, this is for your legal opinion.

- 1) If this contract as provided with the addendum, at this time is approved, in your legal opinion, will the proposed upfront payment be a violation, due to the restrictive powers imposed on the County's Clerk by Florida Administrative Code Rule 69I-40.120 on "Advanced Payments"?

**Mr. Knowles**

Commissioner, yes, the proposed contract by FCI includes a \$500,000, what I would consider an advance payment that would run afoul of 69 and do not have the exact cite in front of me, but believe that was what the Clerk cited to in his Memo, so that would be correct. Yes.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

My other question is:

- 2) If this revised version of the contract is approved, in your legal opinion, will this Board need a budget amendment to pay for the storage, insurance and security of the devices?

**Mr. Knowles**

So, again, if the proposed contract or addendum, sorry, from FCI is yes; they are requesting that the County pay for the rental, storage, insurance and safety of the devices and we would more than likely need a budget amendment to cover that because that is not in the 1.67, 765 I mean. That would be accurate. Yes.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

My third question is:

- 3) If this version of the contract is approved, what is the probability of the County being sued by the service provider if the proposed amount is not paid within the stipulated time? The reason why I'm asking this is, based on the Memo that came from the Clerk earlier this year with regards to the Florida Statutes that I have just referred to, which I have taken a look at and that actually raised my concern as to the direction we are going with this process. That is why I'm asking for clarification.

**Mr. Knowles**

So, just so, I can't speak to it, there have been threats of litigation from FCI. If we did enter into that addendum, we could potentially get sued. We could be in a position where we breached the contract; because the Clerk already said he will not make advanced payments. So, if we don't pay, we could get sued. There is a possibility and a likelihood that FCI could exercise those rights if they are not paid for delivery of the devices. Yes sir.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

So, Madam Chair and fellow Commissioners, that is my concern and that is my position on it. I want this issue resolved. I think it is acting like an albatross dragging this commission down. Let us find a way to resolve it and resolve it legitimately with integrity to the name of this County and the role we play as County Commissioners representing this government.

**Chair Holt**

OK, I think the albatross partially is on our side also. Mr. Administrator...

**Mr. Dixon**

We are not putting forth any addendum. We are back at the simple contract that we would like to see verification and delivery. There is nothing else on the table.

**Chair Holt**

I was about to say the same thing. The addendum does not go with the contract. In order for the addendum to be effective, both sides had to agree, and we have not agreed. That is not part of this proposal tonight. So, we do not have to worry about the movement of money from the budget, we don't have to worry about that. You can be sued for not servicing this contract and then whoever in Court wins. One's going to win no matter what it is. The Clerk knows his job, anyone can read the statute on the Clerk. The Clerk one time would not pay for a teddy bear for Toys for Tots. So that's neither here nor there. What we need to do is service this contract right now. We have to stay on task. Whatever we decide to do, we need a date certain because this has carried on too long. Commissioner Green.

**Commissioner Green**

Before I speak, if we could give the Citizens to be Heard...

**Chair Holt**

Ah, we'll get to them, we can do it at any time.

**Commissioner Green**

Sure, I was hoping that we had given the opportunity to someone from FCI to speak after the Manager so that way we could give input on how we feel about the Manager had already stated. That is what I would like to hear at this time.

**Chair Holt**

Right, they are going to have, ah, Mr. Bebe is on, he's on Zoom now. Also Mr. Pittman's on there. What we are going to have to look at is what is solved now, today. We're going back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, we've been doing that for months. I'm not saying that for you, I'm saying that for clarity. So, Mr. Bebe's going to get an opportunity to speak on this issue. What I'm not looking at ladies and gentlemen, is let's not argue. Let's decide on what we're going to do and then we do that. OK? That's all I wanted to say. Ah, is there, Commissioner NeSmith, you must have known I was calling on you.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Thank you, Madam Chair. This is in reference to a comment made by Dr. Viegbesie. I want to make sure I understand this clearly. So, Madam Chair, do I need your permission to as the attorney a question?

**Chair Holt**

Go right ahead. Once you have the floor, you, you, the attorney's your employee, the Board's employee and the Administrator. So, you can ask either of them, you just don't want to overlap sometime. If staff, you have to ask the Administrator.



**Commissioner NeSmith**

OK, but on yesterday when I...OK, thank you Madam Chair.

**Chair Holt**

Well, I'm sorry, it was overlapping. That was...I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Mr. Attorney, Dr. Viegbesie mentioned that there was, he mentioned there was an Administrative Code and he asked you were we in violation of it by approving an advanced payment to the vendor, or to the person we contracted with.

**Mr. Knowles**

Correct.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

When we entered into that agreement, were we in violation and if so, did that void the contract or impact the contract?

**Mr. Knowles**

Si, I don't think that we were in violation when we did it because we were expecting delivery and verification by someone from the County, by the County representative as was in the contract. The addendum, I think, is what Commissioner Viegbesie was referring to and the Chair suggested that was not on the table today. The addendum, the second contract, the third document that is in Tab 2, has requested upfront payment of \$500,000 upon execution I believe within 7 days. So, if we did that, if we executed that, the Clerk has already said he is not inclined to pay that based on provisions of, and if Commissioner Viegbesie would be so nice as to repeat that Florida Administrative Code, but we would potentially be in violation of that and we could be sued.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

That's only in reference to the Addendum.

**Mr. Knowles**

Correct.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Not the original terms of the contract.

**Mr. Knowles**

Correct.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Attorney.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

Ah, (started to speak)

**Chair Holt**

Ah, Commissioner, just a moment. OK, on page 5 of 23, **Manner and Method of Payment**. Let's look at that, under **Payments**. Just take a minute to look over that. (She gave them a moment to review.) I just wanted to make sure that we clarified that part. OK, now, Commissioner Green, you were looking at me like that.

**Commissioner Green**

No, I was looking at you like that because, I mean, it's in writing what the expectations were in reference to even considering the payments.

**Chair Holt**

Commissioner, (referring to Commissioner Viegbesie) you're not going to tell us again what the Clerk's job is are you?

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

No, I'm not going to tell you what it is because I've already said that into record and I am actually asking to be granted the floor based on the question that Commissioner NeSmith asked for clarification on that quote and it specifically says that "If advance payment is \$25,000 or less, then, we do not need the prior approval from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the State. Since the payment of \$811 is more than \$25,000, then that would be in violation of that Code. If the advanced is more than \$25,000, yes, it would be a violation of the Code.

**Chair Holt**

You're saying, Commissioner, that's if he does not deliver the product. Because it says in 5.1 what the product to be delivered is and it says that then you will give the payment. Look in the contract. Alright, we're good. Alright, now, if we may have Mr. Bebe.

**Germain Bebe**

Hello, good afternoon.

**Chair Holt**

Hello, Mr. Bebe. I'm thinking you may have heard what our discussion so far. What I'm asking for and this is what I'm asking for, the Board Members could ask for other things. A verification, an invoice, everything we need to make sure that we're looking at those areas that do not have internet service and a date certain that we can go ahead and get this done.

**Germain Bebe**

OK, we have provided, for me, this could have been worked out well over a month ago. We provided an Addendum based on what, first of all, I just want to say, I can't corroborate anything that the County Administrator has said here. We never came to an agreement for any verification or part delivery. This was a new interpretation after we had began to do the distribution. We had came into this with a very clear notion from the Board that no-one at the County wanted to take any delivery of this and that's what we came to do. And so, as far as what we're looking for as far as verification, we submitted an Addendum saying is you want 25,000, these are the terms and it changed the entire terms of the contract based on what we initially agreed on. We did not hear any response from anyone from the County for over a month. This was done on February 26<sup>th</sup>. So, this idea that we were in constant communication isn't true. These are things that we submitted in response to the Addendum sent to us.

**Commissioner Holt**

Mr. Bebe, Mr. Bebe, as of today, how can we move forward with this? Service this contract and move forward.

**Mr. Bebe**

Again, we can move forward by remitting payment. We have not violated this contract in any way.

**Chair Holt**

OK, the...

**Mr. Bebe**

There is nothing in the contract that requires verification for initial payment. We have maintained that, we have not changed anything. We spoke to the County Administrator and your attorneys and the changes they wanted and we responded to those changes and that's all that's occurred. We have not changed our stance. Not only that, see, this is where...

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, Mr. Bebe, hold on please if you will, hold on just a minute. Let's say this, we decide tonight to go ahead and service this contract. Let's forget about everything that happened in the past, who said, as old people used to say, 'who shot John' if John's dead, he's dead. OK, now, today, if we have to say service this contract, cease-and-desist is lifted, everything is ready to go, you bring the items, you already have the invoice, we can go ahead and service the contract. Tell me what you think about that.

**Mr. Bebe**

Well, it depends on, well I guess one thing is to make payment. This is what we said, right? We said this, if you want all 25,000 at the County, you are going to have to pay us for all 25,000. It is not fair for us as a vendor to carry all those costs and then you do not pay. You have to pay us for all 25,000 if we are bringing to the County. That why the contract was written the way it is right now. The County has specifically said they do not want possession of it. That's why there is no instructions for possession was on the contract.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, hold on just a second, I have a question from a Commissioner. Commissioner Green?

**Commissioner Green**

So, my question, Mr. Bebe, is how many devices do you have ready to roll like now.

**Mr. Bebe**

I will have to do a specific inventory of that because we already did quite a bit of distribution. It's probably somewhere in the 20 something thousands.

**Commissioner Green**

OK, so, what we're saying is even, we're not asking at this point to bring the devices to us, we are asking for verification of the devices.

**Mr. Bebe**

And I understand that. We simply said to you, what happened here, and I want to walk this back a bit. We got hit with a cease-and-desist order, right? The cease-and-desist was sent at 5:11 p.m. right after we do the first distribution after all offices were closed, right? This was after seven weeks of working with the Administrator and his staff to market events for distribution. You have to understand that. After we spent the money, you hired 22 people in Gadsden County, we spent tens of thousands of dollars on postage we will never get back. Now, we get hit with 'you need to deliver to the County'. You have to understand it where puts us as a minority vendor. It puts us at an extremely disadvantage and a big loss. So again, to say, hey, we want you to stop what you're doing, take on the liability, come here and verify, right, and say, we're then going to decide what we're going to pay you. We simply said, 'well, if you're going to do that, then you have to take possession of them. These are yours now. If you want 25,000, you want to come see 25,000, you're going to have to come to me with a check for 25,000 devices. They are not your devices and if we are responsible for distribution, as it says in the contract, you are responsible for holding those devices, make sure we have access to those devices, insuring those devices. We have to have it like that because if they end up in your possession and they catch afire or it rains out, we're at a loss for the second part of our contract. So, you are responsible. That is why this is written that way. Everything we've said is new. Him saying that he, that we were in February we were, we came, how was that possible when we started distribution February 1<sup>st</sup>? He has video of us distributing on February 1<sup>st</sup>. We delivered an 1100-page, 32-pound document showing that. So, how is that possible, how does that make any sense? How is it possible that you have an addendum in front of you and a response since the 26<sup>th</sup> that required Board approval and the first time we've heard from anyone in the County is today? This doesn't add up and that's where we're at with this thing about verification. It is more undue burden on us that is not contractually required when someone sitting there sends a cease-and-desist order and saying that 'you are in violation'. Well, if we are in violation then you have to have it in the contract that says 'In order to receive this payment', that's what I want you to show me, in order to receive our initial payment, we are required to have, you are to get verification to come to our facilities. That's what we need to have. If you do not have that in there, how could you expect us to acquiesce to that. That requires an addendum. That's the only way. We don't have to acquiesce to that in order to get paid, that's how the contract was written. If we lose that, that's why we got a surety bond to ensure. If the County had wanted possession, the County would have said from day one, I want possession of these to control these. You said at three board meetings, we've been through two County Administrators, two Chairs and every juncture the County did not want possession. The County wanted FCI to handle distribution. We did that. We went above and beyond.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, for this contract, the County did not ask for possession. The County only asked for verification, that's all. OK? All we're trying to do today is service the contract, OK? Now, if we're able to service the contract and we get some resolution today instead of going back and forth, what's the resolution today? We're not asking for possession, just verification. That's all. If you have a verification of 10,000, that's fine. I see the attestations you sent; we see the people in the book; we see the invoice. Commissioners, have you had a chance to look through that? For this contract, the County did not ask for possession. Trying to service the contract today. What is resolution today?

(Commissioner Green started to speak and Mr. Bebe started to speak at the same time.)

**Chair Holt**

Hold on, hold on, just a minute. Commissioner was speaking. Yes sir?

**Commissioner Green**

Well, I was saying, we had an opportunity to look through it as of yesterday and the day prior, but it's a lot of information.

**Chair Holt**

OK, so we received the information. Commissioner NeSmith, did you have...

**Commissioner NeSmith**

I scanned the information, but I did not have an opportunity to look closely at it.

**Chair Holt**

And we looked at the serial numbers in the back; we have the invoice sitting here looking at me and then the new Commissioners had questions about the payment process and that was in 5.1, ah, and in 5.1 it says ah, Mr. Attorney, read please. 5.1 first sentence.

**Mr. Knowles**

FCI shall deliver to the County up to a total 25,000 devices and, in exchange, the County shall issue to FCI a payment not to exceed \$965,000.000 (the "Device Fee").

**Chair Holt**

Now, Mr. Bebe, what we want to do is service this part of the contract, ok? Not take possession, just verify. If you...

**Mr. Bebe**

And I did hear mention of the two. What we're saying and this is where our stance is, we are not contractually obligated to do that in order to receive the initial payment. That's where we are at with this. If you are saying you are going to come to verify them, that means you have possession, they are yours. So why not, as part of the stance for us, we don't owe the County anything in order to receive our initial payment. That's where we stand with that. You are, see what happened is here, after months of having this, a very tiny window in which this, someone had came in decided that this is how we're going to interpret this. That's fine, but, that interpretation of that one sentence comes with no instructions.

**Chair Holt**

Right...

**Mr. Bebe**

So, that already tells you how it was initially interpreted. We don't have, there's no, there is no obstacle to service this contract. You're choosing to do so or not, but there is no obstacle. We don't owe, at this juncture right here for this initial payment, we don't owe the County anything.

**Chair Holt**

OK, you were saying that your company, ah, Mr. Figgers' company, has spent money, we're trying...

**Mr. Bebe**

A lot of money.

**Chair Holt**

Well, we're trying to pay a lot of money, ok? But what I'm saying is, we're trying to come to a resolution because if he's manufactured these instruments, we want to pay. We want the...

**Mr. Bebe**

We sent 25,000 serial numbers. I mean, as far as like the verification, we're not gonna go into (inaudible)...

**Chair Holt**

Let me say this, Mr. Bebe, listen, if you produce and you have in here your invoices, or you producing these people in this book that have received these devices, those the ones that have been received so far, do you not want to get paid for those? Because you already have evidence of those.

**Mr. Bebe**

We want to get paid exactly...

**Chair Holt**

OK, but, but, listen, listen. Would it not make sense to get paid for those? If we said pay me for those today, you will be paid for those as soon as because you delivered. And I'm being very honest with you, and I called some of the people. So, I have been checking and, ah, some of them have called me. But, I'm saying we're trying to come to a resolution. We're not trying to not service this contract. So that's where we are Commissioners. We're not going back and forth, back and forth, who said who what. If it's in black and white, if you have done a job, we expect for you to get paid and for the rest of the instruments, however that's to be done, this Board can decide this in a date certain and we say by Monday and you agree to Monday, then that...

**Mr. Bebe**

We have not agreed to Monday.

**Chair Holt**

I'm saying if, Sir, I said if.  
Commissioner V, excuse me, Commissioner Viegbesie.

**Commissioner Viegbesie**

Thank you, Madam Chair. Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen, and ah, right now we are at an impasse. I wasn't going to say anything about this right now, but my professional part is asking me to because there are ways that we can resolve the impasse in negotiations. On the first thing, the first requirement to resolve an impasse is to negotiate in good faith. I think right now the conversation is searching for that common ground. We cannot resolve an impasse if one or both parties are coming with aggression defending ones' own interest and not looking for a way when in order to find a resolution. I said earlier, this issue has become an albatross on this County. Each and every Commissioner on this County Board of County Commission gets

phone calls. The phone calls don't go to one Commissioner. To claim that everybody has been calling me as if their number is the one that all citizens got the number (inaudible). We should find a way to resolve this, as I said a few minutes ago, without anger, without one being very aggressive and defending their position of their own interest so that we can find the common ground. If we can't, I guess that's why we have three branches of the government; the legislative, the executive and the judicial.

**Chair Holt**

OK, Commissioner, thank you and we don't want to be adversarial when we say defending your own interest, we don't even want to claim that. All we want to do is service the contract and keep moving, OK? Ah, ah, Mr. Attorney, give me your opinion.

**Mr. Knowles**

On which part, Madam Chair?

**Chair Holt**

I don't know, you're the attorney, and listen carefully now. Listen at this carefully. There was never a concern about paying this \$965,000 unless there were instruments being delivered. Right, there?

**Mr. Knowles**

No ma'am. My understanding was, the black...

**Chair Holt**

I think, no, it's right there.

**Mr. Knowles**

Right, and that's where I was going. The black better contract law says "FCI shall deliver to the County", capital C; County capital C back on the very first paragraph. The County is defined as Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners, a political subdivision of the State, 9 East Jefferson Street, #B, Quincy, Florida 32351 (the "County"). So, regardless of what was said in the meeting, the contract itself says that they've got to come here first. Now, whether we take possession of them is a whole different story. I think the word "verify" is probably not the best word, we should use the contract language. Contract language says "deliver to the County".

**Chair Holt**

So, that was no reason to for having these statements about the Clerk. The contract is between FCI and the County, not between the Clerk. (Mr. Knowles starts to speak.) Wait, wait, wait, no concern, who is the contract with; FCI and Gadsden County. OK, the Clerk says what he's not going to do, that's fine. Then that's something we take up in that situation. Mr. Administrator, any comments?

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair, and I've always thought the interest of the Board was resolution and if you are asking for a recommendation, it is to determine time certain in the future that delivery will be made, and if not, that will void the contract.

**Chair Holt**

OK, ah, Mr. Bebe, is Mr. Bebe still on?

**Mr. Bebe**

Yes, I'm still here.

**Chair Holt**

Oh, ok, I didn't see your name up there on the screen. Mr. Bebe, we're looking at a date that we can do verification or, or it says deliver to the County, up to 25,000, OK? Alright, now we're looking at a date. This Board is looking at a date. Give me your opinion about a date.

**Mr. Bebe**

My opinion is gonna remain the same, you know, I understand where you guys are coming from and where we are. I can't, as far as, you know, where we are with the contract, we are secure where we are. It sounds like you're not secure with that, but we are secure where we are with this contract and we haven't violated this and if the contention of the Board is to not pay, may put you in breach, but as far as that I can see, you know, we're not in breach here and the contract is very clear and maybe you interpreted it differently, but we've got ample evidence that the County acquiesced to this and has, and has made this this way and this is their intention. The intention was to deliver to the County residents. (Chair Holt said uh-uh.) That's where I'm at, and uh, I apologize about this, this misunderstanding and perhaps, there may have been too much contention in the initial writing of this contract, but that is how it's written and that's how this has been worked on. So, ah, to tell me know that, that there's another demand being made on us that we have this here and brought to you at our own expense, right, by Monday, is not something I can think, I can abide by.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, that was an example date. I giving your opinion about a date.

**Mr. Bebe**

Ah, I'm going to have, Ms. Brown, are you available?

**Joycelyn Brown, Esquire (Figgers Communications, Inc. attorney)**

Yes, I'm here. (Mr. Bebe said OK.) So, I think, ah, I've listened to everything that's been said, I just want to add just a couple of things. There was a meeting that occurred in mid-February, excuse me if I don't know the exact date, during that meeting, it was agreed that the County Attorney and myself would clarify the terms and conditions of an Addendum. The initial draft of the addendum was provided on February 21<sup>st</sup>; the revision, FCI's revision to the addendum, was submitted on February 26<sup>th</sup>. So, from February 26<sup>th</sup> until today, this is the first day that we've actually received any type of a formal communication from the County regarding this particular contract. We have sent formal emails requesting updates and information, but today is the actual first day that we're actually speaking about this. So, Madam Chairman, and I know you said you want to talk about how we can forward. I think we can move forward by establishing a delivery and payment schedule. A delivery and payment schedule. Now, what I can say for certain, is FCI has provided a significant amount of money and resources into providing into the, the not just the delivery and service thing, because there are actual devices that are currently being serviced in Gadsden County being utilized by County residents as defined by the contract. But, so not only do we have well over 600 qualified County residents actively using FCI services



and actively using these devices, we also have devices that are available for delivery and distribution, right? Ah, to the point that Attorney Knowles has stated regarding the, the actual terms of the existing contract, not the addendum, the actual terms of the existing contract as it relates to delivery to the County, there are several, ah, several communications between the County and FCI...

**Mr. Bebe**

Ms. Brown, can I interrupt one, I have a quick question. Ah, on two occasions, ah, well, first occasion, I sent very detailed videos, three videos requested by Mr. Dixon, which he said, you know, he wanted those videos for some sort of verification of being distributed. He got them and he was satisfied. Then on a second occasion, we brought devices again and contacted Mr. Dixon to arrange for him to come and inspect the devices before we distributed and Chairman Holt and the PIO showed up and did it there. He also then again said he was satisfied and so, this is where I'm at here again. Now that we have to do this a third time where we're saying again, come and verify. This is bordering on discrimination to me.

**Chair Holt**

OK, Mr. ah, Ms. Brown and Mr. Bebe, listen to me and listen to me very carefully. We are talking about a resolution, we're not talking about each other, OK? (Ms. Brown said "Understood Madam Chair.) Wait, wait, wait, let me finish, OK? We're talking about a resolution to this situation. Ah, if we want a resolution, we're going to go after a resolution. If we're going to talk about each other, then we may as well end the meeting and if there is litigation, there's litigation, OK? Now, Ms. Brown, you were speaking, if you want to finish, go ahead and wrap up.

**Ms. Brown**

OK, I would like that. As it relates to looking forward to resolution, FCI is prepared to deliver the devices to the County and actually formally deliver the devices to the County whereby the County takes possession of the devices. When County takes possession of the devices, the expectation is that FCI will receive payment. Now, as it relates to the distribution, FCI does not have a problem with managing control of distribution so long as the County maintains possession of the devices. Ah, at the opening of this meeting that was something that Attorney Knowles had mentioned that a second budget item would need to be addressed as it relates to that. Ah, what I will say is, you know, we do have, we do have a draft addendum, just a draft, we have a draft addendum up on the table. If there are certain elements of the addendum that the County wishes to address, then we are more than happy, more than willing to addressing those and making sure that everything is concise, consistent and is worded in a way that both parties agree to so we can go ahead and conclude and finish out this contract.

**Chair Holt**

So, the one reason why, and I'm sure you heard the statement made by Commissioner Viegbesie, OK. And so, you can see why we're probably not going to take possession of those devices and especially when you have the addendum that if you're not able to get distribution there is fine to County of \$500,000. OK, so since that's not going to happen, I see Board members going no, that's not going to happen. OK, are we going to solve this today or not. If not, we can go home.

**Ms. Brown**

Madam Chairman, if I may, ah, the addendum is currently a draft. So, the initial draft was provided by Attorney McKinney, ah, and we sent back our proposed revisions. We're not opposed to engaging in actual, cordial, constructive conversations to revising the addendum language to something that the County, that would be acceptable to the County. We're definitely open to that. We're ready and waiting for the County to be willing to have this conversation. Ah, so, if, if perhaps, if today we can conclude that we will move forward with refining the language of the addendum, ah, and engaging in active communication setting a date for it to be finalized and setting a date for payment to be made, we can definitely do that.

**Chair Holt**

Commissioners, ah, Mr. Administrator, what is your opinion of that, please, Sir? Are we going back around in circles or are we going to come to an end to this?

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chairman, I...there is nothing more I think I want to happen than this contract. You gave me the job to do and I, there is nothing worse to me than I feel like I have not done what the Board asked me to do. But, I've laid it all on the line. We've offered the addendum, we've offered every opportunity, I think Ms. McKinney and Mr. Knowles can speak to that. I don't know, the only reason I'm here is because I did not think we could go any further.

**Chair Holt**

Commissioners, we're looking at a date certain. Commissioner Green and then Commissioner Hinson.

**Commissioner Green**

I really don't want to go back because, you know you stated you don't want us to do that; but, however, it was stated that you guys had an opportunity to verify when it was here once before. I guess, my question will be then, how many items did you verify, ah, that we can account for even then. If they were verified, then we shouldn't be where we are now.

**Mr. Dixon**

Commissioner, there were just, there was just hundreds, there may have been only hundreds, not thousands.

**Commissioner Green**

So, then that doesn't...

**Mr. Dixon**

Even in the video, there are only, they were loading a small trailer, it wasn't enough....

**Mr. Bebe**

That's untrue, I sent them a video of all 25,000, I sent three videos.

**Chair Holt**

OK, Mr. Bebe, now we're talking about, what we're looking at is this. And Mr. Bebe, I called and I spoke to you and I had a visitor at my house and I brought them with me and we sent out to the Post Office and so did the PIO and we met with the gentleman that had those in a truck, van,

and I asked him, I said 'How many do you have' and he said 300. I said do you have an invoice and he said no. So, in order for me to be to verify that, I would need an invoice and that's what I asked him for. So, maybe I was asking because he said that was what he had and I even road around and helped to see what the distribution would look like. I rode in my truck along with my visitor, to see. And so, I don't blame him for not having an invoice, I don't blame you. All I'm saying is what he told me that he had in the van, and then we gave out, there were two people that we rode with because I had some other things to go do. So, what I'm saying is that, for them to be verified, it would have to be a number that was reasonable and then for the gentleman to say that he thought is was three hundred and then I had to go along with what he said, OK? What I'm saying is this, we are still trying to solve this problem. But now, we want to go home pretty soon, OK? So, now, I'm telling you we're going home. So, what is it that we need, what do you want us to look at, working out that addendum and you pretty much heard about the up-front payment and that all that kind of stuff and I won't get into that because the Clerk and I have some history. So, you don't want to get into that. What I'm saying is this, this is a contract. I would like for us, we know he's getting, we know people are getting some service. We're not opposed to paying him. Can't we just work out something where the items are delivered and you can get payment. You can get back with Mr. Figgers or however y'all want to do it and we can go ahead and take care of this. I'm good to take care of it. Now, Commissioner Hinson?

**Commissioner Hinson**

Yes Ma'am, thank you, Madam Chairman. I just have a couple of questions here, ah, not sure which one should go first. (Chair Holt asked him to speak into his microphone.) I'm just curious, I know you said they sent a video out. If he want to, he, can send the video to us now if he feel like it to the board members so we can see all 25,000 they sent to the Administrator; if possible. Also, I would like, still trying to come to a resolution with this again. If, it said that it got close to 20,000, so how long would it take to distribute at least half of these devices, hotspots to the citizens? Because I know they had a game plan from my understanding. Oh, by the way, let me disclose something. I did talk to Figgers Communications to, some of the representatives, representatives and stuff like that, in the past, and I said this last year and I say it again right now. I don't have a dog in this fight, I just been talking about broadband for the last 6 years. So, I just want broadband in this community, that's what I want. How long would it take to distribute half of the hotspots to the citizens, say for instance, if he has like, 8 locations, how long would it take to distribute at least half of it? Once he distributes half, then we just cut him a check. Or close to half. And other question I got, too, the heartburns, I can tell the frustration, in all fairness, because of the amount of money put into advertisement and marketing, ah, marketing costs. They had flyers and stuff already posted for a certain date and they had to go back and retract. So, all that funding that he had out there, he lost everything based on that distribution and Saturday was supposed to be a big day, I'm assuming. Maybe since they had that out there already and how can they recoup those costs, I mean recover those costs as well? We have paid, comparing apples to apples, we paid Integrity x amount of dollars to build a portal, to build a database, and all. We paid Integrity before everything was over with. I think in the first month or so, I'm not sure. And they built, the same company did the same thing. They built the database, they built the portals and everything else, not just hotspots is one thing. They also built everything that went along with that and advertising, whole nine yards and that's a cost to it. That's a cost. So, I can understand the frustration, it's not the frustration, it's just really how saying how (inaudible) speak, right? So, I'm not frustrated how someone speak, that just how people speak in certain groups. I'm not intimidated or I don't think that he mad or

anything, he just (inaudible) what he saying. So, ah, my thing is how can we cover that costs and maybe intangible costs as well as tangible costs. So, and the next question is that how long would it take for, first question again, how long would it take to distribute half of the devices, the hotspot devices to the citizens. After that, just cut them a check. That's just a question.

**Chair Holt**

Alright, Mr. Bebe? Did you hear the question from Commissioner Hinson?

**Mr. Bebe**

Yes, I did. Thank you for the question. When we began the distribution, I believe we were on pace for 1,000 a day, close to. The first day of distribution we did well over 500, we stopped only because of security reasons, we didn't have any officers out there and the crowds were getting a little bit too rambunctious for us on the staff that we had there. The second day, ah, after we got the cease-and-desist, we still did show up to the next distribution spot to let everyone know we had, I would say already 300 people in line at 7:30 in the morning. So, I think we were really on pace to do at least, at a minimum, 500 a day to 1,000 a day.

**Chair Holt**

Commissioner Hinson, did you have something?

**Commissioner Hinson**

Well...

**Mr. Bebe**

Also, I sent you, I sent everyone an email of the verification videos that I did send.

**Commissioner Hinson**

Personally, I saw the (inaudible) clear and it was impressive to me. Not only did they had to sign in, as a matter of fact, I took a picture of it. It's impressive, so, I do, I can understand all parties. You got to do what you got to do to make sure things work. And, I'm sorry, I took a couple of pictures myself, I got it here so...Here we go here. They sent the invoice, Table of Contents, Invoice, the security bond, ah, timeline of events, Letter of Attestation, Device International Mobile Equipment Identity, Device Data usage Report, too, as well and what was impressive, like I said, they created this database that they had the citizens' name, gender, address, phone number, children, they had a part for that and they also had the ah, date of birth, race, ah, what County they was from, emails, and it had the address as well. And, also like Commissioner, Madam Chairman said, they had some other information, some additional information that was there. So, I was impressed. They showed, they showed that people had to sign this too as well. It's very professional. Bit, we, it's OK in my humble opinion, again, I'm not going against it, I'm just comparing apples to apples. I think Integrity doing a wonderful job. I'm not going against anyone. But, we just wanted Integrity just to do this, just to do this, not...We just want Integrity to provide the service, right? They provided the service plus the devices and all, so what I'm saying, they did, they did part of it. Like you said, we not trying to go against it, we just trying to come to a (Chair Holt said "resolution") a resolution how can we can all benefit from this and move forward so the citizens can get this because I know in Concord they called me up and I hope that we want to get this resolved. One of the first places is in Concord. So, they will be able to get, whatever...

**Chair Holt**

Commissioner, listen, on this item, in order a resolution, the same I named in the beginning have to be met, OK? So, back to that point, date certain. Because, in order for them to get paid, we have to have some stipulations. We want them to get paid, OK? Now, how do we get that done? They're saying to negotiate ah, this addendum, which has to be voted on by the Board, OK? Does the Board want to take possession of the instruments, does the Board want to pay the insurance, does the Board want to store the instruments? That's what the Board needs to decide, even if we look at the addendum. Does the Board want to just service the contract we have in front of us, forget the addendum? Those are your choices. Now, if you want to consider the addendum, that means you have to negotiate back and forth. If you are going to say let's vote on the contract as it stands today with a date certain, then that's what you do. Now, those are your two choices.

**Commissioner Hinson**

So, in thirty days, based...

**Chair Holt**

Hold on, hold on just a minute, I got a hand right there.

**Commissioner Hinson**

I apologize.

**Commissioner Green**

So, there' our two choices, but, however, we haven't got an agreement from FCI as to (inaudible) choice.

**Chair Holt**

Well, you, we gonna make a decision one way or the other. Because if you do nothing, that's a decision, OK? We can either say we're gonna look at this contract, you want the addendum to be looked at, or you want to do nothing and the contract is going to die anyway. Those are the options. Commissioner Hinson?

**Commissioner Hinson**

I noticed this is calculated under here, if you, in thirty days, if you distribute 500, from my math I have here is \$15,000 or something like that. And so, that's half.

**Chair Holt**

So, Commissioner, listen at me carefully, the distribution is the part you're talking about. We're talking about the distribution has stopped, ok? Everything stopped. If you want the distribution to continue, that means you got to go back and decide on something in this contract that will make it continue. OK? You cannot have it so that we skip over any parts because we don't have to come back here again. So, Board do you want to look at the contract and the information that was sent? Have you had a chance to look at it in the book? Commissioner NeSmith?

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Yes, Madam Chair. The issue, from what I have heard from all parties, the issue that is, the issue that is important to us, to all parties, seems to be the word delivery. Is that correct or incorrect?

**Chair Holt**

Very important.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Mr. Bebe?

**Mr. Bebe**

Yes sir?

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Is that the, is that the word that causing the hang-up?

**Mr. Bebe**

The interpretation of it. But here's what I would say, because, you know, I agree with Chairman Holt about not continuing to go back and forth. For us, even though we weren't obligated to verify, because if you look at it, two separate things. There is verification and there's delivery, right? Both those, both those have been used against us here and if we're going to talk about verification, on our behalf, we consider that already done because on three separate occasions we arrived with the devices and including the day of distribution when we had almost all the devices, the entire Board was invited...

**Commissioner NeSmith**

OK, Mr. Bebe, may I ask a question? Madam Chairman? (Chair Holt said to go ahead.) OK, Mr. Bebe, what I'm hearing from you is that you, you delivered, that you arrived in Gadsden County with 25,000 devices, or am I misinterpreting that?

**Mr. Bebe**

Pretty close to it, pretty close to it. And that's where, I apologize for how my tone has been here and that's where my frustration has been. Because, I believe that we worked to get to the point. I want it to be mentioned here, just so we don't have to go back in the past real quick, but the day of distribution, we had a meeting with County administration. I left the distribution to meet and I said to Mr. Dixon, if you want to verify, come down, we're here, we're less than two minutes away. Again...

**Chair Holt**

Hold on, Mr. Bebe, hold on.

(Several people talking over each other and was hard to understand.)

**Mr. Bebe**

That's why we're saying, when we say delivery, we, you're asking this, you're asking us to bear more costs in order to get paid. That's where we're having the angst here.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, OK, now, the reason I did not want to go back and forth in this, delivery is to the County. The reason it's saying capital "C" is because it represents the Board. OK? Now, I don't want to get back who says what, like I said, who sots John, who cares, OK, John evidently didn't care. What I'm trying to get to, is that, first of all, if delivery is a problem and we have been

trying to be very flexible. I'm trying to be flexible here. What's your definition of delivery and that's what Commissioner NeSmith is going after. He wants to know how he can solve that problem.

**Mr. Bebe**

Our understanding of delivery and based on all the negotiations we have with the Board and the understanding of that, it was for us to begin delivery to the County residents. That is what we began to do immediately once we got the contract. That's where I believe the issue arrived is once we were told after we started distribution that we were to deliver somehow to the actual County building, I'm not quite sure, but, that's where it's at.

**Chair Holt**

Right, right. That has been the misunderstanding.

**Mr. Bebe**

OK.

**Chair Holt**

That's why when I said in 5.1, it said the same thing it said in the first paragraph. The County with a capital "C", OK. Now, Mr. Bebe, hold on just a minute because Commissioner NeSmith has another comment or question.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Mr. Bebe, I want to make sure you hear this question. I want to make sure you hear this clearly and Madam Chair...so, Mr. Bebe, your understanding of that term delivery meant that you were, you were going to deliver 25,000 devices in the hands of 25,000 residents to Gadsden before you received the first payment?

**Mr. Bebe**

No. It was for us to begin delivery up to 25,000; once we began delivery, we were qualified to get our first initial payment. We're not talking about the entirety of the contract. We're talking about the terms or prerequisite to receive our initial payment.

**Chair Holt**

OK, ah...

**Commissioner NeSmith**

OK, Madam Chair, OK, there seems to be some confusion with that term. Because when I read that, my interpretation is different.

**Chair Holt**

And your interpretation was?

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Well, again, I didn't know that was the interpretation of the, of the, of FCI that they would, as soon as they started to deliver the items to the residents, payment was due.

**Chair Holt**

That was their interpretation. That's why I...

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Madam Chair, what was our interpretation?

**Chair Holt**

It's right there in 5.1. So, listen, listen, I'll be very honest with you. View these items, they go on about their business, do what they do, OK? That was why, ah, the Administrator and a couple of others said, let's see them, when you see them, go distribute. We can turn in our invoice, OK? So, their interpretations was different, OK? Where we are now. They have these in this book that they have distributed, OK, to the residents. Alright, Mr. Attorney?

**Mr. Knowles**

Alright, thank you Madam Chair. Commissioners, I had suggested this originally and maybe a solution would be, again, do a pay as you go; if FCI delivers 600 and some odd hotspots, they deliver them, residents are signing an approved attestation form pursuant to the contract, it's approved by the County and whoever our official representative is, they submit that, folks are qualified as determined by us, they get paid. They deliver 10,000, they get paid for 10,000. They deliver 10, they get paid for 10.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Attorney, since you see there is a difference in the interpretation and Mr. Bebe and FCI saying that we have sent this money because their thinking they have delivered to the people. So you see where the...

**Mr. Knowles**

No Ma'am, I don't.

**Chair Holt**

OK, but it happened. I'm saying...(Mr. Knowles started to speak.) Ah, Ah, let's see, let's see, I didn't say what you may have thought was logical, I said for your interpretation. OK, Commissioner Hinson?

**Commissioner Hinson**

Madam Chairman, ah, man, this is interesting. The interesting thing is, is, I want y'all to hear this real quick. Unfortunately, the interesting thing is that unfortunately we got a problem. We got a major problem. I want you to listen to this real quick. "FCI shall deliver to the County up to a total 25,000 devices." Unfortunately, we got a major problem, because we put ourselves, unfortunately, (continued to read) "...and, in exchange, the County shall issue to FCI a payment not to exceed \$965,000". Now, the issue here is where we have a problem. Logic and everything else, apply the math and everything else, and unfortunately, it's a bad contract.

**Chair Holt**

We already decided that.



**Commissioner Hinson**

Up means that, from 1 – 25,000. So, if they deliver one, that’s just, legally, we put a legal documentation here that can hurt the County.

**Chair Holt**

Now, listen at this interpretation.

**Commissioner Hinson**

It’s not an interpretation, it say up to...

**Chair Holt**

Sir, listen at this, “and, in exchange, the County shall issue to FCI a payment not to exceed \$965,000; it could be \$1.00, it could be \$965,000, just can’t exceed it.

**Commissioner Hinson**

That’s right, just can’t exceed.

**Chair Holt**

Either way...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Either way, that’s what I said, that regardless of, it’s a crazy situation and too much here...

**Chair Holt**

Too much leeway...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Too much leeway for both sides. For one, it say “shall deliver to the County up to 25,000, in exchange the County shall issue to FCI a payment not to exceed \$965,000. So, we can literally give them \$1.00 to as well. And so, reality is that we kind of up in the air here.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Attorney, that’s your area.

**Mr. Knowles**

Madam Chair, I’ll be honest, this was not the contract I advised the Board to sign.

**Chair Holt**

Yes, you did.

**Mr. Knowles**

No Ma’am, I did not.

**Chair Holt**

She brought it to me.

**Mr. Knowles**

I cannot speak to this, FCI sent this contract over pre-signed, pre-authorized, with ambiguity terms that's in here that says shall not be drafted against either party if their late (inaudible) ambiguity. So, again, the contract says shall deliver to the County, those are words FCI wanted.

**Chair Holt**

OK, let me clarify that a little bit. I think we were cutting the ribbon out there at the Extension Center when staff brought it to me, OK, with your recommendation. But, that's neither here nor there right now. We're gonna solve this, OK? Now, Mr. Bebe, Mr. Administrator, what do you think? Mr. Administrator?

**Mr. Dixon**

The question remains to put FCI in a position to be paid. That is the goal of the County. We're not trying to stop anybody from getting hotspots. I think we're getting sideways and we're talking about everything except let's verify the hotspots and send them home. That's all we're talking about, Madam Chair. This is not difficult.

**Chair Holt**

OK, Mr. Bebe? Mr. Bebe?

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 7:23 p.m.*

**Mr. Bebe**

Yes Ma'am, yes?

**Chair Holt**

We want to give you a check for the hotspots. You guys want to get paid for the hotspots. How can we come to a resolution here? Pretty soon we gonna be beating this gavel and going home. Now, we're supposed to work so we can't complain, OK? Can you come up with a solution Mr. Bebe?

**Ms. Brown**

If I can, if I can answer that, Madam Chairwoman, my, my proposal will be to, first and foremost, allow us, so, as it relates to the contract terms as far as the devices delivered to the County, this was something that Mr. Bebe had addressed and I'll state it in more specificity. The reality is there were several Board meetings and County specifically stated that the County did not want to physically receive the devices. There was, there was an acquiescence on behalf of the County whereby the County worked with FCI, put out press releases so on and so forth and assisted with the marketing efforts to get the devices delivered directly from FCI to the County. So, the conversation as it relates to delivery to the County is not, and from my perspective, is moot, right? But as it relates to how we can move forward and how we can get a resolution tonight, my recommendation would be first and foremost, for the devices that were actually delivered to County residents, for a check to be delivered and cut by the Clerk and delivered to FCI for those devices immediately. As it relates to the devices to be delivered, then my recommendation would be to allow FCI's attorney, myself, as well as the County Attorney, Mr. Knowles and Ms. McKinney, to discuss this addendum, actively, because the addendum has been in the hands of the County Attorney for over a month, to discuss those terms, get to a resolution of those terms by a certain date. So today is April 7<sup>th</sup>, so I would say that no later than April 14<sup>th</sup>, within a week,

within a week's time for us to have an executed addendum to where the delivery terms are very clear, the payment terms are very, very clear, there's no more ambiguity, both parties are on the same page.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 7:26 p.m.*

**Mr. Bebe**

Ah, Ms. Brown, Ms. Brown, I ah, I believe, I'm not opposed to the idea, but I believe ah, the Board, if, it sounds like the Board is looking for a resolution this evening. So, I want to levy an option here for that. We started all this work, we spent a lot of money, a lot of headache, I don't think anybody can refute that. FCI did come through and answered the bell. We did what we said we were going to do. There is an exception here as far as interpretation of essentially who was supposed to get the devices first it sounds like. So, for me, everybody knows we have these devices, devices were being given out, we're activating them, and people were very satisfied. I commend the Board for taking on an initiative like this with no precedence and no case study, trying to provide some sort of a solution for a problem that's been in this community. I think we can all feel good knowing that those concerns were validated by the response to this. So, for me, if there's some type of agreement that the County is going to pay us the money and we can exchange the money for these devices, then we can arrange that. If you're going to pay us for all those devices, pay us our initial payment via our invoice, then we'll arrange a time to deliver the devices. If you want all 25,000 to come to you, then arrange for the payment of all 25,000, you guys issue and bring a check; if you want it simultaneous the same day, we'll do that. But I don't want to be in a position of essentially, this is what I'm looking at, precedence of coming out to, us basically on credit, 25,000 devices and not get payment.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, Mr. Bebe, Me. Bebe, there's no...I think Ms. Brown was on a roll and everybody was pretty much happy with Ms. Brown. When you start talking about that other stuff, everybody...

**Mr. Bebe**

Here's my concern, Madam Chairman, this is my concerns...

**Chair Holt**

Go ahead.

**Mr. Bebe**

Negotiations that we have had with, have not went well. We have continued to come back here with nothing...I would appreciate it if we can take clear, decisive action tonight.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, I don't (inaudible) and I haven't been happy. So, listen, let's say this, let's let Ms. Brown start speaking again. So, Ms. Brown, we can kind of hear something going on, then we're going to hear what the Administrator has to say and this Board's going to make a decision, at least somewhat. If not, I'm going to beat this gavel and we're going home. OK, Commissioner Green and then Ms. Brown please.

**Commissioner Green**

Thank you. I keep saying, or I keep hearing that they will give us the devices. We don't want the devices and so, that's not an option for us right now, because we don't have, we don't want to have to store them, the responsibility of them, we don't want the responsibility of distributing the devices either. And my biggest, another concern I have that is, once we pay for the devices, I want to make sure that we're still intact to the devices that we don't get rid of, that we still be allowed that refund of the monies that we talked about in the original contract. So, when you say give us the devices, then it's almost like that they're yours, do what you want to do with them. We can't do that. I just want to make sure that we don't confuse that and as you stated, Ms. Brown was on a roll and she had my attention.

**Chair Holt**

Ms. Brown, are you still there?

**Ms. Brown**

Yes Ma'am, I'm here Madam Chairwoman.

**Chair Holt**

Let's go back to what you were saying.

**Ms. Brown**

OK, so, if we're talking about getting a resolution tonight, and to the point that was just made by the Commissioner, I believe that was Commissioner Green, as it relates to in the event that the devices, that if overpayment is made for devices, or something along those lines, there is a surety bond in place and the whole purpose of that surety bond is such that, that the County would receive monies returned for any devices that were paid for but were not delivered, right? And so, so, my, you know, while I understand and I respect, and I'm listening to everything that is being stated here, right, and while I understand and respect the fact that the County has a different contract interpretation that is vastly different from the contract that FCI has, what we're faced with is how do we move this forward, OK? So, let's just focus on the facts. The facts are that we have well over 600 devices that are currently in the hands of qualified County residents, attestations have been provided for, the detailed invoice that was requested during the Board meeting in February has been provided. At the very least, at the bare, bare minimum, the bare minimum, those devices and the services that have been rendered should be paid for immediately, and by immediately, today is Monday and that payment should be rendered to FCI no later than Monday, OK? That's at the bare minimum. As it relates to moving forward and the verification of the devices that is currently being requested, then we do not have a problem, FCI does not have a problem with actually delivering those devices to the County. Now, if we're talking about the nuances about delivery and nuances about payment, there is a draft, it is just a draft, an Addendum that was provided on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Let us take the time, today is Wednesday, take the time for the remainder of this week, to hash that out, get to a final resolution, and maybe, preferably no later than Monday, have terms that are agreeable to both parties, get that addendum signed so we can carry on this contract. I feel as though a lot of this conversation during, over the past hour and half, you know, a lot of this could be resolved if we were to just work together, actively work together to get the addendum language to a point where both parties agree, right, and we can go ahead and move forward.

**Chair Holt**

OK, if you decided, we decided to take the vote to pay for the hotspots that have been passed out so far, if this Board decided to do that, we did not guarantee you payment by Monday because we have to send it to the Clerk, OK? So, we could say we agree to do this, if we agree to do this, Mr. Attorney, if we agreed to the term of paying for the 600 devices, we would have to vote on that today, then that has to be given to the Clerk. I sure Ms. Brown would invoice 600 from FCI, OK, and then we have to look at that turn-around time, if we were to do this. Now, the reason I'm bringing that up is because that Ms. Brown just mentioned that that maybe something that would work. I'm just reiterating what was said. Mr. Administrator, what do you think?

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair, one issue is confirmation. You can't just tell the Clerk to write a check.

**Chair Holt**

Well, you have your book with your people in it that says they are getting service.

**Mr. Dixon**

We have to confirm. That's not Monday. Second of all, I don't think accepting that policy, I think it accepts their interpretation of the situation and I think their interpretation is, the attorney was wrong. Our interpretation is correct and if we are going to resolve this thing, let's resolve one big pot. Our deal is to pay them \$900,000, if they do, we offered them if they wanted to do 5,000, do 5, we'll send in payment for 5,000. They want to do 10, do 10, we'll send in payment for 10,000, but the verification of the deliverables still has to happen. It doesn't matter, that position we have won't go away and we don't have that (inaudible) 600.

**Chair Holt**

Right, may I say this, OK, let's say for example, that they do have 10,000, they said OK, we'll allow you to verify 10,000, but they've already passed the others out because they interpreted that differently, OK? So, then we can verify that those people have those devices and they can get paid for those devices, is, are you saying that's possible or not possible?

**Mr. Knowles**

Could you repeat that Chair?

**Chair Holt**

OK, they passed out 600 devices and he's given us serial numbers in this book that's saying these are the devices that they had, OK? Is it possible to look through this documentation saying that they have 600 people that have received these and pay them for the 600, along with the 10,000 if they present, let's say example 10,000, because...

**Mr. Knowles**

I imagine that if they are verified, sure. I mean, I don't see why not.

**Chair Holt**

I can see easily that the people already have them, but they've got to verify the others...

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair, the only difference now, instead of verifying them on the front end, we got to go find 600 people and verify...

**Chair Holt**

Or (inaudible) 600 people. No, no, what I'm saying is...

**Mr. Dixon**

I understand what they sent us. That's like those pictures, they sent them, a picture can be of anywhere, any time.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Dixon, I'm trying to be hypothetical here...

**Mr. Dixon**

I am too. But I want to be real about it. That we asked for verification on the front end as opposed to having them go out to 600 people.

**Chair Holt**

But this has already happened, once this is over, it's already happened. We can't go back and make them verify on the front-end, OK? If, it would be nice to have these run off on a spreadsheet and do call and verifications. I'm just saying that, and not having to go to their houses and verify. But, I'm just speaking on what's already been given out. Commissioner Green?

**Commissioner Green**

Thank you. My question to FCI is, what is, why is there a problem with someone coming from the County to your facilities to get accountability?

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at 7:38 p.m.*

**Commissioner Green (continued)**

That's the thing that we've been asking for, you know, the majority of this meeting is accountability or to give, to see how many devices are there. It's not that it's going to cost you to bring the devices here if someone's going to fly there or drive, however to get there to do the accounting. So, it seems to be, that seems to be the problem we're trying to figure out why is that a problem.

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

Is that to...

**Commissioner Green**

That's to FCI, Brown, or Mr. Bebe.

**Vice Chair Viegbesie**

FCI, or someone, Ms. Brown or Mr. Bebe, could you respond to Commissioner Green's...

**Mr. Bebe**

Yes, ah, could you repeat the question?

**Commissioner Green**

Is there a problem with having someone from the County to come to the warehouse so that way you don't have to procure any expense in bringing however how many devices down here just for the accountability of the County.

**Mr. Bebe**

That's also where we have the issue, if there is an expense and so, it, it's just like repeating a lot of this right here. We've been through three situations where a verification was done and said 'hey, this is OK' and every time it's escalated more. So, when you say somebody is going to your warehouse, it means that you stop everything in your production, in our production facility. I've got to take insurance on you and run through that for however long it's going to take for you to count 25,000. Now, right, on top of that, right, at this point, right, because of all the things that, you go to the Board so you're not here, you know, you haven't been involved in the direct discussions. It's almost to the point where we really have no trust in anyone there at the Administration for what we've been through. So, again, it's, we've have had, I know people don't want to talk about what has happened, but it's all very relevant...

***Chair Holt returned at 7:40 p.m.***

(Mr. Bebe Continued) We have been through this several times and at each level we were given a green light, we were fine. It's all the way up until we, here we are distributing that we're just getting slammed and at every level, no-one cared about the vendor. No-one cared about what we were going through, what our, where our money is. So, it just, to me, I know everybody feels confident that somehow this is going to be worked out, it doesn't feel like there is an appetite on the Administrator to work anything out. There's no appetite for even to pay for the 600 we have distributed. There was no appetite really to even verify, we could have verified in Gadsden County the first day we were there on the 16<sup>th</sup>. So, I understand where you're coming from and it sounds very, very logical, but a lot of things were very, very logical from the very onset of this and we're still here, and we will still be here again if it goes right back to the (inaudible). It may take three days, it may take five weeks, yet, nothing has changed. We have provided everything that he asked, that we were asked to give up until now. If so, again, you may think there's no, no ah, money that we had to come out, yes we do. It doesn't work like that. See, show me the picture of anybody with Gadsden County going to Amazon to verify office chairs. It doesn't happen like that because Amazon's not going to stop their distribution center so you can walk through it. It doesn't work like that. And so that's where we're at with the, that's why it wasn't put in the contract. There is no verification, no verification was put in the contract.

**Chair Holt**

OK...

**Mr. Bebe**

The only part we can say that we can discuss right now, as far as I'm concerned, the verification, that part, is not in the contract. That can be out the window. We can discuss take delivery and

go back and forth about that, because for us, that's where we're going back and forth, this whole take delivery part. It's two different arguments.

**Chair Holt**

Mr. Bebe, alright, Mr. Bebe...OK, thank you. Commissioner NeSmith?

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Ms. Brown, are you still on the line?

**Ms. Brown**

Yes, I'm still here.

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Is there a possibility that we could send someone down to your location, look at the, look inside the warehouse and verify the 20,000 plus devices?

**Ms. Brown**

There are, there are two things that I would like to address to that. The first is what would be preferable would be to provide a video of all 25,000 devices, identifying with specificity how many devices are in each box; how many boxes are present and how many boxes are available for immediate distribution. That's number one. Number two, this was something that was brought up in a previous meeting, ah, we, Mr. Figgers and FCI with Mr. Figgers specifically as an individual, currently has a restraining order against an individual that resides in Gadsden County. This individual has been privy to information that has come either directly from emails, directly as the information has been spoken from FCI directly to a Board Member, somehow, somehow, all of this information has been received by this individual. The challenge that we have is that this individual has made valid and verifiable death threats against Mr. Figgers. (Chair Holt started to speak.) With all due respect Madam Chair, it is important that I finish this point. Our concern is that if we release the actual, physical location of the warehouse to the County, that information will then be placed in the hands of this particular individual and will result in viable threats against the lives and safety of the individuals in the warehouse.

**Chair Holt**

Ms. Brown, Mr. Figgers and I have talked about this, so this is nothing new, to me, OK? I don't care if it's on the back of a semi-truck somewhere. But, what I am saying is this, in order for, and I can understand your concern, but what I am concerned about is that we have to solve this problem. We have other infrastructure monies coming down. We have all the things that we have to do, Mr. Figgers has other things he has to do, OK? Now, if we can come to a resolution, I, I don't, individually I don't have a problem with paying him for 600 devices. None at all, any at all. Because the people that I talked to have them, OK? And if the Board said pay it, that's how the Board's vote's gonna be, that's what will happen. Ah, and that is a matter of 3 votes, 4 votes, whatever. But, we have to come to some type of resolution on this delivery part, the verification part. Now, if you want to pull up in the back-parking lot with a truckload of hotspots, I'm good, OK? But we can't get an invoice over to the Clerk unless we come to some type of resolution. Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have, it's about 10-15 minutes to 7:00. We should have a resolution by 7:00 p.m.



**Commissioner Hinson**

Madam Chair?

**Chair Holt**

Yes, sir? Or we can go home.

**Commissioner Hinson**

Again, I don't have a dog in this fight, but ah, if I do...

**Chair Holt**

Let's get a dog in the fight, let's just go...

**Commissioner Hinson**

This is something I've been bringing up the last 6 years, right? if we purchase something from Walmart, we don't have to go down to Arkansas to see, that's where this is taking precedence of that. See, the problem here, in all fairness, that's why a Commissioner cannot be on social media and instigate things, right? How can you trust that Commissioner or trust anyone else when they...

**Chair Holt**

Stop doing, don't do accusations in a public meeting...

**Commissioner Hinson**

That's what I'm saying, that's why we can't do that. We got to stay neutral...

**Chair Holt**

Commissioner Hinson, listen, listen...

**Commissioner Hinson**

We got to make sure...

**Chair Holt**

Not ah, stop, stop, we're not gonna address it...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Right...

**Chair Holt**

What everybody do on Facebook, we not gonna do...

**Commissioner Hinson**

I'm not talking about Facebook...

**Chair Holt**

I am, whatever It is, leave it there. In fact, I don't feel like Facebook should even, this should be on Facebook...

**Commissioner Hinson**

because Commissioners spend too much time...

**Commissioner Hinson**

too much time...

**Chair Holt**

Ah, Commissioner...

**Commissioner Hinson**

It's unprofessional...

**Chair Holt**

Stop talking...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Right...

**Chair Holt**

Stop it...

**Commissioner Hinson**

You're right...

**Chair Holt**

Ah, Commissioner...

**Commissioner Hinson**

You're right, I concur...

**Chair Holt**

You'll be concurring outside that door...Now, listen to me...

**Commissioner Hinson**

I'm a Commissioner...

**Chair Holt**

I know and that's why you're going to be gone because the only difference in you and I in this meeting is that I run the meeting.

**Commissioner Hinson**

I didn't do anything...

**Chair Holt**

Ah, Sir (talking to the Bailiff) you can come on up.

**Commissioner Hinson**

I bet you a \$Million dollars they won't come up with me...

**Chair Holt**

I bet you they will.

**Commissioner Green**

Alright, guys, alright, alright...

**Commissioner Hinson**

OK, OK, OK, OK...

**Chair Holt**

I'm not going to have it. I'm not going to have it. Now...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Disrespectful...

**Chair Holt**

That's what I'm saying. You're not going to keep talking. Now, you speak and when I speak, then you can speak. I don't have a problem with that...

**Commissioner Hinson**

You can't stop me from speaking...

**Chair Holt**

Officer, you can come on up...

**Commissioner Hinson**

He can't stop me...

**Chair Holt**

You'll do it from outside that door. Commissioner, stop talking. You can speak when I finish. I'm not going to have a problem with you speaking...

**Commissioner Hinson**

Alright, go ahead Commissioner. Go ahead Madam Chair, I'm finished.

**Chair Holt**

Now, this is not going to continue, OK? Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, listen. Leave your conversation on the item, not on the individual. OK, now, if we're going to come to a resolution today or not. If you're (inaudible) with someone, you take it outside this building. OK. Commissioners, do we have any ideas or concerns or anything that helps out this problem? Mr. Administrator?

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair...

**Chair Holt**

Yeah, any ideas, that's all.

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair, I suggest, as I did earlier, you propose a time certain to work this out and, and, give us the opportunity to verify delivery, ah, with the understanding we knew we never intended to take delivery. That was never the deal. Our deal is simply to verify and we're not buying one, we're buying 25,000. So, it's not like walking into the drug store. We're buying 25,000 at \$900, almost \$1 Million dollars. If we can verify by date certain, then we can continue with this contract. Once...

**Chair Holt**

OK, Commissioners, y'all have any date that you're interested in? Ah, Ms. Brown mentioned the 14<sup>th</sup> to negotiate on the Addendum. That would be next Wednesday. You have a County Commission Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup>, on the 20<sup>th</sup>. OK.

**Mr. Dixon**

Madam Chair, there's no rush, it can wait until the next meeting so that we don't have to call a special meeting.

**Chair Holt**

OK.

**Mr. Dixon**

It is, we will either have something to execute in terms of delivery or we won't.

**Chair Holt**

OK, so that's the 20<sup>th</sup>. We do have a 4:30 workshop. Mr. Administrator, do we have anything on that Workshop other than to go over the agenda?

**Mr. Dixon**

No, Madam Chair.

**Chair Holt**

OK, so Ladies and Gentlemen, this can be agendaed for the next regular meeting, we can review it in the 4:30 meeting, so if there are any other concerns that we have with this item, we can do it that at this time. Are there any questions?

**Commissioner Hinson**

Madam Chair? What's wrong with next, what's wrong with next week?

**Chair Holt**

We have to give them time to work it out.

**Commissioner Hinson**

OK.

**Chair Holt**

OK, are there, ready to go home?

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
April 7, 2021 – Special Meeting

**Commissioner NeSmith**

Yes.

**Chair Holt**

(Hitting gavel) OK, let's go.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:52 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 20, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**\*\*Chair started meeting without Deputy Clerk present, had a moment of silence and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag \*\***

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to add 5a-Approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects Request to be Submitted for Gadsden County to the Consent Agenda; 5b-Approval of the Support Letter for Gadsden Senior Services to the Consent Agenda; and 6a-Approval of Response Letter to the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee Regarding a Repeat Audit Finding to General Business.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked to pull Items 5a and 5b for discussion.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED TO APPROVE WITH CHANGES BY A VOICE VOTE OF 5-0.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Presentation of Cares 2 Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the CARES 2 program. He said they expected the money to come down mid-to late May and expect it to be \$8.9 Million. The County has not received any Treasury direction on the money, but understood it would be coming in two piles, the first in May and second half not until March 2022. He said they have laid out a program to start June 1<sup>st</sup>. He added that date was moveable depending on when they received the information and the ability to get ready. They intend on the first 30 days, to host workshops county-wide to inform and pre-qualify citizens for all programs created by the Board, including the landlords for emergency rental assistance program and the tenants for emergency utilities program. In pre-qualifying, they hoped to get anyone that applied for any program ready and pre-qualified to be submitted for funding in that program. In the second 60 days, they will be open to receive applications from all funded programs; qualified applications will be processed to be funded, they will continue stations around the County that will be manned for continued help and referral. He said their one goal was to get that money to the people. He added there were many separate pots of money coming down that was not there last time; cities will receive their own money; utilities will receive their money and many other organizations that the Board was

responsible for looking out for that they will not have that obligation to this time. They have expressed they still wanted to put money into small business and try to get money down to people at the lowest level.

**Karen Wells, 373 East Jefferson Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. She wanted to find out more about the CARES Act money from the first draw-down. She has talked with a lot of people that said they were denied, which meant to her there should be more money from the first go-round. She asked if it had been depleted or was there still money available.

Mr. Dixon said there was individual funding of \$1.3 Million.

Ms. Wells asked if there was a sense of urgency to help the people?

Chair Holt said there was a sense of urgency to help, but they wanted to make sure they were doing it so they could get it done. She said last time it was done, one reason why was there was a concern was because of the application, because of the unknowing and lack of preparation. She said they have to do that now.

Ms. Wells said a lot of people had problems with the application, retrieving the information and a lot did not have the know-how.

Mr. Dixon said he knew \$1.3 Million looked nice, but asked if they did not accept staff recommendation, to roll it into the time frame and said part of their situation was stacking up to do the program and was quite expensive. He said the time frame would remain the same because they were counting on a lot of other people to be a part of this program in order to roll it out right and not experience what they experienced last time.

Chair Holt said they intend to have workshops on this.

Commissioner Hinson said for the record, he brought this up in the workshop earlier, the money was intended for the people and small businesses. He said he asked the Board two weeks ago to put it on the Agenda and it was not on there tonight.

Commissioner Green said it was good to hear from the community. He asked the Chair if they could schedule a date now while they were talking about it.

Chair Holt said for them to look at their calendars.

Mr. Dixon said there was some back-room stuff that required time. Part of the problem was they did not staff up properly in the previous roll-out. They want to solve as many problems as they possibly could.

Chair Holt said a lot of things were stalled in the system and several times had to get legal opinions. She said they need to workshop it and work some of the problems out.

Ms. Wells said she was able to get it rather quickly but she had to help them do their job.

Commissioner Hinson said if he was not mistaken, Ms. Wells and others were talking about the \$1.3 Million that was there now.

*Chair Holt stepped out at 6:25 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson said the Board paid Integrity almost \$1 Million; he had no problem with them, but wanted to provide staff for them, gave them office space, and then they have a problem with FCI when they were going to provide services, marketing, product, everything. He said why were they making these decisions when they were paid almost \$1 Million.

*Chair Holt returned at 6:26 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson mentioned how much had been paid to Integrity over time. (Then he and Chair Holt started talking over each other and it became inaudible to transcribe.)

Chair Holt said they were going to workshop this and do as other Counties were doing.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was something he intended when amending the agenda and suggested they move Item 14 to under the Presentations for discussion of the program.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO MOVE ITEM 14 FROM GENERAL BUSINESS TO UNDER PRESENTATIONS SO IT COULD BE MADE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14. 2021 Summer Youth Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the agenda item and **Ms. Kim Moore, TCC Workforce Development** appeared before the Board.

Ms. Moore gave a brief synopsis of the Gadsden Youth Initiative. She spoke on the current landscape and how Gadsden had the highest unemployment rate; workforce challenges; program design; anticipated outcomes; key stakeholders and the next steps. She said Gadsden County had maintained the highest unemployment numbers. She mentioned some of the anticipated stakeholders were the Gadsden County Board of County Commission; Tallahassee Community College; Gadsden County School District; Gadsden County Development Council; and CareerSource Capital Region. Investing in Gadsden youth has never been more critical as it was now; collaboration was critical to community success; and alignment with industry was the key ingredient for growth and job creation.

Mr. Dixon said they wanted to build a robust program, that not only fed off the BOCC money but everyone involved. He said they could host more youth, give deeper and more depth to the programs and his goal was to make the program go year-round, not just the summer.

Commissioner Viegbesie commended Mr. Dixon for this vision. He said this would train and give the skillset to help attract industry to the area. He said the 100 students was a pilot number and had the capability to grow to 500 to 1,000 participants.



Ms. Moore explained the program and elaborated while they were in training, they would receive a stipend, once they transitioned to a work environment, they would receive minimum wage.

Commissioner Viegbesie said when they vet the youth and they might could adopt the FAMU SDI model where every company wanted to hire an intern that came to them from FAMU. He said everyone that went through that program was disciplined, had a positive work ethic and was professional. He felt that was a great foundation for growing the youth.

Commissioner Green thanked her for the presentation and hoped she could talk about the stipend. He added he was a recipient of being part of the summer program when he was in high school. His main question was the timeframe. Did they think this could be launched in the next few weeks? Ms. Moore said with all the partners they had around the table, they could do this.

Commissioner NeSmith echoed what he heard from the other commissioners. He said this spoke to the vision statement they created earlier and the partnership, which was a key.

Commissioner Hinson said this was one of many things he asked to be brought to the Board. He felt this should be in addition to the 125 jobs he hoped to have.

Chair Holt said she wanted to have people trained on industrial certification and with that industries would want to hire people.

#### **CONSENT**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked to pull items 5a and 5b just to be explained for the purpose of transparency.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBSIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
  - **February 2, 2021 – Workshop**
  - **March 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting**
  - **March 10, 2021 – Emergency Meeting**
  - **March 29, 2021 – Emergency Meeting**
- 4. Support Letter for Congressional Legislation**
- 5. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract – SHIP**
- 5a. Approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects Request to be Submitted for Gadsden County**

Mr. Dixon said this was for approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects and this project had been submitted by the Town of Havana. He added the Congressman reopened the

submission process and asked that all programs to come before the BOCC for approval before being submitted to his office.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**5b. Approval of Support Letter for Gadsden Senior Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of a support letter for Gadsden Senior Services.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**5a. Approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects Request to be Submitted for Gadsden County**

**5b. Approval of Federal Legislative Community Projects Request to be Submitted for Gadsden County**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.**

**If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.**

Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the COVID Statement.

Chair Holt said she had a couple to read and would make it brief as the Chambers were now open to the public and people could now appear in person.

**Dr. Joe Parramore, 6099 Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board regarding the Greensboro Fire Department. He said there has been ongoing problems with the Town of Greensboro and the Greensboro Fire Department and they have reached an impasse. He said the Town has shown an unwillingness to continue conversations with the first responders of that fire district. He said they contend the budget has been mis-used through mis-guided direction leaving the firefighters without appropriate PPE and apparatus to respond appropriately. Because of recent events, the ISO Fire ratings now has a potential of rising insurance premiums and insurance deductibles. He further stated it was clear that the existing interlocal fire service agreement was specific to the Town of Greensboro and Gadsden County and was a legal and binding contract. He said every fire fighter was still serving their community through other departments until such time there is an amicable resolution. He also said the Greensboro volunteers were now known as the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., a Florida Non-Profit corporation.

**Danny Hunter, 202 East Lake Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He said the last time he appeared before the Board he was the Assistant Chief of the Greensboro Fire Department. He said one thing that remained consistent was the dangers were the same, ever present and did not discriminate whether the responder was a volunteer or a career fire fighter. He said their request was simple and they stand to gain nothing. His desire was this body could broker a resolution to this problem.

Chair Holt thanked them for their comments. She asked Mr. Dixon if this was something they could look into.

Mr. Dixon said he had contacted the Town of Greensboro and they stand by the decisions they have made as a Town and the Board does have a contract with them. He said they know small fire stations may not put all of their money into fire equipment. He said they have always given leniency in that. He said once they realized the fire fighters had walked away and were no longer serving Greensboro, the Chief of Fire and Emergency Service was redirected to formulate a plan to serve Greensboro and the surrounding areas until the Town of Greensboro reached an understanding with their internal situation.

Commissioner Green asked what the financial stipend was given to the Town of Greensboro. Mr. Dixon said it was \$31,000 annual. Commissioner Green asked if they could make a motion for this to be put on the Agenda.

Chair Holt explained she felt it would be better if they wanted to look at this, let the Administrator know, they had a contract with the Town and they were the ones they had to deal with over the contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie reminded this was comments by the citizens and should not be discussed. Chair Holt agreed and said they could make comments under their comments later.

**Stanley Sims, 1320 Avondale Way, Tallahassee, FL** appeared before the Board regarding the CARES Act.

Commissioner Hinson said he will make a motion at the end of this meeting to allow him to make a presentation to the Board. Chair Holt said they will be having a workshop that will be open to the public.

Commissioner Hinson said in reality, been following him over years and his courage of fighting good fight. He added he would like to put him on the Agenda for his company to present to the Board and he would have a chance to talk.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:36 p.m.*

Chair Holt then read aloud Don Stewart's email. (Email will be scanned in and follow the Minutes.)

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:39 p.m.*

She read aloud another statement from Don Stewart regarding Citizens to be Heard. (Will also be attached to the Minutes.)

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**6. Discussion and Approval of the Extension of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) with the Recent Passage of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval from the Board regarding the extension of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**6a. Approval of Response Letter to the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee Regarding a Repeat Audit Finding**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for Board approval of a response letter to the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee regarding a repeat audit finding.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**7. Resolution in Support for St. Hebron Road Sidewalk Project**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to execute a Resolution in support for the Gadsden County BOCC to apply for a Transportation Alternatives Grant to construct a sidewalk along St. Hebron Road from Pt. Milligan Road to Fontana Trail, then down Fontana Trail to St. Hebron Park.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**8. Approval of Work Authorization Agreement 2021-020 for Grant Program Consulting Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Work Authorization Agreement 2021-2022 for Grant Program Consulting Services.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. COVID-19 Loss of Life Memorial**

Mr. Dixon said this item sought the Board's direction on a COVID-19 Loss of Life Memorial to be developed and presented back to the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this was just for construction of the memorial and what was the fiscal impact. Chair Holt explained it was up to \$20,000.

Commissioner Hinson said sometimes people did not want recognition because the loss could be too soon.

Chair Holt explained this was to recognize the number of people that have passed away from COVID, but was not for an individual.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about this item and Chair Holt explained the discussion she had recently had with the Administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought this was a wonderful idea.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ALLOCATE UP TO \$20,000 FOR THE MEMORIAL AND THE ADMINISTRATOR TO COME BACK WITH A SPECIFIC PLAN/DESIGN OF THE MEMORIAL AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. Discussion and Action on Dental Equipment Owned by Gadsden County**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for discussion and action on dental equipment owned by Gadsden County. North Florida Medical, Gadsden Dental Outreach has been providing preventative dental services at the Gadsden County Schools and some of the dental equipment being used by North Florida Medical belonged to the County. Staff was contacted by NFM requesting that the dental equipment be donated to them in order to help expand services to children and to help the next generation of children.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to make sure there were no plans they were aware of for the future.

Chair Holt said they have to recruit doctors and dentists in that area and to do so, there had to be a plan. The equipment was already being used and was old.

Commissioner Green said he had no problem with the donation but wanted to know the value of the equipment.

Commissioner Hinson said from what he was told, the chairs were worth over several hundred dollars.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they had done something of this nature with the Neighborhood Medical services in Havana. Chair Holt said the chairs were leased to them.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.**

Commissioner Hinson said he thought they had 4, once they do that, it opens a can of worms. Mr. Dixon explained they were the only dental center and there was no rush to do this.

Chair Holt said to get the numbers and then bring this item back.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO TABLE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Approval of the Non-Profit/Human Services Funding Agreements and Interlocal Agreement for Human Senior Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Non-Profit/Human Services Funding Agreements and Interlocal Agreements for Human Senior Services for FY2020-2021 and for authorization for the Chair to sign the agreements.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked with them approving this item, was it honoring the request of Chattahoochee that the County should give up sovereign immunity. Mr. Knowles stated they were approving the agreements as they were.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER HINSON WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE WITH BOCC RETAINING SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY ON ALL CONTRACTS AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. Approval of the Temporary Road Closures Pursuant to Completion of the Railroad Crossing Replacement on SR 267 (North Adams Street/Bainbridge Hwy) 550' North of Dezell Street**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of the temporary road closure pursuant to completion of the railroad crossing replacement on SR 267 (North Adams Street/Bainbridge Highway) 550' north of Dezell Street.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. Approval of Code Enforcement Lien Satisfaction**

Mr. Dixon said this item was approval of the Code Enforcement Lien Satisfaction.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14. 2021 Summer Youth Program**

This item was moved under Presentations

**15. FCI Contract Addendum**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and said the attorney would be bringing the item. He apologized it wasn't sooner and said it was not done until earlier today.

Mr. Knowles explained they just received the revised language from FCI late this afternoon. The name of the corporation has been corrected. On page 1 and top of page 2, they added definitions...

Chair Holt interrupted (hand was raised in audience) and she asked if they could not hear. Bishop Green said "Citizens to be Heard". She said they would go through this and get input.

Bishop Green stated he was skipped over last time. Chair Holt said she told him to put his hand up this time because she forgot to call on him last time. She said they would get to him and asked if he had a copy of the agreement and he stated yes.

Mr. Knowles continued and said they clarified how the devices would be distributed, they amended the Force Majeure clause and explained if there was an act of God or some other intervening force that caused non-performance and FCI was unable to distribute the devices, that would not be held against them and same manner, if something happened to the Courthouse and they were unable to cut a check, it would not be held against the County. They clarified payment terms; added prevailing party attorney's fees in the event of lawsuits and clarified the verification of the devices that were handed out at the prior distribution during the month of February. He said they could go over each addition or subtraction if they liked with regard to going through the contract and would be happy to do so. He said aside from one or two lingering issues regarding payment, and he had discussed that with Ms. Brown and felt the County needed 30 days at least effectuate payment from the date of an itemized invoice was submitted, additionally, he did have a concern regarding IMEI (which is defined in the definitions) versus a serial number. He said his understanding was the IMEI was the device number that identified the type of device and serial number would identify the particular device. He said originally there was a removal of the Surety Bond language but that has been left in and FCI has agreed to remove the clause from the prior contract regarding overage. He said if they recalled in the prior agreement there was an overage clause where for every 50 GB of data that a resident went over, the 50GB cap they received on the initial allocation, the County would be responsible for the additional \$10.00 per 50GB and FCI agreed to waive that so there were no issues there. The W-9 forms will need to be collected by the County and the County would need to appoint a County Representative who would be present when FCI brings the devices. He added that FCI, every two weeks would bring devices and leave up to 2,000 devices per weekend and get with the County Representative, will record the serial numbers of those devices, ensure how many devices were actually brought to the County and subsequent to that, on Saturday and Sunday at specific times listed in the contract, they would then be distributed to residents who would sign either electronically or paper form, an attestation form as described within the contract. He further stated the contract also gives Mr. Dixon the ability to shut things down and make changes without coming back to the Board. He said he was happy to answer any questions.

Chair Holt said to make sure the pages were numbered and would be able to view easier. She also cautioned them to be careful shuffling papers because it made it hard to hear.

Commissioner Hinson said he had some things highlighted on the original. Why were they asking for W-9 forms? Chair Holt said because they were getting something of value. Commissioner Hinson said why W-9's. Chair Holt said to go to FCI to see how they felt about the document.

**Joycelyn Brown, FCI's Attorney**, said she believed this agreement did accurately reflect all concerns, there were a few minor things that needed to be finalized; the timing of the payment for the devices that have already been delivered and outside of that, believed they had a very accurate reflection of where both parties stood.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Knowles for that section.

Mr. Knowles said there were multiple sections that dealt with payment.

He said in Section 5.3.2 on page 6, “The County shall be obligated to remit for payment to the Clerk of the Circuit the Itemized Invoice within ten (10) days of receipt (stated it was hard to read with underlines and strikethroughs) of the Itemized Invoice. Pursuant to Section 5.2, the County shall pay FCI the \$38.60 Device Fee and the \$32.00 Service Fee, per Device.”

Chair Holt asked that was for devices that were already delivered. Mr. Knowles said for devices that were already delivered, they developed a verification schematic and would have 30 days to complete that from the execution of this contract where they would take a random sample of twenty percent (20%) of the Attestations...

Chair Holt asked what page and section and Mr. Knowles stated it was on multiple pages and stated on page 1 under Definitions; on page 2 with Itemized Invoice; Section 1.1.5 Verification of Qualified Residents; and on Section 5.3.4. He stated it was in the Addendum and was not in the original Agreement.

Commissioner Hinson said if both attorneys agreed, he felt they should move forward.

Mr. Dixon said he was disappointed this took so long, however they had in place a process they thought would work and had enough control to allow them to move forward. They did not envision the process happening like this and did not have staff and it was not budgeted. He said it would require some time. He said they would meet their obligations and hoped the distribution will go a lot smoother.

Chair Holt asked Ms. Brown if she followed along with the County Attorney and she said yes. Chair Holt asked if he answered her questions or concerns and she said their primary concern was raised at the last meeting. There was some concern in the amount of time it will take to verify what has already been delivered.

**Bishop Willie Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the Board. He said it sounded like he did not need to say anything tonight because both sides have worked on this. He said it was not unusual for parties to have differences with the contracts like this, this was a very different contract, included a device that had to be made especially for the County and when you have technical problems, they are usually worked out without as much difficulty as this seemed to have caused. He added that he felt because FCI has acted in good faith as he understood it and she did share with him a copy of what was presented tonight, they continue to service some of those devices that were distributed, and as much as they have given, 15 days not lot to be haggling over at this point. He was glad to hear they had resolved the issues and were down “to tightening one or two little screws”. He said there were more important issues to address than this issue.

Chair Holt read Don Stewart’s email regarding the contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked the County for this work in progress; however, his concern was and, which was also a concern he received from calls from citizens, mainly in the Reston



area specifically and two calls from the Lake Tallavana community. They were concerned that an item was agendaed with an Addendum that was not available for them to preview before the meeting and they accused the Board of operating under a secrecy without being transparent. The other was, how many devices was FCI saying they had already submitted, and how were the Attestations being evaluated? Some citizens said they completed the application for the devices on-line and have not received any devices from FCI. Has the County validated that these items have been delivered?

Chair Holt said she was sure they were watching, the verification process has not taken place yet and there will be no payment until the verification was made, in a timely manner. The Administrator mentioned they had to have staff to verify that and they assured FCI that they were verifying for those items.

Commissioner NeSmith said he had several questions for Ms. Brown and Mr. Knowles. How was 20% derived as opposed to all of the Attestations being verified. Mr. Knowles said he and Mr. Dixon got together and originally thought, given time constraints and staffing, 20% was adequate. If it was the will of the Board to do more, they could do that.

Commissioner NeSmith said they had just received this and it was a marked-up copy, not a clean one. He said he would like to see a final draft. He thanked Ms. Brown in working so diligently with the County Attorney in moving this process forward. He said he had a chance to look over the Notebook that was sent to him and noticed some of the paperwork did not have complete information such as the identification information and last names. He asked what the total number of verifications or documents that the County had in their possession. Ms. Brown asked if he was saying that some of the documentation that was submitted to the County regarding the contract over the past few months had some incomplete information and he was now asking whether or not the County has been provided the accurate information and what exactly the information...Commissioner NeSmith said no, how many devices have already been distributed and based on that distribution, the Notebook he was sent, were those verifications of the devices? She said Mr. Bebe could address that, he was the one who compiled the information. She said it was her understanding that the information that was included had serial IME number for each device, the Letters of Attestation for each device as well as (inaudible) of the individual qualified resident as well as the daily usage for each device so the County could see that the devices had actually been delivered and the ones that were delivered had been used.

Mr. Bebe appeared remotely before the Board. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the items in the notebook was a reflection of the devices that have been distributed. Mr. Bebe said yes, that was why they gave out so much detail. Commissioner NeSmith said based on his review, quite a few of the documents had missing information. Mr. Bebe said it was unfortunate, there were some issues when it came to printing and was why he gave out corresponding data usage so they could see the devices were active. It was an issue they had when printing out all the Attestations, they will be pulling from that list. Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to make sure they had all the necessary identifying information because at some point this program will be audited and they will need to make sure they had all the documentation and needed to verify every document as opposed to 20% because down the road, they would have to answer to each device. He wanted to make sure that whatever agency came to verify the information, their documentation was in order.

Chair Holt said each one of them has a packet and hopefully was information they would want to know anyway and verify. There are phone numbers and the Commissioners can call themselves.

Mr. Bebe said they also agreed to give the County full access to their data base with the attestations and will include what they have already done.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure the 20% language was removed. He wanted to verify every device 100% and any information that was inadvertently not included in that package, he wanted to make sure that every document was verified. Mr. Bebe said that was something he would have to work out with the County Administrator, they would do what they were supposed to do on their end.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought the information digitally was more detailed. He said he requested the information digitally and received it late this afternoon. He said it was easily verifiable. He said there were 13-14 folders and the first one was a folder of boxes, the other folder was a hand holding a cell phone with the time and date; the other folder was the one showing boxes on a crate and from there the folders have a number of names where you click and there is a drop-down and each one will have a photo, the ID of the applicant with their name, address, telephone number that was easily verifiable to determine whether they received the items or not. He said digital was easier to enter into the record and make it available to everyone. He added he thought the digital was easily verifiable and was the ones he would be looking at and calling the individuals to see who had received one or not. He added it was a work in progress and they would be very diligent and making sure they did not pay for something they never got.

Chair Holt said she did not think they wanted to give them anything that they could not verify. She asked the attorney if the Board wanted some type of consistency in doing the verification and take out the 20%. She asked the Administrator how he felt about that and he responded they would get the 600 done. She said for the Commissioners to not be bashful in checking in their own district because they could be helpful and do some work also. She asked if there were any other questions and said, if they need a clean copy, they could make their motion to approve and he could provide a clean copy.

Commissioner Hinson said before they make the motion, he needed to disclose he's had conversations with Mr. Figgers and FCI. Chair Holt said several of them have because he was from here and that had no bearing on this now.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:30 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles asked if they were removing the 20% and Commissioner NeSmith said yes.

Chair Holt said they needed a motion.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION THEY REMOVE THE LANGUAGE OF 20% TO 100%, TO VERIFY ALL DEVICES.**

Chair Holt asked the Administrator if that was the wording he would like and Mr. Knowles said they would work on the wording with Ms. Brown.

Chair Holt said they have discussed it, have heard comments from the public.

Commissioner Hinson said they might should wait until Commissioner Viegbesie returned.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON SAID HE WOULD SECOND IT.**

Chair Holt asked the will of the Board and with the vote, they either come back or they don't.

Commissioner NeSmith stated there was a motion and a second.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were now at the agreement. Mr. Knowles stated they just passed it. Commissioner NeSmith said "No, we passed the motion for the verification of the devices." Mr. Knowles said that was the whole contract. Commissioner NeSmith then stated he had a question. He said he thought they were passing that motion to include that language in the contract. Mr. Knowles said no. Commissioner NeSmith said he had a question.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were any other issues in the contract, given the fact that there were a lot of strikethroughs and this was a contract in motion and they did not have a clean copy in front of them.

Mr. Knowles said they will amend that term and also thirty days for payment or remittance of payment. They will make that alteration for thirty days to remit payment. So, once the itemized invoice is received from FCI, there will be a time period to send it to the Clerk and a certain time period for the Clerk to remit payment.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if that was already in the contract and Mr. Knowles stated they would make that alteration for thirty (30) days to remit payment so once the itemized invoice was received from FCI, they have a time period to send it to the Clerk and a certain time period for the Clerk to remit payment.

Ms. Brown asked what was the Board's typical process of remitting payment to the Clerk. She understood that the Clerk had its own process for issuing payment, but was there a reason why it would take 30 days to submit payment to the Clerk?

Mr. Dixon said they did not have staff.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 8:33 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles said it was not that it would not get remitted on the thirtieth day, there needs to be an intervening timeframe within which the County has the ability to pay, particularly in light

of the late fees, particularly in light of breach of contract issues. He said it may very well get paid faster, but if it was on the 29<sup>th</sup> day, they were still ok. It was to give them the ability but no reason it would be held up any longer than 30 days. If it was held up longer than 30 days, they had an issue. But if they only have 5-10 days with which to remit payment and that was not done, they are 1½% in the hole in terms of the late fee. He said he would not advise the County to be put into that kind of position. There needed to be some amount of time with which they had to make it happen to get them a check. He said it was the same thing his firm goes through and what other vendors go through. He said it would be submitted to the Clerk as soon as they receive it but it needed to go through that process. He said that was what he and she spoke about earlier and was what he and the Clerk spoke about today. He said they were trying to make sure it was done, but they had to give a little to get a little.

Ms. Brown said she appreciated the response.

Commissioner Viegbesie said to the Administrator he was going to request if the digital information that was sent to him today, please be sent to the rest of the Commissioners so they will have an easier access to the information. He said for the short time he got it, he already pulled out thirteen names and was preparing a spreadsheet for every name and was an easy way to verify the information to see they were doing the right thing.

Chair Holt told him she knew he stepped out but they took the vote and asked if he had a vote yea or nay. Then said they were moving on.

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **16. Updates**

Chair Holt said he (the Clerk) didn't have anything.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **17. Updates**

Mr. Dixon implored all of Commissioners to try to slow down little. He said realistically they were having trouble keeping up. He said it was hard to do quality in the timeframe they are putting on them.

He said in October 2020, the Board awarded a contract to Motorola and they previously approved the purchase of the Motorola capacity to match DMTT3 system, the lease of radio equipment Dispatch console and the new radio tower. The contract for civil work was awarded in the amount of \$435,448.43 and at the time of the contract award, it was indicated to the Board that the entire amount was included in the FY20-21 budget. He said their research has shown that did not happen, only \$109,000 was put in the budget and that would be enough for the debt service of the financing agreement but not what was proposed to the Board. He said there were a number of issues like that and they were actively working them out in the house, but this should have been brought to their attention immediately once staff found out about it at the beginning of the new fiscal year. He said they were dealing with the situation in-house. However, \$109,000 was not \$435,000 and that payment was coming soon. He said they will be bringing the Board some options, probably regarding financing of that amount, already have

contracts out there, and will be working with Motorola. He said as they cross these situations, they will be bringing back to the Board.

Chair Holt asked if he had someone in place to prevent this from happening again and he said that would be Ms. Daniels. Chair Holt said, in the future, if they need help in that department, that needed to be on the Agenda to get them help. He said they knew they need more positions now as opposed to later. He said how they get there would be the Board's decision, but they will present a number of opportunities. He said the Board was not demanding less and they had a less than optimal situation they were dealing with and was trying to not make mistakes.

Commissioner Hinson asked if that was a change order. Mr. Dixon said not a change order, it was an error. He said once it was done, it should have been brought back to the Board immediately for correction so they could either move money into that, because it was not put in there or agreed to some additional agreement.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much that contract was. Mr. Dixon said he was not certain, there were two or three provisions in that contract, it was a big contract.

Chair Holt said this was more on them and way why she said whatever it took to get that department straightened out, normally there were two-three people in that department.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was an error with regards to staff not requesting a budget amendment that was not presented to the Board. Mr. Dixon said it was presented to the Board that the money was in the budget during the last fiscal year but it was not in the budget. Commissioner Viegbesie then said he knew there was a lot coming at the Administrator and staff rapidly and they were very ambitious but they needed to understand everything takes time.

He asked when they will get to meet the grant writer they just hired. Mr. Dixon said she was on Zoom but had left the meeting already.

Mr. Dixon said they can have the meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 for the CARES Act 2.

Commissioner Green asked if that would be the only thing on the Agenda and suggested they make that the only item. Chair Holt asked if anything was planned and was that enough time and Mr. Dixon said no. Commissioner Green asked if they could hold it on a different day they were not scheduled to meet and wanted to make sure they were all available.

Mr. Dixon said they were trying to not have as many special meetings, they were expensive to advertise.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the good news was on the 4<sup>th</sup>, he was wide open and could make the meeting earlier if needed to.

Chair Holt asked if there was an interactive place on the website so people could leave messages or comments. She added the Order was still in place for 50 people or less and if they wanted to have another location because there might be a lot of people there, she was trying to

put out several possibilities. Mr. Dixon said anyone could email to the County at [socialmedia@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:socialmedia@gadsdencountyfl.gov). and it would come to them.

Mr. Dixon said nothing was set in stone, they were throwing things against the wall and hoped some caught fire. Chair Holt said other Constitutionals received funding, they did not fund in the County itself. This part of the Government never got funded. She said they reimbursed at the Sheriff's Department and everywhere else that spent money. They needed to look at a few things they needed to do at that particular building because there will be high traffic.

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

### **18 Updates**

Mr. Knowles said he received a letter asking to join the Opioid litigation and asked for direction on how to proceed.

Chair Holt asked what the Board wanted to do and Commissioner Viegbesie said to agenda it.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

### **19. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

#### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he had three things. He asked them to put on the agenda 125 jobs for Summer Youth program; \$1.3 Million for half to go to residents and the other half to the Small Business Assistance program; and the Emergency Housing Assistance program for the Seniors and disabled. He said he knew they got funding for Hurricane Michael, but asked it to be put on the Agenda to help some of the Seniors and special needs people. He told the new commissioners he was actually a really nice guy, just loses his cool on certain items.

Mr. Dixon said he did not make the agenda, the Chairman did. Secondly, he does what the Board directs him to do. If a motion was made, it goes on the Agenda.

Chair Holt said the reason they hear the Administrator say that, that was the way the Board was originally set up. Over the years they have gone back and forth doing it different ways. At one time they all voted on what went on the Agenda. She said they need at least one or two people going over stuff when it comes because there were always things going on behind the scenes they never see.

Commissioner Hinson said from his understanding in the past, if the Board decided they wanted something on the agenda and no-one opposed it, it went on there. Chair Holt said no, that was not how it worked.

Chair Holt said two of the previous commissioners, before he was on the Board, would fight over the Agenda and there was no reason to hold up a meeting fighting. She told them instead of fighting, to put the item on the Agenda and discuss it when it was on there. Once that happened, they started calming down and was more of a strategy and she carried it on over.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if he understood correctly during his initial initiation into the Board, he received an Ordinance of Procedure that stated the County Administrator was the one that determined the items that goes on the Agenda and works in conjunction with the Chair to make sure the Agenda was not overloaded and had to work closely with the Attorney to make sure the language was correct; no item goes on the Agenda without the attorney's preview. His understanding was they could suggest an item be agendaed and then depending on the load of the agenda and when appropriate, it would go on.

Chair Holt said back to the history of this, the reason it changed over the years was the Board members changed and they changed the policy. She said one reason it changed was because they had to keep order in the room. They need extra eyes on agenda items before they go on to be advertised. They must have a process in place.

She told the Attorney this was an item he had to look at because he was the Parliamentarian.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith said they have the work coming because they have vision. He asked to place on the Agenda at some reasonable time to start planning for the County's 200-year anniversary.

He said they also need to revisit the strategic plan at some point.

Mr. Dixon said they have already some strategic plans and started issuing assignments to the Departments to be worked through and it was moving.

Commissioner NeSmith said the Chair alluded to a very important issue and asked if there were policy, guidelines and procedures that governed how they act in place. He added he knew Robert's Rules of Order impacted them to a certain point but felt they needed a workshop on the guidelines.

He said they were moving in a new direction with all the partnerships.

He congratulated Commissioner Viegbesie on his award, the Excellence in Leadership award from NACO (National Association of Counties).

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said to save time, he has concerns and will get with Ms. Quigley and Curtis Young in reference to his concerns.

He wanted to make sure citizens knew he was working toward getting speed bumps on Shaw Road and Holt Lane in reference to getting petitions signed. He said he was still waiting for a schedule to the County maintenance in reference to the cuttings in the district.

He wanted to make sure when citizens do come and give their concerns, the Board hears and also address, such as the issues with Greensboro.

He further added they need to workshop and adopt procedures, he was not there for a circus show or for people to make fun of the Board. He said they need to make sure they put a handle on things they are passionate about.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said to Commissioner Green, there were two items he wanted to mention:

1) To the Attorney, they may need to have a workshop on Robert’s Rules so they know when to talk and when to be recognized.

2) He was concerned with what he just heard with the Greensboro Fire Service. That was not something they should marginalize with that service. Yes, they do give Greensboro money annually and if they are now going to say they will no longer have the fire service within the municipality, what about the citizens that are in the unincorporated area. The citizens of Greensboro are citizens of Gadsden County and they need to be protected. When he first came on the Board, he floated an idea of Gadsden County exploring the possibility of creating a bona fide Gadsden County Fire Department. He said he felt the issue was, how would they bring the volunteers into what they love to do with a passion, how they bring them into becoming full-time fire fighters. He said maybe at budget time, that money should go to the volunteers. He asked they not drop the ball.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said they need to start with who they have the contract with.

She added that a workshop on Policy and procedure was a great idea.

The Celebration for the County was good idea. They need to get research and give it to the Administrator.

She said she learned from some of the other counties, some of the Commissioners worked with the Administrator and Departments in helping to do research and get it to the Administrator. She said she was looking at having meetings with every city to work together on goals and objectives.

She said they have farmers in the County and they were looking at how they could get money to help with the farms and there was money out there for them. They will have to have a Farmers’ Certification number that can be obtained from USDA, the office is located in Calhoun County and in one pot of money there is \$5 Billion. She said they need help with the paperwork.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the meeting with the municipalities should be with the governmental body of the municipalities.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**



Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
April 20, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:30 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 4, 2021 AT 3:00 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Hannah Pope, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Dixon welcomed everyone to the workshop at 3:03 p.m. Mr. Dixon asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on Tuesday, May 4, 2021. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record. The County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Presentation from The Integrity Group and The Tuggerson Group Regarding the American Rescue Plan Act.**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and corresponding staff to the Board.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 3:05 p.m.*

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered the workshop at 3:06 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon stated initially the County was awarded \$8.9 Million related to COVID-19 in two equal allocations. He stated that unlike the previous CARES Act funding, this funding was directly awarded to the County. The time frame for this allocation of funding was not as stringent and the County has until December 31, 2024 to use the allotted funds. This program does not require the submission of any documentation from any agencies unlike the last program. The cities and utility companies will receive their own funding so, a large portion that the County was responsible for is no longer a part of the program. The Board of County Commissioners gave away most of the CARES Act money to its residents in phase one. Mr. Dixon stated that out of the \$4.5 Million, staff recommended to keep \$995,488.50 in reserve for internal programs. The following

grant programs will be a first qualified, first served basis. Staff has done their very best to make it easy for the citizens to apply for these programs.

1. **Gadsden County Church Assistance Program** is allotted a total of \$900,000. The Board made it known to staff that the churches were helping the community during the pandemic. Grant amounts are based off of the number of members in the congregation. Churches with 10-100 members can receive up to \$2,000 dollars and those with 100 or more can receive up to \$5,000 dollars. Mr. Dixon stated that the eligibility and documentation requirements are very minimal to allow as many churches as possible to qualify for the program.
2. **Residence Assistance** is going to be a **Food Card Program**. Mr. Dixon stated that the allotted total amount for the program would be \$600,000. The card for each household will be granted \$150 once they meet the eligibility requirements. Mr. Dixon stated that citizens would need to sign an attestation, have a Florida Driver's License/State Identification showing residence in Gadsden County, copy of their most recent utility bill, and the full names of those who reside in the household. Mr. Dixon stated that this was for eligibility requirements and to keep proper records.
3. **Non-Profit Organization Assistance Program** will help non-profit health care and regular non-profit organizations. Mr. Dixon stated that the reason non-profit health care was so important was because health care services are nonexistent in Gadsden County. He stated that the County needs these programs that help the citizens. These health organizations have shown themselves more important during the pandemic than ever before since they were testing and treating those who needed care. There are also non-profits that have been making sure that food was distributed and educational materials were being disbursed. The amount of funds allotted would be \$400,000. The eligible recipients would be based off of loss revenue or new cost. Mr. Dixon stated that the amounts that would be awarded would be in the \$5,000-8,000 range.

Mr. Dixon stated the Non-Profit Organization Assistance Program is one of the programs that staff struggled with. That is because non-profits may or may not be able to show loss. Mr. Dixon stated that none of these figures were set in stone yet since this was a workshop and they were wanting the Commissioners' direction on these amounts.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked, based on the information that has been provided, was the Health Council that was created by the Board of County Commissioners being considered as a non-profit. If they were not, why are they being placed along with the non-profits that will be applying for assistance when these programs become available.

Mr. Dixon stated that most health care organizations belong to the Health Council. He stated that the Health Council has been a major distributor of COVID-related information for the County. Also, the Health Council provided a screening service for the organizations that were coming to the County so there were no duplicate programs.

Commissioner Green asked what was puzzling Mr. Dixon regarding the non-profits.

Mr. Dixon stated that some non-profits may not have documentation to show the loss of money per say or they may not be able to prove the loss of money. Some non-profits changed the way that they served the County during the pandemic and those organizations may not be able to show losses.

4. **Small Business Assistance Program** will look at eligibility requirements that were directed by the Board of County Commissioners during the last CARES Act Program. The funds that have been set aside for this program will total \$750,000. The determination of funds will be based off of loss of revenue and the maximum for each allotment will range from \$8,000-\$20,000. Mr. Dixon stated that most will easily qualify for the \$8,000 amount.
5. **Directed Funding** was created to help programs that were already helping citizens before COVID. Mr. Dixon stated that those programs will be ones such as Second Harvest and Farm Share. The total amount for this funding will be \$25,000 and will be allotted via the Board's discretion.
6. **Other Support and Funding Available for Gadsden County** is using resources provided by the Integrity Group and Tuggerson Group to locate all of the funds that the citizens can acquire. There will be technical support and workshops to aid the citizens on preparing the documents for grant submittal. Mr. Dixon stated that staff wants the citizens to get this money. There will be people at each and every step of the program to help aid in the grant process for citizens. Also, the Commissioners need to pass on the word to the citizens in their districts as well.

Commissioner NeSmith asked which organizations will be aiding in the outreach efforts.

Mr. Dixon stated that the Tuggerson Group will be bringing in a number of people to help who are from Gadsden County. What was on the schedule was technical system workshop dates and they were dedicated to helping every city and citizen.

Mr. Stanley Sims asked about the role of the citizens to help aid in education for these programs.

Mr. Dixon stated that they have set aside 30 days to assist with these issues.

Mr. Sims asked how would citizens educate other citizens on what needed to be done to receive these grants.

Mr. Dixon stated that citizens could come to the technical workshops or call the center and staff will assist them. Also, that staff will not just be in the offices, they will be out in neighborhoods and at churches.

Mr. Sims asked what was the method of outreach that would be used.

Mr. Dixon deferred to Ms. Tuggerson to answer Mr. Sims' question.

Ms. Tuggerson stated that this was a layout to show how this would be ran. She stated that this was to address the dates and the times for the program. Also, she stated that this was about the people that Tuggerson Group will be contacting to work this program.

Mr. Sims asked if The Tuggerson Group already had staff.

Ms. Tuggerson answered no, since this was a workshop, her group wanted to hear from the Board and public before they finalized everything. All information that was shared tonight was to be taken into consideration for the finished project.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that this model should also be used to educate citizens on probate and heir property laws.

Mr. Dixon then went over the proposed time line for the program.

Mr. Dixon introduced the following timeline for the proposed Rescue Plan:

**May 3-10:** Present Program for Board of County Commissioner Approval  
Finalize Outreach Plan/Schedule/Locations

Finalize Marketing Campaign

Finalize Program Eligibility Criteria and Standards

Draft Application forms, attestations, and other program aids

**May 11-14:** Receive First Rescue Funding Allocation from U.S. Treasury

Develop Grant Portal and Management System

Finalize paper applications and other application tools

**May 17-31:** Communication Soft Roll-out (Radio, Newspaper, Website, Facebook, etc.)

Implement media campaign

Final modifications of Portal, Management System, Applications

**June 1-30/July 1-2:** Conduct County wide workshops (Chattahoochee, Greensboro, Gretna, Quincy, Midway, Havana)

**July 1- Aug 31:** Implement Application Phase

Award grants to qualifying applicants (beginning July 15)

Audit/Closeout Phase One

**Sept 1-30:** Implement second Application Phase (for any remaining grant funds)

**Oct 1-31:** Award grants for second Application Phase

Audit/Begin Closeout of Phase Two

**Nov 1-30:** Final Audit, Reporting and Closeout of Grant Program

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested that the citizen preparation for this plan be a continuous process.

Mr. Dixon stated that it was going to be a continuous process.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that all citizens needed to be ready for this opportunity so that when the program opened up, those citizens could get the funding as soon as possible.

Mr. Dixon stated that the intention of this program was to help get citizens ready for the opportunity.

7. **Marketing and Communication** is one thing the County has allotted \$50,000 to ensure that every citizen gets the information that they need. This campaign will be digital and in print.

Mr. Sims asked who was being hired to do the marketing and communications and how the citizens would apply for these job opportunities that were arising.

Mr. Dixon stated that this program was not finished and once a timeline is finalized, the issue would be dealt with then.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if staff would be considering using the local churches to help get out the information.

Mr. Dixon stated that churches will be used as a resource.

Commissioner Green stated that it could be an incentive for those churches to apply for grants.

Mr. Sims stated that staff also needed to understand that many were not attending church physically right now so to look at Walmart and other businesses as well to get out the information.

Mr. Dixon stated that this time around, staff wanted to know what services the County was paying for through groups that was processing the applications for the County.

Commissioner Green stated that the Board should hear from The Integrity Group.

Mr. Eric Miller stated that with running a grant program, there was a large amount of administrative duties that are in the background. They start out with an analysis of the current controls that are imposed by law and look at all of the requirements. Their staff stays up to date on the changes to the requirements set by the current laws so there are no implemented legalities. They assist with developing the application process that will be available as a paper application as well as the online application. Also, they defer individuals to programs that might assist them and work with the Clerk's office for payments. Their staff documents all interactions with applicants and keeps in contact with them to get the appropriate information. They also do the reports for the Federal and State level regarding what has been distributed. They also report the amounts of applications that have been approved to the County.

Mr. Sims asked if the small business grant determination was based off of the number of expenditures. He asked for it to be explained to him so he could tell citizens which application to apply for. Also, was it based on the loss of revenue or added expenses.

Ms. Tuggerson said that one of the techniques used was to get citizens' documents ready. So, if citizens did not have those documents, staff would work with them to get the appropriate documents. She stated that every case is different and it took time to address each case. Also, this type of grant work was not done in an hour and her staff will work with citizens one on one to ensure the best outcome.

Karen Wells stated that the County has to be very careful on how they advise people as well. Citizens need documents so they do not have their bank accounts locked up.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked how cash and carry businesses document their loss. If they do not have receipts how do they show their loss.

Mr. Dixon stated that this was what Ms. Tuggerson was saying. We will take the time to get all of the required documentation for each citizen. The goal is to help most, if not all, of the citizens who need assistance.

*Commissioner Green exited at 3:59 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon stated that all commitments were taken into account and that staff will take its time to get each citizen the help they need. He also stated that the Board may want to consider a bonus for the employees who have worked diligently during this difficult time.

Chair Holt stated that the Health Council made sure that people got their funding before time ran out. Also, to look at staff because they were having more work than personnel for continued programs.

**2. Review and Discuss the May 4, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

There was no discussion regarding this agenda item.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, MR. DIXON DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 4:25 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

Nicholas Thomas, Clerk

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 4, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**Call to Order, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone and called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and the led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Holt asked for a Proclamation declaring May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as John Lewis Voter Rights Advancement Day of Action.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED.**

Mr. Dixon asked that Item 9 be pulled and he added Item 9a-Massey Building Repairs Bid Award and Item 9b-Recreation Trails Program Grant Request.

Commissioner Hinson asked to add 9c-Discussion of the FY21 Summer Youth Program.

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

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

Mr. Dixon introduced “new parts of the County Family”:  
Sheree Walker, the new Grants Administrator for the County; and Jerry Lee, Interim Public Works Director.

**CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS WRITTEN  
AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO  
APPROVE.**

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
  - **April 7, 2021 Special Meeting**



**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Commissioner Green read aloud the Statement.

Betty Kabel

Karen Watson

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**3. Discussion and Action on Dental Equipment Owned by Gadsden County**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board discussion and action on the dental equipment owned by Gadsden County.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**4. Approval to Confirm Appointment of UF IFAS Gadsden County Extension Director**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for confirmation of employment of Robert H. Jones as the new County Extension Director.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**5. Approval of the Massey Building Sub-lease**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for approval of Amendment Number 1 to Lease Number 4845 with the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only concern would be to not crowd out the Senior Services occupancy of that building at any time.

Mr. Dixon said he has made that clear from the beginning and it would be clear in any documentation.

Commissioner Nesmith said he had the opportunity to view the building and made sure the space was allocated.

Commissioner Green asked if that was in writing?

Mr. Knowles said he thought they needed to make a small tweak to the agreement before the Chair signed and he could have it ready tomorrow.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought they were fixing it themselves and now they were talking about using CARES money. He felt they should hold off before voting on this matter because they were talking about almost \$300,000.

Mr. Dixon said the reason they were attempting to repair it was because it was a County-owned building. He was of the opinion they should not be leasing buildings that was not in proper order. They should charge adequate rent but it was a County building and the County should take care of it.

*Chair Holt left the meeting at 6:20 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson said he believed in this item, but now needed to know more about this. He also added that he was of the belief that North Florida Health Corporation was willing to make the repairs. He stated he wished he could make a motion to go back on his previous motion.

Commissioner Green said he was looking though the contract and did not see the amount they would be charged and was told they have not done that yet.

Mr. Knowles said he believed the Board approved a percentage but was not sure and said he would have the Clerk check the record.

Mr. Dixon said to clarify, they did not make that decision, the County did because they were going to spend \$100,000 on the roof either way, insurance covered that part. He also said once they toured the building and saw the trouble it was really in, it was in disrepair and needed numerous repairs. He added it was a County building and they did not need to be leasing places without them being up to standards. He spoke with North Florida Rural Health and they offered to do this but it was a County building and was more prudent for them to take care of their own buildings and to start the process to take care of all the facilities. He added that all the buildings were in terrible shape.

Commissioner Green said since he made that statement and they know they have all the facilities that will need attention in the near future, was this something they have already started being more proactive on as to the condition of the buildings. Mr. Dixon said that was what it amounted to.

Mr. NeSmith said he toured the building several times and it was in such disrepair that he called the County Administrator and asked him to tour the inside and outside of the building. He added that not only was the building in disrepair, but the seniors were still using the building.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he also had toured the building and agreed it was in bad shape. He added that he did not know where Commissioner Hinson was coming from with regard to the promise the individual made, however, if they want to be sovereign and if the lessee was

not doing things the right way, they could leave. If they were able to fix it, they should fix it. He added his only concern was the Senior Citizens having access and use of the building in perpetuity. If they can fix it, will give them some independence as opposed to being indebted to someone that has come out of their pockets and would then be hard to evict.

Commissioner Hinson said it made sense what they said. He was the one that brought the guy here and took him at this word when he said he would fix it. He said they were about to pay \$300,000 out of CARES money for a building that could help impact the Seniors. He added the money that the Federal government gave them, money they promised to the people, they were about to give it to someone who told him...repairing the building, what about repairing these people lives in Gadsden County. People need help, small business people need assistance. The funding that will support this building was coming from the CARES dollars that the Federal Government gave to the County to help people, human resources, residents assistance program, the \$1.3 Million they said the Board agreed that would go to residents and small business, that was wiped out. He said he wanted them to come before the Board again.

Commissioner Green said this vote was for repairs. When Commissioner Hinson spoke of giving someone \$300,000, they were not giving that to this individual. He said it was a County building that they were responsible for the upkeep and was a shame they allowed the building to get to that state.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO ACCEPT OPTION 1. VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE ASKED FOR THEM TO LET THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TALK.**

Mr. Dixon said this was a sublease that has to be approved first by the State government. The County has an agreement with North Florida Rural Health Corporation to lease the building and the County has to get their approval first to lease the building. The 50-year contract is the lease to the County, not to North Florida Medical; there is no CARES money involved in the repair of the building. It was insurance money and money they found in the budget to repair their own building.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said Item 9a will be dealing with the building repairs and asked they keep the conversation to the lease part for this item.

Commissioner Hinson said they received something two weeks ago from the Administrator that broke down the \$1.3 Million and now almost \$300,000 was for the repairs of the Massey building. If they approve this, it was indicative as to who they were.

Mr. Dixon said first to the lease, it says it is until 2070; however, he thought that the intention was they were investing their money into the building. He added they could not allow others to fix up and invest in their building, it would set them up for failure at every turn. He further stated it was their recommendation, once they approve the sublease, deal with the lease, but not for 50 years.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AS PRESENTED BY THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR WITH A CAVEAT TO ADD LANGUAGE TO PROTECT THE SENIORS AND AUTHORIZE THE ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE A TERM OF LEAST THAT BENEFITS THE COUNTY UP TO...THEN ASKED FOR GUIDANCE.**

Mr. Knowles said he could make a motion to approve Option1 as presented by the Administrator with an initial term for 5 or 10 years and bring it back to the Board at a certain interval for re-approval if they wanted to continue with and could move forward. He suggested a 5-10 years with 5-year or 10-year renewals and be brought back to the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if he was looking for suggestions, since it was a medical service that the citizens would depend on, the recurring nature should be the farthest they could stretch as opposed to every so often that could terminate that vital medical service the citizens would become used to and dependent on.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH CONTINUED WITH HIS MOTION AND SAID THE TERM OF YEARS AS PER HIS MOTION WAS 10 YEARS WITH CAVEAT TO PROTECT THE SENIORS IN PERPETUITY. COMMISSIONER HINSON STATED HE HAD A QUESTION AFTER THE MOTION WAS SECONDED. COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Hinson said they were about to make a major investment and he thought for transparency, they should table this item so citizens would know what was about to come around them.

**VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 3-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**6. Approval of the Gadsden County Jail Fire Protection**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Johnson Controls Service Agreement Renewal for the Gadsden County Jail and was effective June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**7. Approval of the Judiciary System (JIS) Inter-Agency Agreement provided through the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for the approval for the attached Inter-Agency Agreement between the Judiciary Inquiry System (JIS) provided through the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) and the Gadsden County Probation Division.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Approval of the Criminal Justice User Agreement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval of the Criminal Justice User Agreement (CJIS) between the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Gadsden County Probation Division.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9. Approval of MOU with the Apalachee Regional Resilience Collaborative**

Item Pulled

**9a. Massey Building Repairs Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to award and execute the Massey Building Repairs Project contract to Tip Top Construction, Inc. for \$233,224.00.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9b. Recreation Trails Program Grant Request**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for the approval of a Recreation Trails Grant Program.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

Vice Chair Viegbesie explained the reason they were doing this was the application had already been made to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and this was to approve a letter confirming the Gadsden County BOCC commitment to the 60/40 match.

**VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9c Discussion of the FY21 Summer Youth Program**

Commissioner Hinson explained his item that was added. He explained the Summer Youth Program was requesting \$150,000 for employment of 125 youth for the 2021 Summer. For each youth, the Board will pay up to 20 hours per week for up to six weeks at a rate of \$8.56/hr. This amount adds up to approximately \$1027.00/youth. Additionally, the request includes \$18,000 for the hiring of monitors to assist with the management of the youth throughout the County and to ensure compliance with program rules.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said this was for discussion.

Commissioner Green asked how this would work with the program that has already been presented with and would the budget allow them to have two separate programs.

Mr. Dixon said it was whatever the Board directed him to do.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if he was presenting this proposal in addition to the other program, the Gadsden Youth Initiative Program.

Commissioner Hinson said that was what he said earlier and also, he was an Executive Board member with CareerSource and had information that they may not be privy to. He had the Deputy Clerk pass out information to the Board members and explained.

Vice Chair Viegbesie suggested he sit with the County Administrator or whoever was running the Youth Initiative to see what the differences were, if they could be married and bring it back as an action item and they would vote it up or down.

Commissioner Green said this was good information but they did not have a lot of time as it related to they had already been working on a program for the youth. He said he agreed with Vice Chair Viegbesie that some could be “married” but there was not a lot of time to make this happen.

Mr. Dixon said CareerSource was one of the initial partners in this program. The program has limitations and the limitation did not fit the majority of kids. He said they will be funding 100 kids. Any other kids that meet CareerSource’s program requirements, will be funded by CareerSource. He said it could be 150-200 kids. He hoped to come back with a year-round program.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Commissioner Hinson for bringing this to the Board. He said he did not see that the two programs were mutually exclusive. He asked Commissioner Hinson if this was a CareerSource program and if he was asking the Commission to take it over. Commissioner Hinson stated no. Commissioner NeSmith wanted to clarify the question, with the CareerSource program, would this program be a third program for the youth.

Commissioner Hinson thought would have great representation with all districts. In the past, Havana/Midway has not been represented properly, along with Chattahoochee.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said he felt the best approach was, this conversation was not exclusive of the Youth Initiative. He had read the presentation the Administrator provided, saw some overlap and it could be addressed. He asked for Commissioner Hinson to agree to meet with the representative of the Youth Initiative.

Commissioner Hinson said with the other timeframe, it gives only 1 week and his would give 4 weeks. He stated they had to figure out how to work together and come to a consensus.

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **10. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **11. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said there will be a Proclamation coming for National EMS Week and Public Works Week the next week.

He said they will send notice out tomorrow regarding the Youth Initiative. He said they would also be going into the private schools so they could participate.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**12 Updates**

Mr. Knowles said he had two items:

- 1) The two Executive Orders promulgated by the Governor; one was invalidating all mandates and the other was invalidating all remaining COVID-19 Orders and Ordinances that had been promulgated by municipalities and Counties and the County Resolutions were now dead. He said there was a provision in there that would kick in if there was a pre-emption by the State. He said they will not renew it this week.
- 2) In addition to the Executive Orders, there was Senate Bill 2006 regarding County Municipal measures to address emergencies and requires the governmental agency imposing the Ordinance or other measure that deprives a person of what the bill calls a right or liberty of property to prove that the measure is “narrowly tailored” to and serves a “compelling public health or safety purpose”. He added it was solidified in case law and now in Statute authorizing the Governor or Legislature to invalidate a City or County measure that unnecessarily restricts the Constitutional rights under the liberty or statutory right and provides the City or County emergency order will automatically expire 10 days after issuance unless extended by a majority vote of the political subdivision of the governing body. He said he believed the case law was every seven days and they have afforded their Chair at the time the ability to just “re-up” those. But, now they will be required to meet every 10 days and a majority vote of the Board will be required to keep that emergency order in place. He added it seemed to be specifically designated towards pandemics and COVID because it does not apply to hurricanes and other natural disasters that the State may encounter moving forward.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said he had a question with regard to calls received from citizens regarding a lawsuit and asked him to explain. Mr. Knowles said Derick Elias has filed a lawsuit suing the County. Vice Chair Viegbesie asked him to give a brief synopsis of what it was about.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if this was something that should be discussed in this forum.

Mr. Knowles said he would not get into the merits of the case but could discuss what the claims were and who they were against. Mr. Knowles said he respectfully would not address that to preserve any defenses they may have. He did say he believed the lawsuit was without merit and the County will be prevailing. He said Mr. Elias has sued both the County, the Board as a whole and Chair Holt in her official capacity as Chairperson of the Board. There were four counts; Count 1-Due Process Violation Property Interest where he alleged that when he was removed from the position as County Administrator without notice, he was deprived of a property interest; Count 2-Due Process Violation of a Liberty Interest where he is making an allegation the Defendants made stigmatizing statements concerning him and his willingness to serve as County Administrator without providing him with notice or hearing; Count 3-Substantive Due Process violation; Count 4 is a First Amendment Retaliation claim where he is alleging that the Board deprived him of his right to freedom of speech and association as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution and that the actions of the Board and Defendant Holt were willful, wanton and in reckless disregard for his constitutional rights. He said he preferred to not get into the merits of that...

Vice Chair Viegbesie said he was not asking him to go into the merits and details; he had received a number of calls and he told them he could not go into detail but he would ask them

to give a brief synopsis of what it was about. He asked the attorney if it was public record and Mr. Knowles stated it was and was available to anyone with a PACER account or they could go to the Northern District and pick up a copy themselves. Mr. Knowles said he had passed it on to Ms. Butler and she will give it to the adjuster. He also said this may not be something that would come through the County Attorney office seeing the allegations were made there was a failure to negotiate so there may be fact witness questions on his end. He said while they may assist on the case to keep the Commissioners abreast of what was going on, they may not handle the case out-right.

Commissioner Green asked if it was possible for them to receive a copy of lawsuit and Mr. Knowles said he could provide either electronically or a hard copy.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

#### **13. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

##### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson stated he had no comments.

##### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Commissioner Hinson for sharing the enlightening information on the youth.

He said he would like for them to take seriously an opportunity to take a trip to the “golden triangle” for a learning experience.

##### **Gadsden Youth Initiative**

He said word has gotten out and has been positive.

##### **Love Where You Live Initiative**

He said word has also gotten out about this campaign and he was very excited about June and the kick-off of that campaign.

##### **Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

##### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green asked for the name of the new Public Works Director, Jerry Lee, and Commissioner Green welcomed him.

He announced he spoke with an organization today that will adopt, along with his business, The Greenery Florist and Tuxedo Place, Joe Adams Road and Spooner Road. He encouraged other organizations, fraternities and sororities and churches to get involved as well.

He also wanted to make known he started today going door to door for the initiative for speed bumps on Shiloh and Hogan Lane.



**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Vice Chair Viegbesie said he has done that in one or two communities as well. He said the Petitions need to be from property owners and not tenants.

He said he had a number of things:

- 1) He asked where they were with the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Service. Mr. Dixon said they have re-routed their situation to provide coverage to Greensboro but it was an internal issue and was the Town of Greensboro’s responsibility to provide fire protection to Greensboro. He said they have provided coverage and they could not resolve that situation for them. He spoke with Greensboro and they have asked that the County not get involved.
- 2) He asked about the mowing of Attapulcus Highway and Scottown Road and asked they take note of that. Mr. Dixon said they have an internal problem and they were looking at right now. The system they have internally was they did not have enough mowers and need to look at redesigning the whole mowing program. Right now, they do not have the ability to keep the County mowed.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if he thought it would be feasible to have a location on both ends of the County. Mr. Dixon said they were studying that.

Commissioner Green asked if it was something they could consider contracting out as well. Mr. Dixon said they were looking at every option.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said in looking at Woodward Road and Dodger Ball Park Road, they have some dangerous dips. He said if someone was traveling at night and was speeding, there was a tendency for them to slightly hydroplane. He was thinking of the possibility of putting a flashing, warning sign to warn drivers.

He said his last comment was something the Board decided on and the Board was instructed to follow up on it. He said it had to do with the broadband devices they were to verify the attestations. He said they should help staff with the verification. In the Letters that were provided, there were 549 Letters of Attestation in the package, out of that number 189 have been personally spoken with and found there were 75 that received a device; 114 said they did not receive a device, 16 had non-working numbers, 100 of the calls had no answer and 2 individuals were found to have the same identification on their Letter of Attestation. He said there was a lot of confusion and had a particular applicant who applied for the device on February 17<sup>th</sup> and the device showed usage started before he made the application on February 15<sup>th</sup>. IT was also discovered that 8 individuals did not receive a device. He said he told them he was preparing a spreadsheet and as more were found, will bring the information to them. He added he will be glad to provide names for the record.

Commissioner Green asked if he could give a copy of what he was reading from. He stated he will give it to the Clerk for the record and the Clerk can provide it to them.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the ribbon cutting ceremony. Mr. Dixon said it was scheduled for tomorrow at 10:00 at the new Fire Station located on Joe Adams Road.

Commissioner Hinson asked about the Roberts Rules of Order workshop.

Commissioner NeSmith said it was an excellent idea and added if they could have a workshop where they were getting guideline, policy and procedures for their workshops, special meetings and regular meetings.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, VICE CHAIR VIEGBESIE  
DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:55 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 13, 2021  
AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING  
WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Hannah Pope, Deputy Clerk

**Welcome (Brenda Holt)**

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 4:05 p.m.

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence then she led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

***Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.***

***If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email***

***[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.***

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

Commissioner NeSmith read the above statement and there were no citizens to be heard at this time.

*Commissioner Viegbesie exited the workshop at 4:06 p.m.*

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned to the workshop at 4:06 p.m.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**3. Introduction/Overview (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

Commissioner Viegbesie informed the Board that Mr. Dixon was not feeling well and therefore had gone home. Chair Holt stated that Ms. Daniels had informed the Board before the meeting. She then asked Ms. Daniels if she had any commits or if there anything that she needed to go over. Ms. Daniels stated that she could stand in for Mr. Dixon at this time.

*Chair Holt exited the workshop at 4:07 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated that this was preliminary information since the Board showed interest in starting the budget process earlier than normal. This was going to be an informal workshop since all of the information is again preliminary. She stated as the Board knew, the preliminary property evaluations

would not come out until June 1<sup>st</sup>. Right now, staff was anticipating the revenues may be a “little flat” and the Property Appraiser has initially indicated to staff that there may be some increase in property evaluations. She stated there have also been some significant home sales in the eastern part of the county that may increase evaluations as well.

*Chair Holt re-entered the workshop at 4:09 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated that with this upcoming budget the assumptions that staff was making were that the Board would need to be a little conservative. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the County’s revenue may remain “a little flat”.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 4:10 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated there will be some cost-of-living increases to some budgets for contracts and other such expenses. There have been some increases due to the pandemic for Information Technology (IT) advancements. She stated when transitioning to working from home there was software that needed to be purchased. There will be no raises for the employees in this upcoming fiscal year which includes cost of living and merit increases.

**a) Financial Outlook for FY 21/22 - Goals**

**i. Reserve**

Ms. Daniels stated that there was interest from the Board regarding the reserves. This was not the internal contingency fund but the overall reserves. These funds are what the County puts aside for situations such as Hurricane Michael, other natural disasters, or a pandemic. She stated that the numbers the Board was seeing was not the finalized total but an estimate that the auditors could give staff at this time. The biggest reserve is the \$4.3 Million dollars in the General Fund. Ms. Daniels stated that most governments have a threshold amount that they try to keep in reserves and currently the County did not have a threshold for the reserves. Customarily there has been at least two to two and a half months of operating funds in the reserves. Staff will be getting with the Board at a later time to create a goal to start working towards the reserves. She stated that the next largest fund would be the Transportation fund which totaled \$2.7 Million dollars. That is where the gas taxes are located and is designated for road maintenance. She stated that the third largest fund is the Fire Assessment Fund which totals \$644 Thousand dollars. Ms. Daniels stated the amount that was previously stated for the General Fund is not the total of that fund. The amount stated is the unrestricted or unassigned balance. The total of the General Fund including the restricted or assigned amount is \$5.3 Million dollars.

Chair Holt asked for a break in the presentation so the commissioners could number the pages of the hand out they were given to be able to ask questions.

Ms. Daniels resumed the presentation by stating there are items in the \$5.3 Million dollars that is assigned to special projects or accounts payables of some sort. She stated that the \$4.3 Million is not what is typically used to budget projects but it is there to use when it is “raining cats and dogs”.

Commissioner Green asked if the \$4.3 Million dollars was not part of the budget.

Ms. Daniels answered that it has typically not been part of the budget. Those funds are the emergency funds. She stated that during a natural disaster those are the funds that allow the county to remain operational.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated those funds are to sustain the County for two to three months in case of an emergency. This is the reason that the General Fund is not technically the County's reserves. He stated in his personal opinion the Board should not be considering those funds right now because it is not the budget/accounts payables that the County will be using.

Chair Holt stated what was needed was a good explanation of the budget for the two new commissioners. She also reminded the Board of Ms. Daniels prior work with budgets via what was listed on her resume. Then she stated that she would like to see a comparison of the total amounts that were in the general fund. This could give clarity to the new commissioners and to the public regarding these amounts.

Commissioner Hinson stated that having a conservative amount for County reserves was 5 percent of the county's budget which would be \$2 to \$3 Million dollars, and the County has above that amount at this time. Yet, those funds are meant to aid the County when there is a disaster of a certain magnitude.

Chair Holt stated that the State recommends that the County have three months of operating funds in case of an emergency.

Commissioner Hinson stated that the most important thing to understand as a commissioner was the budget. He stated before Hurricane Michael the general fund was around \$7 to \$8 Million dollars. He stated that they needed to look at the auditor's report for the percentages and the board needed to be on the safe side by being conservative.

Commissioner NeSmith was then recognized and he asked Ms. Daniels if the County was following the "best practices" regarding the general fund.

Ms. Daniels answered that in her experience the reserves have been "healthier" than what the County has. She stated that where "she came from they had two reserve accounts one at six percent and one at 11 percent". She stated if the County has "healthier" reserves it could be a positive reflection on the County's financials for bonding purposes. It aids in the bond rating and the interest rates for the County. The reserves are there so the County is prepared in the face of a catastrophe such as Hurricane Michael. The County can work to building the reverses and that is something that staff would like direction on via the Board's discretion.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how has the commission improved the reserves in the past and "where do those dollars typically come from". Chair Holt stated that the County has not increased that amount. It has always been based off of the 5 percent of the budget "which is not a good practice". This is because the State says in case of emergency there is staff, contractors, and bills that still have to be paid. She stated this is why officials say to strengthen the reserves. COVID should be a warning since soon the federal government will not be giving out money and it does not matter what the virus does.

Commissioner NeSmith asked that while looking at the budget did the Board budget for the reserves or did the funds that were not spent go into reserves.

Chair Holt stated that once all of the expenditures are taken out and all that is left can be discussed. They have to remember that the pandemic has cause a large number of citizens to lose their jobs so they have to look at what people can pay as far as taxes goes. The Board has to look at all of the taxes coming in. Once the Property Appraiser gets the information in regarding property tax that can be discussed in further detail.

Commissioner Green asked how did the County build up the reserve account and even though nobody would want it, how about an increase in taxes. Was there a way for the Board to improve since the five percent has been just enough to get by?

Chair Holt stated that there would be more workshops to discuss this issue. The Board needed to allow Ms. Daniels to finish the presentation then they could have some discussion regarding the issues that were brought before them.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated this process was something that was new to Commissioner Green and Commissioner NeSmith. The reason they were asking these questions was for clarification as Ms. Daniels was going through the presentation.

Chair Holt stated "Jot it down"

Commissioner Viegbesie continued with a review of what Ms. Daniels stated regarding the process building the reserve account.

Commissioner Hinson stated the Board could regulate the County Administrator's discretionary spending. This was so the Board could have almost total control of the spending in the County.

Chair Holt stated that the Board has to know what the numbers are and for the commissioners to jot down their questions so Ms. Daniels can finish the presentation.

Ms. Daniels stated that the Board could budget amounts to go into reserves as well as placing unused funds into the reserves. She continued with the presentation by going over the breakdown of where the funds are placed once they are in the general fund. Staff wanted to show the Board a breakdown of the expenditures from the General fund that have been used and what remained. She stated that this was just for the Board's information only.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a breakdown on how the funds were spent.

Ms. Daniels stated that this was from the operating budget and all of these things were outlined in the budget. She stated that staff could provide them additional details and this was just the funds that the different departments receive. There were also other services that are used to operate the departments.

Commissioner Hinson stated that there is cell phone line item on this sheet.

Ms. Daniels state that was a typo because that was the cell towers.

Commissioner Hinson stated that made more since because he could not understand having a \$400 Thousand cell phone bill.

Chair Holt asked them to jot down the questions they had so they could be addressed at a later time. She reminded the Commissioners they could meet with the County Administrator on these issues outside of workshops as well.

Commissioner Green stated if they had an itemized list it would be helpful and may alleviate some of the questions that the commissioners had.

Commissioner Hinson stated there are some funds that are being used under the grant writer and that position has just become available. He asked how were those funds being used.

Ms. Daniels stated the name was a typo and the amount stated was a contract for the SHIP program. The names for some of these accounts have changed.

Chair Holt stated that there are administrative fees that need to be discussed as well. The Commissioners needed to jot down their questions and meet with the County Administrator as well.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that once Ms. Daniels finished the presentation, the Commissioners could take it home and look over it so they could have questions prepared for the next workshop.

Ms. Daniels stated that the next portion of the presentation was the general fund revenue and this states what the County has received up until this month. She stated that it also showed what the County receives annually over the last few years and was for information only. The information looks as if the County has a shortage of funds yet it was just a comparison of the funds that have been collected and the budget. She stated there are still five months in this fiscal year and there is still revenue to be collected in those months.

*Commissioner Green exited the workshop at 4:47 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated that the next two sections of the presentation show the amounts collected over the last two years and these were the major revenues for all funds. There being no questions Ms. Daniels proceeded to a breakdown of what the Constitutional Officers have spent since 2017 and the request for the current fiscal year. The last section of the presentation showed the taxable value of the ad valorem taxes. The County had a 5.24% increase in property evaluations from the previous fiscal year.

*Commissioner Green returned to the workshop at 4:50 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated the presentation showed the current millage, previous millage rate, and how much property revenue was generated. The final columns showed the budgeted amounts and the amounts that were generated. The highlighted sections of the presentation would be the

upcoming fiscal year projections off of the current figures. She stated that this was all a “what if” explanation and staff should know more once the property evaluations were received. She asked the Board for their consideration regarding the non-profits and how they would like to handle the budget process for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chair Holt stated the reason the Board set those funds aside was because of the virus.

Commissioner Green asked was the Boys and Girls Club one of the organizations that money was set aside for and when would the Board be able to distribute those funds to the organizations. He stated that those funds help those organizations provide services to the County.

Ms. Daniels stated that staff will be bringing that item to the Board in a regular meeting because those funds were set aside in the previous budget that the County was operating on now. The funds have to be brought back before the Board to be released to those organizations. She stated since it was allocated it has been placed in reserves.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated when those funds were put into the reserves it was because the schools were closing due to the virus. These organizations have to prove they were having activities during the shutdown. He stated he believed if the organizations should get the funds based on the amount of time they provided service during the pandemic time frame. This was so that information could be part of the budget proposal. He stated it could be used to see what the County is expecting to spend versus what the County is expecting to receive. The nonprofits need to bring in their requests which can allow staff to add those requests to the budget so that they can be added to the expenditures. He stated he is hearing that Gadsden County has one of the lowest millage rates which may hurt the County when it comes to revenue sharing. The reason why is because the State sharing process is done off of the local government millage rates.

Chair Holt stated that Gadsden County is a receiver County. The reason being is a receiver county is landlocked and does not have the large revenue sources as the counties with beaches. The problem with raising the millage rate was “we would be asking poor people to pay more taxes”. She stated that has been a dilemma for the County for years.

Commissioner Green asked when was the last time there was a tax increase.

Chair Holt stated that property tax and gas taxes are two different entities. She stated it was easier to get funds off of gas tax than property tax.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that gasoline tax is a restricted tax and is only for transportation purposes.

Chair Holt stated that if there are those tax dollars coming in for a specific purpose the other funds do not have to carry those projects.

- ii. Contingency
- b) Assumptions/Trends

**Summary Highlight** (*Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator*)

- a) Revenue/Expenditures



- b) Fund Balance/Reserve
- c) Non-Profits

**Constitutional Officers**

The Supervisor of Elections, Shirley Green Knight, appeared before the board to discuss her budget request. She stated that at every one of the polling places there has to be a machine called auto mark. These machines are for disabled voters in which the voters get a ballot to take to the machine that digitizes the ballot for them. This machine helps those who are visually and hearing-impaired voters. The Supervisor of Elections Office purchased these machines in 2011 and they can no longer be upgraded with the election software. Therefore, there was a need for voting machines that will be placed into the budget request. Also, she stated there was a lawsuit that involved software that has to be in place by March of 2022. This software was where the disabled voter could pull up the ballot to be able to vote independently at home. This software could also be used for the military personnel. This software will also be included in the budget request.

Chair Holt stated as soon as those numbers could be submitted it would be greatly appreciated. She asked how many COVID cases were there.

Ms. Knight answered they still have 25. She stated that the ball park number of the additional costs would be \$110,000.

Chair Holt asked if that included both software and the machines.

Ms. Green Knight answered that was correct.

Chair Holt asked that she please get that information to administrative staff.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he appreciated that Ms. Knight came to explain the increase in her budget request from the previous years. He asked if it could be impressed upon the other Constitutional Officers to give an explanation as to why there was increases to their budget requests.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the software for military and disabled citizens would allow them to vote electronically as opposed to returning an actual ballot.

Ms. Knight answered they will have to return the ballot. This software has to be requested from the Supervisor of Elections Office first and then they will be given a link to pull up a ballot. The citizens then have to print it out and mail it back. It has to be delivered to the office by mail or hand.

*Commissioner Green exited the workshop at 5:13 p.m.*

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the software only allowed them to access their ballot as opposed to receiving it in the mail.

Ms. Knight answered that was correct yet, the ones at the polling place use a different software.

Chair Holt asked if there were any other questions.

Commissioner Hinson asked the Board to take under consideration updating the Planning and Zoning practices, bringing in WastePro to look at waste collection, and looking at employee wages.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
May 13, 2021 Budget Workshop

*Commissioner Green re-entered the workshop at 5:16 p.m.*

Chair Holt stated if he had any idea to jot those down so they can be discussed when there is more information on the budget.

Commissioner NeSmith asked was there a reason the Bboard has not increased the gas taxes since it was a more palatable way to generate revenue.

Chair Holt answered that people just did not want to raise any of the taxes.

Commissioner NeSmith asked was there a way to create a marketing program to explain that those taxes would be used to provide additional services.

Mr. Knowles informed the Board t he had emailed them the millage rates by County for comparison. He stated that property in counties are not going to have sufficient value to have a major increase if the millage rate increased. Some of the business and larger parcels may suffer but a lot of the citizens are not really going to see a tremendous increase.

Ms. Daniels stated that in the last section of the presentation the millage rates are listed out for the County since 2005.

Mr. Knowles stated that once discounts and other aspects apply, the increase may be only \$100.

Ms. Daniels stated that it will be based on the evaluations of the properties.

Chair Holt stated due to the conditions of the time a large group of people were exempt at that time. That when you say percent as cent it also makes a big difference. They have to clarify what is being said for the public.

Commissioner Hinson stated there was a bridge that collapsed last year. There are still bridges that need to be corrected as well.

Chair Holt stated Hurricane Michael and Hurricane Sally weakened the roads/bridges in this area. The storms washed out those roads/bridges.

Mr. Knowles stated there is going to possibly have a new resolution or ordnance regarding the masks in the next upcoming meeting. It does not affect the County regarding resources.

Ms. Daniels reiterated that this was again strictly preliminary for their information. Staff will be bringing back this information as well as more information as they receive it during the budgeting process. She asked for the Board to consider the idea of taking off some time specifically the month of July. Also, there would have to be a meeting to adopt the millage rate before August 4<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Holt stated that they could have workshops at any time to discuss the information as needed. She stated to look at the calendars to see when they needed to meet.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated the Florida Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties are having conferences and there will not be a quorum present during the times of those conferences.

**Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, CHAIR HOLT ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AT 5:37 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 18, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE-DURING WORKSHOP COMMISSIONERS WERE SITTING IN AUDIENCE AND MADE HEARING COMMENTS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT IN SOME PORTIONS OF THE MEETING\*\***

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Dixon asked for moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

He then read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion of Ordinance 2002-004 (Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners)**

Mr. Knowles said it would be constructive to go through the policies and procedures and then come back for questions. He explained the rules were Board rules and they could change them. He explained three was important for a quorum and they did not need a quorum for a workshop. In the other meetings, they do require an in-person quorum. He further explained the only reason Commissioners should leave a meeting was due to illness or an emergency. If a Commissioner was required to depart prior to adjournment and the departure constituted a loss of a quorum, they would not be able to hold any other business other than adjourn. He said these were their rules and if there were things in them they did not like, they could change them. He said if there was a conflict and there was no rule for it, they would go to Robert's Rules of Order.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about remaining in the Chamber, what was the penalty for violating the rules. Mr. Knowles said one could be an Ethics complaint, further down in the Ordinance there was language concerning missing too many meetings but he was not aware of any penalty. He said he believed the Chair at that time could require a Commissioner to stay in the room, particularly if they would lose a quorum.

Chair Holt said an Ethics attorney said the problem they have is people leaving during a vote because they may not want to take a stand one way or the other. Mr. Dixon said it had to do with abstaining and that was another set of rules that have to be followed. Mr. Knowles stated if there was a conflict of interest, they had rules for that and rules regarding yes and no and not voting. They have had a problem with some folks staying silent and if there is no vote, it was considered an “aye” vote.

Commissioner Viegbesie said with regards to emergency, the emergency did not have to be an emergency, but leaving the room to avoid a vote was a problem. Chair Holt stated also they had to know a person’s state of mind as to whether they were leaving to not vote.

Mr. Knowles said he was hearing the change they wished to make was to give more clarity as to how they leave the room. Commissioner Green said if the conversation was still going on, Mr. Knowles interjected and said without a quorum, nothing could go on. He then asked if they could not take a vote until everyone was back in the room. Mr. Knowles said for the loss of quorum, they could add “other than to call a recess until member returns”. Commissioner Viegbesie said in the meanwhile, there should be no discussion on that item until they had a quorum.

They then addressed Section IV-Presiding Officer. Mr. Knowles asked if they wished to add to it.

Commissioner Green asked if possible, with whoever is Chair, to put in order who would speak next. Mr. Knowles said they could re-organize Section III-Recognize all Commissioners...a sentence could be added “and recognize in order of precedence”.

*There was discussion and with the Commissioners sitting in the audience and wearing masks, it was hard to understand everything that was being said.*

Mr. Dixon said what he understood Commissioner Viegbesie say, he thought they would find that each Chair runs the meeting a little differently.

Chair Holt said citizens wanted them to stay on the discussion and she felt they needed to tighten up on decorum. They must maintain decorum in the building, even if they get a “little hyper”. Chair Holt said once Law Enforcement is called, they will remove you from the building. She added they needed to know if they were disruptive, for safety of everyone, the disruptive person would be removed from the building.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a timeframe for Commissioners on speaking. Chair Holt said at one time there was a rule, she thought 2-3 minutes and 1-2 minutes for rebuttal.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they should be voting to adjourn the meeting, the only time that would not happen is when there might be an emergency.

Mr. Dixon said Number 5 says “Call to order any member of the Board who violates any of these procedures and, when presiding, decide questions of order, subject to a majority vote on a motion to appeal”.

Commissioner Viegbesie said for example, Commissioner Green was waving authority, does not want to come to the point the Chair would become retaliatory (there was more discussion but was hard to understand). Mr. Dixon said that was the reason for the appeal to the rest of the Board so it would not become a personal thing. Mr. Knowles said they could clarify to say if the Board desired to remove a Commissioner, it should be the majority of the Board. He said to make a motion and second to remove the member from that meeting if that was in their Policy and Procedures. He added they could run into a problem if there was a removal of a person that was not specifically called for in the Ordinance, there would be a process issue. They had nothing in the Ordinance that stated a Commissioner could be removed from the Chamber by the Chair unless they voted to change it. He added they want to add a motion, second and majority vote of the Board, to remove that Commissioner for that meeting. Commissioner Viegbesie stated once they calmed down, they should be allowed to return. Commissioner Green said that should be at the discretion of the Chair.

Chair Holt said they still had citizens waiting to have their business taken care of.

Mr. Knowles asked for them to look at Rules of Debate number 3. It read:

“A member once recognized should not be interrupted when speaking unless said member is being called to order. The member should then cease speaking until the question of order is determined, without debate, by the Chairman.

Commissioner Viegbesie said **ORDER OF BUSINESS** Item B (Page 4) Agenda Form. He said he was one that did not like added items. If the supported documents were not available, the item should be removed to prevent lack of transparency. Mr. Knowles said Item J (Page 5) Placing Items on Agenda “With the consent of the Commission as a whole, matters may be placed on the agenda by any member of the Commission, the Manager or by the County Attorney”. He added sometimes they had to add items that would need to get through and asked if they wanted to reconcile that to clarify. He said they had two conflicting provisions and did they want to clarify that. Commissioner NeSmith said he felt they did need to come up with a reasonable time they needed to have prior to the meeting so they could review. Mr. Knowles said they needed to come up with a way because there are times there is an emergency meeting. Chair Holt said these items are also emailed to the Commissioners. Mr. Knowles suggested if it involved a fiscal impact, to keep that amount under a certain amount. Commissioner Viegbesie said since the policy said (inaudible) they were hearing what the Commissioners expressed.

Chair Holt said the Chairman has to be responsible for the agenda. They need to have someone responsible for the final agenda. Commissioner NeSmith asked if that was written and Chair Holt said it should be.

Mr. Dixon said as a thought, the time constraints in getting items on the agenda was not so much to get to the newspaper but in getting the research done in order to be presented to the Commissioners.

Commissioner NeSmith asked (on Page 4) “All support information for agenda items shall be available no later than ten (10) business days before the regular meeting” was that reasonable and was told no. He said the Commissioners had to understand, according to Mr. Knowles, the Ordinance has not been updated since 2002. He asked what a reasonable time was. Mr. Dixon said they would work on a reasonable time. Mr. Knowles said if they were dealing with something that involved a large fiscal impact, he felt they would want to know well in advance, but if it was something they were bringing such as a bridge collapsing or was a dry season and they were in threat of wildfires, it would have to be brought immediately. Commissioner Viegbesie added that if items are added, they should be uploaded so citizens could have a chance to review as well.

**2. Review and Discuss the May 18, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS DECLARED ADJOURNED AT 5:42 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS. Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MAY 18, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone, called the meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to add items 16a-CARES Act Local Government Funding Program, 16b-Approval of Resolution 2021-026 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2021, Item 16c-Ambulance Total Loss Claim, and Item 16d-CARES Act Residual Funds.

Commissioner Hinson asked to add item 16e Summer Youth Program.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Proclamation Honoring Public Works Week**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and Chair Holt called the Public Works employees to the front where she read aloud the Proclamation and then presented it to the employees.

**2. Proclamation Honoring EMS Week**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and called the EMS workers to the front where Vice Chair Viegbesie read aloud the Proclamation and it was presented to Director Keith Maddox.

Commissioner Hinson asked to go over the amendments once again.

**CONSENT**

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

**3. Ratification Memo**

**4. Approval of Minutes**

- March 16, 2021-Regular Meeting



- **March 29, 2021**

**5. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract-SHIP HHR Program**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.**

**If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.**

Commissioner Green read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

Marion Lasley, 5 Dante Court, Quincy, FL 32351 Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

Derrick Elias, 233 Cheeseborough Avenue, Quincy, FL Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

Tonya Gaines, 111 S. Ward Street, Quincy, FL 32351 Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

Sylvester Green, 143 Billy Hatcher Road, Quincy, FL 32352 Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

Norman Shaw, Jr., 446 Uptain Road, Quincy, FL 32352 Bainbridge Highway Land Use Map Amendment

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**6. Public Hearing-Quasi-Judicial-FL Solar D1, LLC Conceptual and Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2021-02)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a quasi-judicial public hearing for consideration of a conceptual/preliminary site plan to construct a solar generation facility on a 35.72± acre parcel located north of Potter Woodberry Road.

**Jill Jeglie Reeves, Gadsden County Senior Planner**, appeared before the Board and was sworn in by Deputy Clerk Marcella Blocker. She gave a brief synopsis of the item and stated the Planning Commission voted 10-0 to recommend approval.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and everyone would be given an opportunity to talk. She then asked if anyone wished to speak for or against and there was no-one.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what district property was located and Commissioner Viegbesie stated it was in District 2.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had no comments and felt the item had been properly vetted. He said the proposed site was adjacent to Ames Barineau and it would be economic development, give citizens access to save on their utilities and felt it would be a wonderful thing for them to approve.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGEBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION ONE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**7. Public Hearing-Legislative-Bainbridge Highway Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment (SSPA 2020-01)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a legislative public hearing for board approval for consideration of Ordinance 2021-003 to adopt the Bainbridge Highway Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) amendment to change the future land use designation from Agriculture 1 (AG-1) to Commercial (COMM).

**Jill Jeglie Reeves, Gadsden County Senior Planner**, appeared before the Board and gave a brief description of the item. She said the Comprehensive Plan amendment is considered a 'legislative action' as described by Subsection 1301 of the Gadsden County Land Development Code and must meet the statutory requirements set forth in Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. Unlike a quasi-judicial action, a local government had broad decision-making latitude in legislative matters. Public notice was mailed at least 30 days prior to public hearing and legal advertisement was placed in local newspapers and a sign was posted on the property. She then gave the board options.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and asked to hear from the proposer of the project.

**David Theriaque, Esquire, Theriaque and Spain**, appeared before the Board and the team introduced themselves.

**Allara Mills Gutcher, The Planning Collaborative**, introduced herself and said she was the planner on the project team.

**Josh Hufstetler, Executive Vice President of Teramore Development, LLC**, appeared before the Board, introduced himself and said he was in charge of everything underneath the umbrella of their company in terms of managing their pipeline.

**Tyler Graybill** introduced himself and said he worked in a real estate capacity for Teramore Development.

**Luke Strickland** introduced himself and said he also worked in a real estate capacity for Teramore Development.

**Joseph Alday, Alday-Howell Engineering**, introduced himself and said he was a sub-consultant with Teramore Development and was the civil engineer on the project.

Mr. Theriaque said he distributed a 3-ring binder and gave a description of the exhibits.

**Allara Mills Gutcher, The Planning Collaborative**, appeared before the Board. She stated she prepared the application for approval of the future land use map amendment. She did go to the State to ask for their help in determining if there were any historical resources on the property. There were some in the vicinity but did not list where they were for the protection of the resources. She added there were a lot of churches and cemeteries in the area and felt that had a lot to do with what was in the area. She prepared a Consistency Analysis to the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan and a Compatibility Review of what this meant to the surrounding development. (Page 45 of 80) There is potable water available and there will be an on-site septic system. They will meet all the concurrency requirements, which include the water, sewer and solid waste. She also said they would not exceed any level of service standards for the roadways. She said there were no wetlands on the acreage and will not impact any. They were on a major collector road and will meet that policy and was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the type of use that would go into the commercial category was consistent with that. They will not impact the surrounding area adversely and this request will meet standards in the Regulation Code. She asked the Board to adopt Option 1.

**Derrick Elias, 233 Cheeseborough Avenue, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board in opposition to this item. (His comments will follow the Minutes.)

He said the proposed location site is directly across from his mother's house. He said a CBOR meeting was held on January 3, 2020, was poorly advertised and had 12 people there and only 2 were in favor of this development. Dollar General representatives were very rude during the meeting and not very forthcoming. The Planning Commission met with 8 members and no-one spoke in favor of this project. The motion was presented to deny the proposal and the vote was unanimous. If this is approved tonight, it opens the door to destroy country living. Someone was misguided when they said there was no noise, smoke, glare, or fumes that would be created. There is no buffer between the site development and his Mother's property. The Level of Service report was done in 2018 and should be updated. Dollar General sells wine and beer and will be in front of the St. Johns AME Church. The driveway will line up directly across from St. Johns AME Church. They were not opposing the store, just the location of the store. He stated he has about 85 petitions in opposition of this project who live in the St. Johns community. He also asked, with this being a public hearing, for full disclosure and transparency from the Board and asked if any of the board members have been involved in any ex parte communication with the developer, any representatives representing the interest of Dollar General or Teramore Development, LLC to please identify for the record.

**Tonya Gaines, 111 S. Ward Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before Board. Her Mom is Ruby Mitchell. She asked the Board go along with the Planning Board's recommendation and deny this site. She added she was not opposed to economic development, just for it to not be located there.

**Pamela Washington** (no Speaker Appearance form) appeared before the Board. She stated Ms. Mitchell was her mother. She listened to the arguments and she was not opposed to the store, felt it would be good for the community but she was opposed to the location of the store. She said she has severe respiratory issues and smoke from cigarettes, cigars, smoke from cars burning oil causes her respiratory problems. If she can't sit outside with her Mother because of what is proposed to be across the street in front of her was an issue. Her Mom also has issues.

**David Theriaque** re-appeared before the Board and said Mr. Elias had no problem with the store when they offered to purchase his mother's property for \$350,000 and it would have been compatible. He said the only reason Mr. Elias was opposing this was when he demanded \$350,000 he did not get it and he stated he would do his best to kill them.

**Josh Hufstetler** re-appeared before the Board. He said he hated it has come to this, they had an agreement to purchase the property for \$250,000 and the additional \$100,000 came as a result of Dollar General's necessity that when they contract a piece of property and subdivide out of that property, they have to restrict it to competition coming in to ensure their landowners will not come in behind them and bring in a competitor. Unfortunately, they were not able to come to terms. He said their goal was to make as many people happy as they could. He said they also have the same restrictions with Coastal with their hundreds of acres. He said they were willing to adapt into the area and make the building as much residential, rural character into the storefront as they could.

Mr. Theriaque appeared again. He said they believe they bring a few things to the community, jobs, economic development, and convenience to the neighbors that want to shop at a neighborhood commercial store. He regretted they were not able to come to terms with Mr. Elias and have his support. He asked for the Board's approval of the Comprehensive Plan amendment. He said they will address site design, if granted, when they come back with the site plan.

Mr. Elias reappeared before the Board to present a rebut to the rebuttal. He said after Teramore was voted down 8-0, Mr. Hufstetler called him and made an offer on the property and a contract was signed, only it was \$260,000, not the \$350,000 they said. After signatures, they wanted to amend the contract and add a Restrictive Covenant Agreement and that was not a part of the original contract. He told Mr. Hufstetler if they wanted to change the terms of the conditions, they had to do something for them. He wanted his Mother to sign into perpetuity what she could and could not do with the remaining portion of her property. He said they would not stipulate to that, but if anyone ever wanted to buy the property, they would give them the right to first refusal.

Chair Holt said they would now look at the others that have signed up to speak.

**Norman Shaw, Jr., 446 Uptain Road, Quincy, FL 32352** appeared before Board and said he was in favor of the store, they do need one in the country, maybe not in that location.

**Sylvester Green, 143 Billy Hatcher Road, Quincy, FL 32352**, appeared before the Board. He said he was a resident of the community of Robertsville and there is a great need for this store.

There were already two stores in the area taking advantage of people. He asked the Board to consider all the residents in the area.

Chair Holt read aloud an email that was sent in by Barbara Nolen. She said she was a resident of the St. Johns community and felt it would benefit the residents not only in their community but the neighboring community of Robertsville as well. She then mentioned Marion Lasley's email that asked if this was properly advertised. Ms. Jeglie said both meetings were properly noticed, put in newspapers and a sign placed on the property.

Chair Holt said people were now allowed in the meeting chambers and people did not have to send in emails, they could appear in person or appear by Zoom.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before Board. He said they have to come down to basic facts, their words must match their actions and their actions must match their words. He said he has challenged the Board to bring industry into the County and for them to do what they were elected to do, to represent the citizens best interests. He said to the Commissioners, "let your words and your actions match". Even if this was in front of someone's property or across from someone's property, does it meet the standards?

Commissioner Green said it has been proven that they will not be able to 100% satisfy everyone. He asked when the meeting was held in the past? Ms. Jeglie said the Planning Commission met June 4, 2020.

Mr. Theriaque re-appeared at the podium and said they were looking at 8-10 full and part-time jobs.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was going to ask and hearing the presentation tonight, the question was not whether the community needs Dollar General, the argument is the location. He said the area does deserve the convenience to improve their quality of life. He asked if both parties have come to an impasse in working something out in order to provide this very needed service? He added that he hoped it had not come to a "my way or no way". If they could, he suggested they do that. If not, he suggested...Chair Holt interrupted and said to do one at a time.

Mr. Hufstetler re-appeared at the podium and said they were at an impasse. He added to meet the contract, there would need to be an additional \$100,000 to come to an agreement. He said it was beyond his control now.

Mr. Elias re-appeared before the board. He said he disagreed with Mr. Hufstetler and stressed they do not oppose the store, they do oppose the location. They approached his Mother about buying her property that was not for sale. After they signed the contract, absent the RCA, they re-appeared with restrictive covenants and wanted her to sign. It changed the terms and conditions of the contract. He told them they could still work it out **IF** they wanted her to sign the RCA, yes, the first option was money. He then went back to them and said they would give them the right of first refusal, and it was a win-win situation. They could work this out, they just do not want it directly in front of her house.

Mr. Hufstetler re-appeared and said there was a third contract that was very specific and pertinent to the situation. It was the contract and lease with Dollar General. He said he was holding a 15-year guaranteed lease with four 5-year options. He said the impasse was a result of their failure to meet their obligations to their tenant within the contract to provide the restrictions. He said even if he wanted to do this deal on the Elias property, he was at an absolute impasse because he had no lease with Dollar General. He had an opportunity to get that and did not have that today.

Commissioner NeSmith had questions for Mr. Theriaque. He asked if there was a possibility they could have some type of buffer in front of the store that would not impede the landowner?

Ms. Jeglie said there was a requirement for a buffer in the area along the front.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Theriaque if there was a possibility a store could be placed there that could be more compatible with the character of the community.

Mr. Hufstetler re-appeared before the Board. If they want to incorporate additional materials, things within reason, they will work with staff to make them happy. Every Dollar General store from this point forward will have produce. He said it was beyond his control but would push Dollar General to do that.

Commissioner Green wanted to make sure he expressed that he understood the concerns of the entire Elias family. He said he knew money had already been invested and it seemed to be too late to talk about moving. He did not want the company to go somewhere else and did not want to be insensitive to the Elias family, but was it an option for them to look at relocating.

Mr. Hufstetler re-appeared and said he would love to do that in good faith to the Elias family and they took it as far as they could, given the fact they needed the restrictions on the property and could not get that deal done. He added he made it very clear to Dollar General the need to put another \$100,000 into the project or doing without the restrictions, in which all indications were they were unwilling to restrict their competitor.

Commissioner Hinson said he served on the Planning Board for many years. What shocked him was, there were eight people on the Planning Commission that voted against this item. He said at first, he thought there was no way he could oppose this, but the comments made him think.

Chair Holt said this was in her District, people were looking for economic development and jobs. She added she even have signatures from people in the church that was interested in it being there and did not want to take the chance of losing the business and economic development. On the issue of a septic tank, you must have enough sewer to pull lines on it, you cannot run a dry line on a septic tank. She pointed out that FAMU (Experiment site) and St. John Elementary School were on septic tanks.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to make a correction and wanted everyone to know he was not against it. He was saying to wait until they had everything they had to get first and then move on. Case in point, Four Star Freightliner in Midway, they built a sewer system for them and they were the only ones that got it.

Chair Holt said that would be at the planning stage and this would come back before them and they would get to see it again.

Diane Quigley re-appeared before the Board and stated that was not so, it was a Type I. However, if they were concerned about significant impacts to the community, the traffic, lighting, etc., they could direct Planning to make it a Type II where it would come back to them.

Chair Holt passed the gavel to Vice Chair Viegbesie so she could make a motion.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said he saw the Parliamentarian, Mr. Knowles, shake his head. Chair Holt asked if she had to pass the gavel and he stated no. The gavel was passed back to her.

**CHAIR HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH STATED WITH THE UPMOST RESPECT TO MR. ELIAS, HE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

Chair Holt said Mr. Elias made one request and they did not honor that request; he asked if they had met with anyone with Dollar General and she had met with a gentleman there and they went over some things and she met with some of the people in the audience.

Mr. Knowles pointed out this was a legislative hearing and ex-parte communication was ok and the quasi-judicial hearings was where there was a problem.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR A 10-MINUTE RECESS AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OBJECTED TO THE RECESS. BOARD RECESSED AT 8:11 P.M.**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**CHAIR HOLT RE-CONVENED THE MEETING AT 8:24 P.M.**

Chair Holt said she forgot a Citizen Request to be Heard and it was not an Agenda item. There was no last name but was from Andre and asked if there would be an increase in pay for employees.

#### **8. COVID-19 Resolution Update**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said Mr. Knowles would discuss it.

Mr. Knowles said in talking with the Administrator and Board, there was a request to update the Resolution. The Governor has forbidden using their emergency Ordinance enactment procedures to create mask orders and regulate things involving COVID-19. He said before them was a proposed Ordinance that regulated certain communicable and airborne diseases. He added there was nothing within the Executive Order to prohibit them from using the normal Ordinance enactment procedure. He asked the Board to assist him in how they would like to continue to handle the ongoing epidemic and airborne communicable disease they had seeing as the Governor has pre-empted them and in light of Senate Bill 2006, which crippled them a little with regard to the Governor and Legislature being able to pre-empt local Orders. He said they could do a Resolution that strongly encouraged people to wear a mask or do an Ordinance that required it but they would not be able to use the regular procedures through FS 125, 252 or 166.

Chair Holt said she would like to see something that read ‘strongly encourage’ but was not sure how they would do it.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could have a workshop to think about this. He said he had a former teacher pass away from this. He also felt they needed to have someone come talk to them every meeting.

Commissioner Green concurred with Commissioner Hinson.

Mr. Dixon said he met with the Health Department Director on a weekly basis. Almost everyone 55+ have been vaccinated. They were trying to encourage younger citizens to get vaccinated.

Commissioner Hinson said in Leon County, the Superintendent was bold enough to have parents bring kids to school so they could be vaccinated. Maybe they could bring the Health Department to the School system and could help everything out.

Mr. Dixon said young people went from being healthy to dead in a couple of weeks.

Chair Holt said she was also thinking 99 deaths since March 1<sup>st</sup> was a lot for a small county.

Commissioner Hinson said it was interesting catch. He thought they could have a partnership with the School Board, do something huge at the school and the County could fund it, invest in it.

Mr. Dixon said one idea was a car show, if you got vaccinated, your name would go into a raffle pot. If you get vaccinated, have a draw to get them motivated.

Commissioner Hinson suggested if parents would, do a raffle of a \$10,000 prize. But the parent and child have to show up.

Chair Holt said to get back to draft, did they want to look at this or also they did have a workshop before their regular meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**9. Approval and Signature(s) for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to satisfy the Special Assessment Lien between Gadsden County SHIP Housing Homebuyer Program and the homeowner.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**10. 2021 Summer Youth Initiative Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to put \$60,000 into the Summer Youth Initiative program. He said they already had \$90,000 and arrived at a number. He said they would give at least \$120,000 in salaries to the young people and the additional \$30,000 was not only for staff, but they had not thought of transportation issues.



Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they had a description of the item on the Agenda. Mr. Dixon said the Agenda item was not present. Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought the approval was for \$50,000.

Commissioner Hinson said he was for it, anything for the kids, but would like to have an itemized description. He wanted to make sure citizens had a chance to look at this too before they voted on it and he did not have a chance to do any research. He said along with this, who were the other partners?

Mr. Dixon said they have not had the Havana meeting yet, it will be 25<sup>th</sup>. City of Quincy has sent their check, Chattahoochee was sending their check. He said \$125,000 of \$150,000 would go directly to students.

Commissioner Hinson said he was looking at the Gadsden County Times and they said two of the partners were Quincy and Havana. He asked who made that statement.

Mr. Dixon said they had met with every city except Havana and did not know who made that statement.

Commissioner Hinson said they were having a breakdown. Why were they giving CareerSource \$150,000 and they were finding kids and they do it free?

Mr. Dixon said all the stakeholders met on a Zoom conference this morning. CareerSource is a stakeholder, while they have lots of funds, their funds were severely limited in who they could serve. He said this would allow them to bring more people into the program or pay the young people more.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his understanding was the partners were going to be the one employing and paying the youth that would participate in the program.

Mr. Dixon said TCC was paying for the site and that was the workplace certification that everyone would meet, they will get training in different fields.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he understood the intention of it. What would the County be spending the \$150,000 on specifically?

**Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator**, appeared before the Board. She said TCC would provide staff that would do training. To encourage the incentive to the employer, the County would pay the stipend. They may also have to provide transportation for youth in the outlying areas that did not have transportation and possibly food. There was \$97,000 already budgeted in this year's budget.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if there was any idea of the targeted number of openings?

Chair Holt asked the timeline. Mr. Dixon said they will bring this back with more information. Right now, they were working in the background.

Chair Holt said he could get information to them and will then be ready for the next agenda.

Commissioner Hinson said the Board voted for \$97,000 to go to kids ages 14-18. Now they were going to take that money and give to another population of people.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the \$97,000 was different from what they set aside for the Boys and Girls Club and was told yes.

Chair Holt said if there were three votes, they could move other monies, it was up to the Board. Work places did not want to train people and then they leave. They were looking to train for their businesses and they need the industrial certification. She was told some places could not hire anyone under 18 years of age. She said they were not overlooking one group, they were helping families and it would not just be a summer job. The businesses dictate what they want.

Mr. Dixon said the money was captured in CARES Residual.

Commissioner Green said he was hoping, because he knew Commissioner Hinson would bring it back up, they would give it some attention and merge the two. He said he was 14 when he was given the opportunity to work and was hoping they could find a way to merge the two.

*Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 9:17 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said they were not attempting to exclude the younger group, they were attempting to meet the market needs. They hoped to bring this back in the new budget with a bigger, annual year-round program that was inclusive of those numbers. They want kids at every stage to be trained so when they roll out of school, they roll into a job.

Commissioner Green said at this point, it was having the time to listen to employers or employees to accommodate the ages of 14-15.

Mr. Dixon said he has spoken with Staff in and out and there was not a staff member he had that was happy with those programs because there were kids standing around.

*Commissioner Hinson returned at 9:21 p.m.*

Commissioner Viegbesie said since they did not have an agenda item, suggested they table this item.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND ITEM 11 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked the timeframe and Mr. Dixon said they would still be working on the issue.

Commissioner Hinson said BOCC carved out almost \$100,000 for youth ages 14-19.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE TABLING THE ITEMS.**

**11. American Rescue Plan**

Item Tabled

**12. Memorandum of Understanding with the Apalachee Regional Resilience Collaborative**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of the adoption of the Apalachee Resilience Collaborative. Counties who adopt the ARPC MOU will help our region leverage resources and share goals towards becoming more resilient. This non-binding MOU was created to show regional support and act as a forum for resiliency efforts in the region.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13. Approval of Courthouse Sidewalk Leveling**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of an agreement with Ram Jack Solid Foundation to level three sections of the sidewalk located on the west-side of the Courthouse.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14. Approval of Motorola Solutions Refinancing**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He stated they have taken the two previous loans, added the \$435,448.43 to it to make the loans come to a total of \$1,756,015.13. It would create one payment and dropped the interest rate from 4.29% and 3.10% to 2.89% to make an annual payment of \$274,026.13. He added they were bringing this to a head and this issue was three years old. The radios have been sitting in someone's garage because they have been unable to wrap this up previously.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said with refinancing, did that make the debt service lower with a lower interest rate?

**Georgette Daniels** appeared before the Board. They had two loans and was paying an annual payment of \$200,000; they will add to the loans they already had and will save money in the interest rate over the life of the loan.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the term of the loan. Ms. Daniels said they had seven years remaining on the current loan and there was no penalty to pay off early.

Mr. Dixon said it was a fantastic system, it was just a fact that they let technology sit on the shelf for three years.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**15. Cochran Road Resurfacing**

Mr. Dixon said this item was for the Cochran and Fairbanks Ferry Road (Agenda Request only shows for Cochran Road but the bid packet was for both roads).

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16. Peck Betts Roadway Repairs-Professional Services**

Mr. Dixon said they have gotten approval from FEMA to get that road in shape. This will be a reimbursement process and the task order was for \$68,025.00.

**CHAIR HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16a. CARES Act Funding Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated this was the CARES Act Funding Program closeout, requires a signature and dictates the amount of money in the draw-down made and officially closes the program with the Federal government.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said he just received this today. He said the reason he could not approve this was because of what happened in the past. He said they have Request ID numbers and do not know what the numbers were for. He asked for an itemized copy of the list to see what the Board was spending before it was approved. Also, they received a letter from the Sheriff where they want an audit on everything.

Commissioner Green asked the timeframe it needed to be approved by.

Mr. Dixon said this was for money already spent, it was the drawdown of all money that came in from the Federal government.

**Fredericka Hamilton, The Infinity Group**, appeared before the Board. She explained this form was just a showcase of what had been provided throughout the program. Every county has to sign off on a form like this.

Commissioner Hinson said they had a conversation years ago. Every time they get information, he wanted to know what they were approving before they approved it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his understanding was these requests and amounts were reflective of information they submitted to draw the money down.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson asked if this was just for the drawdown.

Mr. Dixon said this was about all the money sent to Gadsden County.

Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board and said this was just close-out documents. The County was the applicant, the State was the recipient and the State sends the money to the Counties.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16b. Approval of Resolution 2021-Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2021**

Mr. Dixon said this was budget amendments that should have been coming to them all along. He said they have encapsulated them, created accounts.

Ms. Daniels said this was for grants they get every year and some money was spent in one fiscal year. Finance keeps track of how much the grant was, how much was spent during one fiscal year and then they are rolled-over for the next fiscal year because sometimes they are multiyear grants. She explained this was the roll-over to this fiscal year so they can continue to spend.

Commissioner Viegbesie said for the interest of those viewing, this was grant revenues and was also reported in expenditures and will zero out.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16c Ambulance Total Loss Claim**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for the Board to accept or reject the proposed payment by the County's insurer for the total loss of an EMS ambulance.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**16d. Cares Act Residual**

Mr. Dixon said this was for information. They will bring this back at the next meeting but this was how they looked at how to get some of their projects done from the CARES Residual.

Commissioner Viegbesie commended the Administrator for this information.

**16e. Summer Youth**

Commissioner Hinson presented this item and said first, hopefully they could have a workshop on the \$1.3 Million because other commissioners might have suggestions on how to use the money. He passed out his agenda item and expounded on it. For each youth, the Board will pay up to 20 hours per week for up to six weeks at rate of \$8.56/hr.; it added up to approximately \$1027.00/youth. Additionally, the request includes \$18,000 for hiring of monitors to assist with management of youth throughout County and to ensure compliance with program rules. They could take \$75,000 for 14-16-year olds and the other \$75,000 for ages 17-19. They will need someone to manage them. Hopefully they can put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner NeSmith said in reference to this presentation, he thought Commissioner Viegbesie recommended he speak with the Administrator to see if it was a possibility of merging the two. Commissioner Hinson quickly said to him this was a separate program.

Commissioner Green asked if he had done due diligence in who was willing to take a chance in hiring. Commissioner Hinson said he had talked with various cities and they were willing to partner and was excited.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a reason they have to go through the County as opposed to working directly with the cities.

Commissioner Hinson said in the past, the County paid for them to go to certain locations.

Chair Holt said a couple of things, the conduct in a workplace, there has to be training; on how to dress, how to come to work, how to be polite, etc. Who would select the students? Who at the County had to monitor the program? She said they would have to look at it when it comes back.

Commissioner Hinson said this was for discussion already. Chair Holt said it was up to the Board.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO BRING THIS ITEM BACK IN TWO WEEKS FOR A VOTE FOR KIDS FROM THE AGE OF 14-18 YEARS OF AGE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND FOR THE SAKE OF PUTTING THIS ITEM ON THE AGENDA THE PROPER WAY. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **17. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **18. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said he was seeking opinions, was hoping they could cancel meetings in July because of meetings and travel.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Mr. Dixon said the FAC conference will be June 29-July 2 and anyone wishing to attend to please get with Laurel Bradley.

He said NACO dates had changed and will be July 9 – July 12.

The Public Works appreciation luncheon will be May 20<sup>th</sup> at Noon at Pat Thomas Park.

They were attempting to schedule the “golden triangle” trip in July.

Chair Holt said there were several Constitutionals interested in going.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if he would send his regrets for the Public Works luncheon.

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

### **19 Updates**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

### **20. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

#### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson thanked them for putting his item on the Agenda for the next meeting.

He read a letter from the Gadsden County high school to the Board.

He thanked the citizens for being strong and courageous with regards to getting the COVID-19 shot.

#### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Public Works Department, the past weekend they had a Family Fun day at Sawdust Park. He thanked Chair Holt, Commissioner Hinson and Mr. Dixon for participating in the Sawdust Community Outreach Coalition and thanked Public Works for organizing and cleaning the park in preparation of the event.

#### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green asked how much money was left for striping. Mr. Dixon said Chair Holt had money. Mr. Dixon then told him they were looking, going through the line items to see if they could find more money.

#### **Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION FOR DR. ADRIAN COOKSEY AND THE GADSDEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR THE WONDERFUL JOB THEY HAVE DONE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR A CONTRATULATORY RESOLUTION HONORING ELDER LEE E. PLUMMER FOR HIS RETIREMENT AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**COMMISSIONER HINSON ASKED FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR HIS PARENTS 57<sup>TH</sup> WEDDING ANNIVERSARY AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH SAID SO MOVED. COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

**CHAIR HOLT ASKED FOR A RESOLUTION FOR COMMISSIONER GREEN’S GRANDFATHER, SYLVESTER KEYS AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

She thanked Commissioner Green and Commissioner NeSmith about questioning the legal matter that was mentioned in a previous meeting and passed out a document (Copy was not given to the Deputy Clerk). She said she spoke with a FAC attorney about if it should have been discussed and was told no. The less said, the better they were.

She said they need to look at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola. At one time they were interested in building a hospital here. They told her they do not take over hospitals, they build their own.

Mr. Dixon said that brought something else to his mind. He tried to watch some of the discussions the Board had with its provider and had since looked at the contract and think they really need to seek expert advice about what the contract says and allows them to do and not do in terms of future planning. The Board signed the contract and if the Board knew what exactly it allowed them to do at Gadsden Memorial, asked they please share with him because he did not know. He said they have a request from the eye facility to renew their lease, but to go through the documents, requires hospital expertise. He said it was written by hospital lawyers and understood by hospital lawyers and was very focused. He added he was unsure how they can legally approach, even the comment Chair Holt just made about even talking to another hospital and suggested they not talk with other hospitals until they do know.

Chair Holt said she knew she was being cautioned, but they have both been there a while. There are attorneys that specialize in that and they need to hire one. She said they have been going the cheap way out. They are going to have to hire an attorney that specializes in that for that particular item. She wants them to get out and look.

Mr. Dixon said if nothing but just for clarity and understanding of what it was they have actually signed, given away, given first right of refusal to, what their options were in terms of the ability to solicit, etc.

Mr. Knowles said if they have a contract, they could look at it.

Chair Holt said no.

Mr. Dixon said they “backed into” the contract and that was the problem. If they keep backing into contracts that the vendor supplies to them and not what the Board wishes are, they end up defending or attempting to defend. He said he was not sure about what they agreed to.

Commissioner NeSmith asked when they signed the last contract and Mr. Dixon said within the last year.

Chair Holt said they had attorneys and they always got someone that specialized in that because it was such a technical field.



Commissioner Viegbesie said to Commissioner NeSmith and Commissioner Green, the contract was negotiated by a medical attorney they hired that represented the County and there was one that represented the hospital. That attorney's expertise was with hospitals, Michael Glazer. They had legal representation.

Mr. Dixon said he had a meeting with CRMC and they talked about the County's use of the hospital.

Chair Holt said they had been through that with Mr. Glazer several times. This was not his first rodeo. She said they need to bring this item back; they need to look at some expertise so they can get a good contract and that way the County has the advantage.

**CHAIR HOLT MADE A MOTION TO BRING THE CONTRACT BACK AND GET AN EXPERT THAT KNEW HOW TO DO THAT AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:46 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 1, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M., THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Hannah Pope, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Nesmith called the workshop to order at 4:30 pm. He then asked for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 4:31 pm*

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadscencountyfl.gov until noon on Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record. The County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting.*

Mr. Knowles read the above statement and there where no citizens to be heard at this time.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion of Ordinance 2002-004 (Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners)** (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)

Commissioner Nesmith introduced the above item.

Mr. Knowles came before the board to present them with the proposed ordinance that would be replacing Ordinance 2002-004. He stated that he added the previously discussed issues from the last workshop as well as looking to other Counties for their Rules of Procedures for Meetings. He stated that he was not able to find any authority that would allow a board to remove one of its members within its own Rules of Decorum. Yet, if there was a safety issue where two individuals came to blows, he believed that the Sheriff would jump in but the removal of a duly elected Commissioner would create some due process issues. Mr. Knowles stated that he kept the base of the document regarding the meetings being open to the public. Types of meeting are one of the items for discussion that historically there are questions about. Gadsden County does not specify a time or define Special and Emergency Meetings. Mr. Knowles wanted the Board members to consider a time of day or day of the week that Special meetings should take place. Emergency meetings cannot be planned for but special meetings could. He stated that the first part is based on the distribution of meeting schedule. A meeting schedule will be distributed prior to each calendar year listing the dates of all anticipated meetings of the Board. Meetings set to be conducted the day after a legal holiday may be rescheduled. Meetings may be postponed or

canceled by a motion approved at any Board meeting by a majority of the members present. The Board will not meet the first and third Tuesday in July. Other counties have codified the cancelation of their meetings. This is so the commissioners do not have to cancel the meetings when they are meeting with the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) in July. Mr. Knowles stated that since there was little information regarding workshops in the Ordinance, he looked to Walton County. Workshops are only for discussion and no formal actions can be taken. Workshops are held to discuss items of special importance or complexity that require longer than usual staff presentation and Board questions. These meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month and may include Regular and/or Consent Agenda items, Public Hearings in the case of a timing issue, and other matters that may be presented for formal action during a Regular, Special or Emergency Meeting, in addition to any Workshop presentations. The days and dates are still open for board discussion and are only place holders at this time.

A special meeting of the Board may be called by a majority of the members. When a Commissioner desires to call a Special Meeting he/she shall notify the County Administrator in writing via email. Upon receipt of such request, the County Administrator shall notify the remaining Commissioners of such request in writing and poll the Commissioners individually as to whether they are for or against calling a Special Meeting. The time stamp on an email shall be presumed to be the effective time of giving notice. The notice shall state the business to be transacted at such meeting, including "all other business that may come before the Board." The notice shall be published to the County's website and disseminated via email to all local media who have requested to receive such notices. The Chair may, upon not less than twenty-four (24) hours' notice and via email to every Commissioner and every party receiving email notification hereunder, cancel any special meetings of the Board which he or she had previously called pursuant to this Rule. If after reasonable diligence it was not possible to give notice to each Commissioner or to allow 24 hours to elapse between the time the Clerk receives notice of the meeting and the time the meeting is held, such failure shall not affect the legality of the meeting if a quorum is in attendance.

Mr. Knowles stated that there are two options for how Emergency meeting may be called by the Chair since there were questions on what is done at emergency meetings. He stated that an emergency meeting of the Board may be called by the Chair whenever in his/her opinion an emergency exists which requires immediate action by the Board. Whenever an emergency meeting is called, the Chair shall notify the County Administrator, who shall notify each member of the Board in writing or verbally of the date, time and place of the meeting and the purpose for which it is called, and no other business shall be transacted. There cannot be any stacking of items onto an Emergency Meeting agenda. There is only one major item and other items relating to that item on an Emergency Meeting agenda. This is so staff can be prepared and there are no surprises coming into these types of meetings. At least 24 hours shall elapse between the time the County Administrator receives notice of the meeting and the time the meeting is to be held. If because of the nature of the emergency it is not possible to give notice to each Commissioner or it is impossible to allow 24 hours to elapse between the time the County Administrator receives notice of the meeting and the time the meeting is held, such failure shall not affect the legality of the meeting if a quorum is in attendance. Mr. Knowles added the sections that stated "No items with fiscal impact above an unmet amount shall be considered during an Emergency Meeting

unless the appropriate State or Federal entity has declared a State of Emergency affecting the County. This guaranties that large purchases could not be voted on in an emergency meeting unless it regards to that emergency. Mr. Knowles asked about what the members thought the amount should be set at for emergency issues.

Commissioner Green stated keep the amount as is until everyone has a chance to look over the proposed changes.

Mr. Knowles stated that they are not going to approve anything right now and that he would email all of the Commissioners the proposed document as well.

Mr. Knowles stated Commissioners should remain in the Chambers at all times unless an emergency or illness should occur. Commissioners present in the meeting should not absent themselves for a particular item. Should a Commissioner need to remove himself/herself from the chamber during a meeting, they should announce the reason for their absence, on the record. The Clerk shall record such absence in the minutes of the meeting if there is an issue of an absence from the chamber that Commissioners need to state the reason for leaving so it could be added to the record. This is so the commissioner can still get the adequate information and do not miss any votes. He also stated that he believes that the Clerks' Office already recorded when Commissioners entered and exited the meetings.

*Chair Holt entered the work shop at 4:46 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles went over what he had previously stated for the Chair since she had just entered the workshop.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a previous practice for adding in the scheduled break from meetings or is that something that the Board just started this year.

Chair Holt stated that the breaks were taken because of the FAC schedule. The Commissioner would be at those meetings during that time of the year. She stated that this would be up to Mr. Knowles since they need to comply with that guideline since most of the County's outside help came from the State and FAC.

Mr. Dixon stated that FAC meets at the end of June and NACo meets in July which is a longer process.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if not meeting in July would allow the Commissioners to attend those meetings.

Mr. Dixon answered yes that they would be able to attend both FAC and NACo.

*Commissioner Hinson entered the work shop at 4:50 p.m.*

When reviewing what was previously stated for the Commissioners who had just entered the Workshop, Mr. Knowles stated that there needed to be at least a 48-hour notice for special meetings since there is no emergency to them.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were any statutory rules for meeting notices.

Mr. Knowles stated that there are only statutory rules for emergency meetings.

Chair Holt stated that sometimes they call emergency meetings before a predicted emergency so the County could have the necessary voting done beforehand so the County could get Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) money.

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered the work shop at 4:56 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles stated that the one of the proposed changes are the Rules of Decorum and Civility. He stated that other counties make it to where their board must have a preserved civility and decorum. The Board expressly recognizes that promoting and preserving decorum and civility enhances the Board's ability to fairly and expeditiously conduct the business of the County. While the Board is in session, the Chair shall preserve order and decorum. A Commissioner shall neither by conversation nor otherwise delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the Board, nor disturb any Commissioner while speaking or refuse to obey the orders of the Board or its Chair. This includes Manner of Speaking and that no Commissioner shall speak on any question or discuss any matter, nor interrupt another, nor make a motion without first being recognized by the Chair. When two or more Commissioners seek recognition by the Chair, the Chair shall name the Commissioner who is to speak first. No Commissioner shall be interrupted by another without the consent of the Commissioner who has the floor, except by rising to a question of order. A Commissioner, in speaking on any matter, shall confine him/herself to the question, or matter before the Board, shall not use unbecoming abusive or unparliamentary language and shall avoid commenting on personalities or character of other Board members, former Board members, other officials, staff, or the public.

Chair Holt stated that the Commissioners address the Chair and the Chair recognizes them then they can start speaking. There have been times when another Commissioner would like to comment and yielding that has been going on. She stated that they cannot yield, the Commissioners must first address the Chair.

Mr. Knowles stated that was correct.

Chair Holt stated this was to help keep order and not have debates on the issues at hand.

Commissioner Green asked what happens to a Commissioner who does not adhere to the policies and procedures.

Mr. Knowles stated it was up to the Board to maintain the decorum amongst themselves since he cannot do anything as the County Attorney. If the board did not follow it and other than an ethics complaint, he did not know what could be done from a legal standpoint.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated on other committees that he has served on, if a Commissioner was recognized by the Chair, the Chair would recognize one person at a time. The other Commissioners would not interrupt unless recognized by the Chair.

Mr. Knowles asked if the Commissioners wanted to do away with yielding.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated if the comment was on point with what was being said let the individual say it but have the Chair recognize them.

Mr. Knowles stated since there is going to be another workshop on this issue, he will go ahead and create a yielding section to be added to give options.

Chair Holt stated that she liked the idea of letting Commissioners finish their statements.

Commissioner Hinson stated that the Chair has to say quiet on matters.

Mr. Knowles stated that the Chair should remain objective as per the current code.

Commissioner Hinson stated that when he was Chair he did not say a word and he let the other Commissioners speak. A chairman should not keep speaking and respect the opinions of the other Commissioners.

Mr. Knowles asked if Commissioner Hinson wanted to change what was written.

Commissioner Hinson stated in his opinion a Chairman should not control the meetings and should not tell a Commissioner to stop talking.

Mr. Knowles stated that they could add whatever the Board decided and the ability for the Chairman to debate was issued in the previous Code. He asked if Commissioner Hinson wanted something added that barred the Chairman from speaking on that item until they recognize them self.

Commissioner Hinson stated he wanted something that made them stay objective in their decisions.

Mr. Knowles stated that he can add a little bit of language to that effect and when it is brought back before the Board, they can give their opinions on this addition.

Mr. Dixon stated that the objectivity is to control the meeting and not the Commissioners. He stated that the Chair remains a Commissioner and is why the Chairman has the same powers as the other Commissioners. The objective portion is about who is speaking when and not to choose your buddy as opposed to the person you would not like to hear from.

Mr. Knowles stated that the wording can be cleaned up to satisfy all of the concerns that he has heard thus far.

Chair Holt stated that it did not matter who the Chair is, they can uphold the decorum. She mentioned that when Commissioners fight it was not ok to not remove them from the room.

Mr. Knowles stated that if it is a life safety issue that it is up to the Sheriff's deputy.

Chair Holt stated with all of the violence now days there needs to be something in the document that says what staff/county officials do if something happens. She stated that with all of the violence it is bad that the County does not have a metal detector.

Mr. Knowles stated that his colleagues and himself will work to get all concerns addressed regarding this issue. He stated that it is going to be tough outside of physical violence to remove a Commissioner from a meeting.

Commissioner Green stated that Mr. Dixon clarified his concerns regarding the Chairman issue. He stated that it was his understanding that since the Board votes on the Chairman it does not mean that that individual is not also a Commissioner.

Mr. Knowles stated if he understands Commissioner Hinson correctly that the Chair should be objective and not favor any Commissioner above another.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that whether the Chairman likes the comment or not, to make sure that they do not interrupt the Commissioner who is speaking at that time. The Chairman should give the Commissioners the same respect that Commissioners should give the other Commissioners. That Commissioner should be able to finish their statements before another Commissioner can speak as well as the Chairman. That whoever the Chairman/person may be if they do not like the commit that is being made, they do not interject in the middle of the comment.

Commissioner Hinson stated that it is the Chairman's job is to make sure that the meeting is going smoothly. He stated that it is so the meetings do not have long conversations over every topic. Commissioner Hinson asked what Commissioners do if the Chairperson gets out of hand. Also, do they stay as Chairperson or are they removed from that position.

Mr. Knowles stated there is nothing in the Code on how the Commission votes on a Chairperson.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that it has been in the second meeting in November.

Mr. Knowles asked if the Board wanted to codify that.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how long was the term for the Chairman.

Chair Holt answered one year.

Mr. Knowles stated so November to November, and that would be the second meeting in November.

Commissioner Hinson asked if there was a way to remove a Chairman if they become a danger to the Commissioners.

Mr. Knowles stated that there is nothing in the Code that shows how the County elects or removes a Chairperson and that would need to be added.

*Commissioner Green exited the workshop at 5:18pm*

Commissioner Viegbesie stated since it is an internal leadership change the vote needs to be super majority vote to remove a chairman fairly.

Mr. Knowles asked would that be a super majority of the Board or Board members present.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated a super majority of the Board members.

Commissioner Nesmith asked if there has been any documentation on what other Counties have done to remove their elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 5:22p.m.*

Mr. Knowles stated that he looked at 10 Counties' Codes and the issue is not the removal but the voting. He stated that he will look into those issues before the next meeting on this topic.

Chair Holt stated that the Board's Code cannot control the Commissioner's speech since that would go against the First Amendment. Commissioners that have issues with the overlapping speech sometimes the Chairperson has to interrupt to stop the interruptions that are happening.

Mr. Knowles stated that any person shall be removed by the sheriff's officer if they are a danger to the individuals in the building.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that those elements need to be added to the documents. He hopes to never have to throw out a commissioner.

Bishop Green asked if the public was not meant to speak at the workshops.

Mr. Knowles stated that the public just needs to raise their hands.

**2. Review and Discuss the June 1, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

There was no discussion regarding the Agenda items.

*Chair Holt exited the workshop at 5:43 p.m.*

Senator Lorraine Ausley came before the Board for an update for the submitted projects such as \$400,000 for the mobile health unit, \$50 Thousand dollars for the Chattahoochee Mountain bike trail, and \$755 Thousand dollars for new fire truck for Quincy. Those were the projects that were submitted and accepted into the budget to be sent to the Governor. Senator Ausley stated that she wants to keep lines of communication open.

*Chair Holt entered the workshop at 5:46 p.m.*

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the mobile health unit and other projects are subject to the governmental veto.



Senator Ausley stated that this is all up to the Governor and his decisions.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, MR. DIXON DECLARED THE  
WOPKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:54 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**Nicholas Thomas, Clerk**

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 1, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to pull Item 7 and Item 11. Mr. Knowles asked to pull Item 9.

Chair Holt asked to add Item 5a-Citizens to Speak regarding the timer being used.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

1. Ratification Memo
2. Approval of Minutes
  - April 6, 2021 Regular Meeting
3. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract-SHIP Program

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

**Alice Grandberry, 223 Whetherbine Way West, Tallahassee, FL** appeared before the Board. She has 4.09 acres on Woodberry Road and has been denied the ability to build on that property because the property was classified as 1 per 5 acres. She was advised to speak with Ms. Bradley to make an appointment to speak with Mr. Dixon regarding same.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **4. Public Hearing-Quasi-Judicial-Harbin Road Cruz Soccer & Recreational Complex Special Exception Use (SEU 2021-02)**

Mr. Knowles explained there was a timer placed at the podium that will be operated by the Chair and will allow citizens to speak for 3 minutes. He also said they have discussed and will be adding to their Policies and Procedures to “Decorum” a time limit on Commissioners speaking on items.

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for consideration of an application for a Special Exception Use for the Harbin Road Cruz Soccer and Recreational Complex.

**Jill Jeglie Reeves, AICP, Senior Planner**, appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. She gave a brief synopsis of the agenda item.

**Daniel Cruz, 1960 West King Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He read aloud his statement regarding himself and soccer.

Chair Holt separated the Speaker Request forms into ones for and against the Special Exception Change.

**William Martinez, 1960 West King Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Alicia Martinez, 1960 W. King Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Jonathon Garcia, 57 Dewey Johnson Way, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Yesenia Gonzolez, 85 Penny Kever Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Stanley Johnson, 898 Joe Adams Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Jauelin Cruz, 5845 Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He spoke in favor of this item.

A citizen in the audience spoke up, asked for respect and said there were people talking in the Chamber behind peoples' back and could incite something. Chair asked that there be no talking in the Chambers and for the audience be respectful of the ones coming up.

**Marlon Phillips, 179 Alday Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He said he has lived there 37 years, and spoke against this item.

**Juan Hernandez, 221 E. Franklin Street, Quincy, FL** was sworn in by Deputy Clerk and spoke against the soccer field.

**Benancio Luna, 1401 Gilchrist Street, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said it would be a huge problem and was not the place for a soccer field.

**Alberto Arriaga, 979 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said it was a narrow road, was very dangerous, and was not built for that traffic.

**Kevin Magana, 936 S. Cleveland Street, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said there were two fields on MLK Blvd. that were not being used for softball and could easily be changed to fit for soccer.

**Nancy Romero, 1020 S. Magnolia Drive, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. She stated this was a residential area and asked what was the purpose of having a business in a residential area.

**Yesenia Romero, 1020 S. Magnolia Drive, Quincy, FL (Nancy Romero translated for her and was sworn in and she translated for Yesenia)** She stated she was not against them having soccer but it should be in an appropriate location. She asked if this area was residential, commercial or both. **Diane Quigley, AICP, Growth Development Director**, said it was zoned agricultural. She asked if it was a residential area, for them to find an appropriate place this could go. She added she was not saying the ones running the league would cause problems, but they could not control others that will be there.

**Eduardo Monroy, 1396 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He stated he was not totally against this item. But the point was, he was about to build a house and moved there to have peace with his family.

Chair Holt then stated she had a letter from Martha Arellano that was opposed to the soccer field.

**Chris Arellano, 1531 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL** was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in opposition of the location of this item. He said he was not against what Mr. Cruz was attempting to do, but was against the location.

**Arturo Magana, 936 S. Cleveland Street, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item.

**Cynthia Reese-Donaldson, 1066 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in opposition to this item. She stated she just purchased property and built her house and wanted to be able to sit outside and enjoy her property.

**Adam Gaffey, 350 Rozena Loop, Havana, FL** appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of this item.

**Erica Rojas, 1302 Carson Drive, Tallahassee, FL** was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Chair Holt said they would now move to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Green thanked everyone that appeared tonight. He asked how many spoke in favor of and how many spoke against this item. He said he was torn about this, understood the impact of growth and opportunities and the impact it may have. On the flip-side of it, he also understood if he purchased property in a certain area to build a home and wanted peace. He said this would never be a win-win for everyone. He wished they could meet halfway and have options in making this work for everyone. He added that he heard what people said about there were other places this could have gone and asked if he had measured out all options before purchasing the property.

Danny Cruz re-appeared before the Board to answer questions the Board members had. He said he used to be on Salem Road and some people had mentioned he was “kicked out”. He said they were not kicked out, they decided to move to another location because it was a bigger area. He said they tried to find a location that would be suitable for the community but was unable to find it. He tried to make arrangements to have a youth league here and it never happened. He also said when they bought the land, there were no houses around. He added that the neighbors were welcome to exercise and ride their four-wheelers on the property.

Chair Holt said to Commissioner Green the number was 88.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was also a soccer player from Nigeria. He said Soccer was a religion to those that watch it. He commented he was for soccer but was also for community harmony. When he read the letter that came with the application, the request was this property should be approved because it would be used to provide vegetables for the community and would also be a recreational area for all soccer youth.

Mr. Cruz reappeared before the Board and said there would not be any partying going on. He added that he was responsible for his actions and an officer would be placed at the corners to make sure there was no traffic. One part would be used for agriculture and the other part for soccer. Commissioner Viegbesie said this has been said numerous times about considering different locations that had quick access to citizens. He asked why he was not working in collaboration with 5F Farms in Havana and what led to the “divorce”.

Mr. Cruz said from the games Commissioner Viegbesie spoke of, he was in charge. Due to how small it was, he considered there needed to be a better entrance. He said he looked for a better centrally located property.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated he had a question of Diane Quigley. She appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. She stated this application was for soccer, they have not talked about special events such as is done at 5F Farms. She stated 5F Farms operates under the Florida Statute of agritourism; a working farm and was exempt and could promote weddings and other activities that was classified under that statute. She said there will be a traffic study done and they may have to put in turn lanes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked what if the applicant did not meet the traffic and road requirements?

Ms. Quigley said today was only to allow him to permit to do the soccer complex as a special use under the agriculture and was a land use approval. It will come back to the Board for review and approval.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he felt Mr. Cruz needed to sit down with the people and see what their concerns were.

Commissioner NeSmith said Commissioner Green and Commissioner Viegbesie did an excellent job in echoing what he wanted to say. He was trying to balance youth activities and economic growth.

Commissioner Hinson said he was curious about the CBOR meeting.

*Chair Holt stepped out at 7:55 p.m.*

Ms. Quigley reappeared and said the CBOR had been removed at the time the application came in and they were not required to hold one. She added if the Board would like them to hold one, they certainly could. Commissioner Hinson said it was almost too late since they were there for a public hearing. Mr. Knowles said they could direct them to hold one. He added they may need to have a special meeting in the future.

*Chair Holt returned at 7:56 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson continued and asked the County Administrator what his rationale was in recommending this. Mr. Dixon said they met the requirements.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Cruz to come back to the podium. She said she wanted everyone to know she met with Mr. Cruz, his mother and brother. She asked if he had any concerns of what he would be asked to do. He said that was why he was here and they would comply with everything. He said they planned on having officers on the roads and stated the locations they would have LEO on the different roads.

Ms. Quigley reappeared and said they had talked about Ben Bostick Road as a second entrance.

Chair Holt said the items that Planning put in, if this was approved, what was the starting date. Mr. Cruz said he could not say for sure, maybe in a month. It was said he would need to come back for another review. Ms. Quigley said it could be 6 months or so.

Ms. Quigley reappeared and Planning suggested there be a traffic study and there may need to be a turn lane installed.

**Erica Rojas** reappeared before the Board (still under oath) and said she spoke with FDOT and was told by email they would have an answer in 2 months in 2018 if they needed any signs there for traffic. If they decided it was needed, it would be done in 2025.

Mr. Dixon said Ben Bostick was part of the road improvement plan.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Cruz if he had a chance to look at all 16 items requested by Planning and he responded yes and have already complied with a lot of it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the only concern he had, he wanted this activity to go on in harmony with the ones that lived there. He further stated he did not want to disrespect the decision of Planning and suggested the applicant have some “meeting of the minds” with the neighbors and their concerns be addressed to see if they could come to a resolution. He did not want this to go through without some type of amicable relationship. He also said he would not disrespect Planning and Zoning but would add other requirements to protect the neighbors.

Commissioner Green said and he concurred with Commissioner Viegbesie and one thing that stuck out to him, one comment made by Mr. Cruz was he would do “as much as possible” and he took it to mean that some things might not be possible for Mr. Cruz to do.

Mr. Cruz said his main thing was to make this happen.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:09 p.m.*

Mr. Cruz said he wanted to make sure that whatever they wanted, he would comply with. He added that Commissioner Viegbesie said he would go to the other facility. He passed out a sheet that showed 5F Farms have already started playing just adults and no youth. He was trying to understand the procedures he was having to go through. He asked why he had to go through all this and they were allowed to operate. How could he get to that point?

Mr. Dixon said that was a different process, was a different level and the two were not the same. In order to maintain and not have a lot of issues come back to the Board, Commissioner Viegbesie asked for a public meeting if they could and if the Board was amenable, to add Item Q to require a public meeting with the neighbors. He added he would have to return to the Board with a plan. He further stated giving him permission tonight did not give him anything other than the right to get a plan. They still had the right to reject it if it did not meet with their expectations.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 8:12 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said to add item Q that required the public meeting and felt that would attenuate the situation.

Chair Holt said they would have to vote when it comes back and there was time between now and then to have an opportunity for Mr. Cruz and the neighbors to meet to see if they could come to an agreement.

Commissioner Green said in all honesty, he felt realistically the neighbors were there and were voicing their concerns. He did not see, based on what he has heard from the comments, their minds would be changed.

Commissioner Hinson asked again, was there a reason the community meeting was not had?

Ms. Quigley re-appeared before the Board and said at the time, the CBOR was discussed and they talked about bringing the community meetings back and it was not a requirement at the time he submitted his application.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a copy of the minutes because he thought they voted on it. The Deputy Clerk told him she would get a copy of the minutes to the Commissioners.

Ms. Quigley said if this was denied, Mr. Cruz could start a working farm and file under the agritourism statute and do the same thing 5F Farm was doing. They suggested that he go the correct route.

Chair Holt stated under agritourism, he would not have to go through this process, he was allowed through the State to do this. If he wanted to go through this process, he can follow what the Board wanted him to do.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to be clear. He asked Mr. Cruz why he chose to go through this process as opposed to go through agritourism. Mr. Cruz said out of respect for everyone.

Commissioner NeSmith asked who gives them approval for agritourism.

Ms. Quigley reappeared before the Board and stated there was not necessarily approval. If they were a working farm and became ag-exempt and they decide to open the farm to activities, they would fall under the State statute and the County could not touch them. She added they informed Mr. Cruz if he wanted to do it right, he could apply through the County and it could never be taken away from him; however, if the Agritourism statute changed, it would be taken away from him.

Commissioner Viegbesie told Mr. Cruz that he was still going to make the recommendation and suggestion he did earlier. What he wanted was to circumvent this process, for him to understand he still had to be neighborly with the neighbors because if he did not live in harmony with his neighbors, life could be very uncomfortable.

Commissioner Hinson asked where was the information or documentation on how he could circumvent the process because they were supposed to go on what they reviewed.



Mr. Dixon explained he was not circumventing the process, it was a process that was already out there in State law.

Commissioner Hinson said Ms. Quigley stated he must be a working farm. Ms. Quigley reappeared and said that was correct, it must be a working farm and have an Ag exemption through the Property Appraiser's Office.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he qualified for that and she said not as of yet.

Mr. Knowles read aloud FL Statutes 570.85:

570.85 **Agritourism.** — (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to promote agritourism as a way to support bona fide agricultural production by providing a secondary stream of revenue and by educating the general public about the agricultural industry. It is also the intent of the Legislature to eliminate duplication of regulatory authority over agritourism as expressed in this section. Except as otherwise provided for in this section, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, a local government may not adopt an ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land under s. 193.461.

Chair Holt said if he had contacted the agritourism and met those qualifications, local government could not restrict above the State statute.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to bring this matter to a close, move on to the motion not only with the recommendation from the Planning as well as the Administrator, but the Board add the caveat that they also require him to engage with citizens about their concerns so it could come forward to them during the site plan.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AS PRESENTED ALONG WITH ADDING "Q" TO REQUIRE A PUBLIC MEETING AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said one reason he could not vote for this today, he requested they have community meetings and was hard to vote on something before that. He would like for them to have a community meeting.

Chair Holt wanted to make sure there was a motion and second for the approval with the addition for him to meet with neighbors. She also wanted to clarify that he did not have to go through this process if he went through with the agritourism option.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD CAST THEIR VOTE AND CHAIR HOLT STATED IT WAS A 3-2 VOTE AND MOTION PASSED.**

Commissioner Viegbesie requested a roll call vote because it was hard to tell who voted which way. Chair Holt stated they had already voted. Commissioner Hinson asked how they knew who voted. Chair Holt said in their procedures, no vote was a yes vote.

Mr. Knowles said a non-vote was considered a yes vote under their Code. Commissioner Green said he also wanted to know who voted how.

**CHAIR HOLT ASKED IF THEY WANTED TO RESTATE THE MOTION AND CALLED FOR A ROLL CALL VOTE.**

<b>COMMISSIONER GREEN</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER HINSON</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER NESMITH</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>CHAIR HOLT</b>	<b>YES</b>

**BOARD VOTED 2-3 MOTION DID NOT PASS.**

Chair Holt stated to Mr. Cruz the reason she voted yes was because it required him to come back through the process and to meet with people in the community.

Commissioner Green said the reason he voted no, was he felt the majority of the community was present, heard their concerns, felt he was a commendable young man and hoped they could find a way to make it happen but wanted to make sure they were clear about the safety concerns of the citizens and was able to do it with the certainty he could make everything happen that needed to happen.

Chair Holt explained the motion failed 3-2.

*Chair Holt called for a 10-minute recess at 8:34 p.m.*

*Chair Holt re-convened the meeting at 8:43 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon stated before moving on to the next item, he wanted to take the opportunity to introduce **Ms. Linda Blackshear, the new Director of Elder Affairs for Gadsden County**. He said she was the previous CEO at Riverchase.

**5. Approval of Funding for Boys and Girls Clubs for FY20/21**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item, said it was for approval of funding for the Boys and Girls Club for FY20/21. He added it was included in the proposed budget and funds were there but was not re-addressed to be put in the Final Budget. He explained it was put into Reserves in the Final Budget.

Chair Holt said when looking at non-profits and funding, some were there and functioned and some did not function because of COVID. She asked how they were looking at them.

Mr. Dixon said there was a list of non-profits they had in the budget and will bring those back to them. For the Boys and Girls Club, there was a set amount in the budget. For the other non-profits, there was a general amount with those non-profits mentioned. Those issues will be brought before the Board on how and if to move forward.

Chair Holt asked if they were looking at functioning and non-functioning non-profits.

Mr. Dixon said for the Boys and Girls Club, they have to maintain facilities and staff whether there was one kid or 50 that show up. They found new ways to reach kids. He added that how it went forward was up to the body and what regulations, if any, they put on them. Staff felt the Boys and Girls Club was one that could come in and start running and deserved the funding that was already allocated for them.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the Administrator said all he was going to ask.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson asked if he could bring information to the next meeting as to where they are located in Havana and in Chattahoochee.

Mr. Dixon also said these non-profits had to maintain their ability to function.

Commissioner Hinson said before they vote, thought they needed to see that the money went directly to kids in Gadsden County.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**6. Approval to Apply for the State E-911 Maintenance Grant, Grant Acceptance & MSA for Grant 20-10-05**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated this was the grant used to maintain the E-911 call system and they have to apply for reimbursement of that obligation to the State of Florida.

Chair Holt asked how this worked along with what Motorola was providing. Mr. Dixon explained this was just the E-911 system and maintenance of that system. Chair Holt said they need to look at how it was working with that. Mr. Dixon said they were attempting to see how to piece all of those things together.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**7. Approve of the Federally Funded Sub-Award and Grant Agreement Z2622 with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) for Hurricane Sally**

Item Pulled

**8. Approval of the Willacoochee Creek Bridge Repair-Professional Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and explained it was for approval of a task order with Dewberry Engineers for the design of Willacoochee Creek Bridge as funded by FDOT and had no fiscal impact on the County. The repairs are being done through the Florida Department of Transportation Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) in the amount of \$112,200.00.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. COVID-19 Resolution Update (Proposed Mask Ordinance)**

Pulled

**10. Appointment to the CareerSource Capital Region**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and informed the Board it sought their approval to appoint Michael Temple as the Seat 2 Representative and the re-appointment of Scott Watson to Seat 3 of the CareerSource Capital Region Board.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TWO CANDIDATES AND COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said he was on the Board and if there was a commissioner that wished to be on the Board, he would remove himself and let someone else serve.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson has done a yeoman's job and if he wanted to step down, he would have no problem in nominating or appointing Commissioner NeSmith and Commissioner Green said he would be glad to be the second.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE FOR THE APPROVAL OF THIS ITEM.**

**11. Approval of the Synergy PACT Work Authorization (Hurricane Sally)**

Item Pulled

**12. Approval of Funding for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of funding for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan. He said they had the recommendations as well as the Task Order for Integrity and it included an additional \$500,000 direct funding to the Sheriff's office that they have requested. They went through, made the adjustments and have been in touch with the Circuit Judge from this District that requested County improvements in the County Judge's Courtroom as well as other instrumentation they will need in order to carry out new technology of zooming and teaming, etc. The goal of the request is for "telephone booths" to be placed at the jail so they will no longer have to be transported to the Courthouse and will do the initial proceedings from the Jail and the Judge can see we are being flexible and also have included some technology that will go into those situations. Other than those, the recommendations have been before them before. Their recommendation was that it be approved so they could continue with their timeline that began today of a soft opening of education so they could shoot for July 1<sup>st</sup> to begin to distribute the funds from the program.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND FOR DISCUSSION.**

Commissioner Green said it was brought to his attention earlier in reference to the language of the Church assistance Program and asked if it could be changed to religious groups and said for example Jehovah's Witness did not consider the Hall a church but may need some type of assistance.

Commissioner Hinson said the \$4.4 Million, went through the CARES Program and took them almost three months, had meetings after meetings and the Board came up with what they felt was best from their decisions; had people from the community that also shared information. Now they are saying they did not want community input but the Board has not made input yet. They have not had an open, decisive meeting to decide. He added they were talking about \$9 Million between this year and next and they refuse to have input from the citizens. He further stated he saw why constituents did not trust government. If they do not have workshops, they were not working for the community. He said if the community was not a part, they lose out. He said he did research himself and asked if they knew there was funding for churches; that residents could not figure out the paperwork; the residents were hurting. He said they needed to prioritize. He added they were abandoning themselves from residents of Gadsden County. He said out of the \$4.467 Million, they would be spending \$1.1 Million on engineering projects. They are going to put \$50,000 in marketing; the Gadsden County Rescue Administration would be getting \$446,700. He asked what would the community say, they were hurting and crying.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would make it quick. He said to Commissioner Hinson there was \$200,000 for their building. Commissioner NeSmith said he was looking in the attachments for the \$200,000 and asked if he missed a page. Mr. Dixon said there was money not only for that room, but how to reconfigure for COVID and to look at the entrance. He added it was the most unsecure facility in the County and they need to make the building more secure.

Commissioner NeSmith stated they received a draft copy of this plan at the last meeting.

Mr. Dixon said this was their fourth or fifth meeting on this.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Commissioner Hinson after he received his initial draft, if he had the opportunity to express his concerns to the Administrator.

Commissioner Hinson said there was \$200,000 to refurbish their building and there was a lot of information he knew nothing about but was going to vote on it.

Commissioner NeSmith asked once he originally received the draft of the plan from the Administrator and reviewed it, did he have the opportunity to sit with the Administrator to provide his input.

Commissioner Hinson said he read through everything and was why he was letting them know about the \$200,000, the answer was yes. He tried getting in contact with the Administrator but they both had scheduling conflicts and couldn't get together. He added he could not vote on something that would affect his constituents. He asked how they could vote on something they had not looked through, he looked through everything. He asked they have a workshop so they could break it down line by line. He said he knew which way they were going and it was ok. He added he could not short-change his constituents, it was unfair.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner NeSmith if he met with any of them outside of Chambers regarding that item and he stated no.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Viegbesie if he met with any of the Board members. Commissioner Viegbesie did not respond and Chair Holt said they were trying to clarify that they did not meet with anyone.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Green and he stated no.

Chair Holt said she they needed to clarify those things. She said the reason she asked was they were televised and it was things people needed to know. She said with the security of the building; there was a bomb threat earlier (in the year) and everyone had to go outside and they needed a metal detector. She said she calls the Administrator and they get together on the items. She added what they needed to do, and they had a big argument about getting the Agenda ready and they finally got it where they were not receiving it on the Friday before the meeting or a Monday before the meeting so they have an opportunity to meet with the Administrator or Assistant Administrator. She said what they could decide on was what they wanted to do with that document. She said they should not make accusations against people but they could decide on what they wanted to do. This has been before them before.

Commissioner Hinson said for the record, if he could recall, they have not had too many workshops regarding this item. It has been brought to the Board the day of or the day before.

**Bishop Willie Green, 296 Bradwell, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He said he cared very deeply about this item and found this plan very encouraging. He said he agreed with Commissioner Hinson they should be able to do more and hoped as they moved forward, they will include more citizen input. He had a meeting with the Administrator along with members of the NAACP Economic Development Council, who were also concerned with doing things to help and the process should be simplified. He added he was hopeful they would not find themselves in the same posture they found themselves in last time in losing quite a bit of money and part was the citizens did not understand the process, procedure and the application itself. He added that tonight, he knew everyone wanted as much as they could get and said everyone was impacted by the Church in one way or another.

Commissioner Viegbesie emphasized what Commissioner Green said on changing the language from Churches to religious community. He added if they did not spend it, they will not get it. He said he had a sit-down with the Administrator and when he pointed out the deficiencies with the building, he was shocked to learn the number of safety issues. He added if they do not spend what they get, they will not be able to get more.

Commissioner Green said he also had the opportunity to sit down with the Administrator in reference to what he wanted to see on this plan. He said he would like for him to explain the process as to other pots of money as it related to housing.

Mr. Dixon asked **Fredricka Hamilton, The Integrity Group**, to come forward.

Ms. Hamilton said in addition to this American Rescue Plan program, they have the churches and other religious organizations, the food card, non-profits, non-profit health, small businesses and there are other programs available being offered by other State agencies that are available to the general public. She said for example, first is the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. She explained this program would assist residents with past-due rent and past-due utilities. She

said it was specifically being run through the Department of Children and Families and residents could go online and register at OURFlorida.com; there is mortgage assistance through the Florida SHIP Program that will provide assistance to residents that are delinquent in mortgage payments; the Small Business Administration is providing loans to small businesses financially impacted by COVID-19 through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan; the Paycheck Protection Program also administered by the Small Business Administration; the Small Business Administration with the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, that has closed.

Mr. Dixon interjected and said that program came in and went out in a matter of weeks. He said he put staff in the field and they went to every restaurant they could find in the County and encouraged them to apply for the money. He added at the workshops they have planned, they expect to not only tell people about the programs, but to help them navigate to them. He said they have one goal-to get people the money.

Commissioner Green said she fulfilled his purpose in making citizens aware that there were other things to help with assistance.

Commissioner Hinson said this was the reason he thought they should have a meeting with Board members because ideas start flowing and things start happening. The School Board just sold Gretna School to the Town of Gretna. He said they were looking at closing the old Quincy High School. He was thinking part of that money should go to the areas. Those buildings could be made then into community centers.

Chair Holt asked Ms. Hamilton if she knew anything more about the PPP funding, she heard it ran out. She had not heard anything more on how the funds were moving. Chair Holt said people could also apply under the programs. She said the marketing plan of this was what she wanted to bring up. She added that she wanted to make sure they let everyone know to use this venue. She said to the Administrator they have a small amount of money and lot of people.

Mr. Dixon said they were using every media outlet available to them from websites to social media and they wanted people to get the money. They have tried to leave no stone unturned and if they did, it was unintentional.

Chair Holt said it would be a first come, first served basis.

Ms. Hamilton said they will also be doing mail applications.

Commissioner NeSmith said Commissioner Hinson brought something to his attention. He did have the opportunity to visit Havana Northside and did not know 1) where the school was located, and 2) was given a tour and not only had the opportunity to see the agricultural farming that was taking place and did not know the school was surrounded by what he considered a community that needed “a shot in the arm” of economic development. He said it has tremendous opportunities if they could receive some type of additional economic resources and was inclined to support Commissioner Hinson on workshopping this. He asked the Administrator if there were additional funding sources for non-profits outside of these donors. Mr. Dixon and Ms. Hamilton stated not that they were aware of.

Mr. Dixon said nothing stopped the County from looking for money for those particular kinds of opportunities.

Chair Holt said she did meet with the Commissioners in Gretna and told them the County would be willing to work with them.

Commissioner Hinson said he would love to see Havana Northside added and wanted to talk about it. He said his vision was to put \$600,000 to Gretna Elementary School, \$600,000 to the old Quincy High School and \$600,000 to Havana Northside. He said if this worked, by August kids could go in that gym and have a place to play. He added he would love for Commissioner NeSmith to rescind his motion and then have a workshop.

Commissioner Green asked when they needed to have this approved and Mr. Dixon stated now.

Mr. Dixon said if they wanted to change the program, they could do that but if they were going to maintain the program as presented in any way, form or fashion, this is when they needed to approve the program.

Commissioner Green asked now, there is no governmental...

Mr. Dixon said no.

Chair Holt said they could apply for funding but wanted them to consider, governments can apply for their own funding. Hopefully, they apply and the County applies and they have matching funds. Chair Holt said they have a motion and a second and they needed to address that.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what they would lose if they workshop this.

Mr. Dixon said it depended on what he meant by "lose". Commissioner NeSmith said the timeframe. Mr. Dixon stated only the timeframe they create.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED. ITEM PASSED.**

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could change the workshop like they did last year?

Mr. Dixon said this would be a program that they will program into the system and what they will develop and they will run with and make those deposits to those separate programs unless they change it.

Commissioner Hinson said last year they agreed on something, voted on it and two weeks later Commissioner Viegbesie said he wanted to do something else and they made provisions and changed it. He said it was not set in stone.

Ms. Hamilton reappeared before the Board.



Commissioner Hinson asked if they could change this if they have a workshop. She said last year they changed to shift funds but not the program.

**13. Approval of the Gadsden Youth Initiative Program and Funding**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for board approval of the Gadsden Youth and funding to assist with the program. He stated the program had been before them and was in the beginning stages. He said they seek the approval of \$60,000 from the CARES Act Relief fund residual to be added to this program from the \$90,000 that was already slated for the Summer program.

Commissioner Hinson said he was not trying to go against this but asked where the funding was coming from.

Mr. Dixon said the previous board approved it in the last budget.

Commissioner Hinson said last year's budget was for approval for kids between the ages of 14-18. He said he was not against the program but wanted to make sure young kids have a chance. He said they took that money away from 14-16-year old kids and gave it to 17-19-year-old kids. He added he was for the program and was not going to vote against it, but was it fair to take away what they approved last year from 14-16-year-old kids and give it to 17-18-year-old kids.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**14. Approval of Funding for the Gadsden County Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Residual Funds**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said this sought Board approval for expenditures of the CARES Act Residual Funds. He further explained this was in their Agenda and they have gone through issues regarding new positions, for Granicus to improve their computer system, licensing issues, etc. and in their packet was the layout of the expenditures for the programs:

- Building Management System (\$15,000)
- IT Enhancements/Licenses (\$25,000)
- COVID-19 Media Campaign (\$75,000)
- Granicus Website Services (87,000)

Also new positions they think will be necessary in the next few months to help them meet their capacity to get ready to not only apply for money, but to draw it down and monitor.

- Assistant to the County Administrator (\$65,000)
- Grants Coordinator (Contractual Services \$50,000)
- Grants Monitoring (\$50,000)
- Senior Housing Specialist/SHIP (\$45,000)
- Communications Tech/Motorola, etc. (\$58,000)
- Budget Technician/OMB (\$36,720)

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was something he was going to meet with the Administrator on but classes did not give him that opportunity. He asked what was the purpose for \$75,000 for the COVID-19 Media campaign.

Mr. Dixon said if something happens in the spring or fall related to COVID, they will have a pot of money set aside to deal with it and they can be ready for it.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about the position “Assistant to the County Administrator” for \$65,000. He said there was nothing saying it was a one-time grant or temporary and they have an Assistant County Administrator and Executive Assistant to the Administrator and will now have Assistant to the County Administrator for \$65,000.

Mr. Dixon said when it was put like that, it sounded like he was doing a “whole heap”.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this would be a recurring position...

Mr. Dixon said they were hoping they could work themselves into creating an opportunity and the revenue in terms of generating new programs to fund that position. He said that was one of the risks they were taking in order to staff up to meet the programs they knew were coming. He said they understood it was a one-time position and if funding did not come, they would lose the positions. He said it was his opinion if they waited until they received the money, they would miss multiple opportunities.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the positions listed were already in their Organizational Chart and Mr. Dixon stated no, they would be added.

Commissioner Hinson said this was something they should workshop. He said last year the Board told constituents they would use the majority of the money on small business programs, residential assistance programs, etc. He said now not one penny would be spent on that and people were struggling. He further stated Commissioner NeSmith had mentioned having aides because there was so much going on. He said he now “feels” him because he has a rush of people coming to him every day. He said some of the funds could be used on Commissioners getting aides. He further stated under the American Rescue Plan, they could add aides for another couple of years. He said to get the funds from the General Fund, it might not look well in the community. He said this was the best time to get aides and everybody was stressed. He said they should workshop this so they could take care of all the constituents. He added they had to have a workshop. He then stated they had covered what he wanted to cover. He said it was not that pressing right now. He asked if Sales Tax took care of Public Works and Mr. Dixon said it was their main funding source. Commissioner Hinson asked if it took care of those things and Mr. Dixon said Capital Improvements. Commissioner Hinson asked if it would take care of Public Works vehicle repair and Mr. Dixon said no. He said they all need assistants, he could not wait two weeks to call someone back. They needed to get community input and talk about the \$1.3 Million and do what was for the best for the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not like talking about things he had already gotten the answers to but unfortunately, they were there. He said with the Gadsden Youth Initiative they approved \$60,000 and then he was seeing on the list the Gadsden Youth Initiative for \$60,000. He asked if that was \$120,000 total and also understood they were having the Chambers re-

designed and saw \$150,000 for the Commission Chambers Redesign and thought part of that was on the item they approved earlier. He asked if this was the amount on the \$1.3 that they looked at of the \$4.7 Million or was this a duplication.

Mr. Dixon said this part of the money was housed for the re-design, that was \$150,000, they were just discussing it under the rescue plan. The \$60,000 seen on the list was what they just approved; this was just a funding source.

Chair Holt said they need someone in Budget, they need a Grant Coordinator, they have too much money being moved in order to not have some help in those areas. She said they were short-handed in housing and they have to have those people in place. She added they needed help a couple of years ago. They did not have anyone on the County side monitoring contracts. These positions were needed years ago before COVID. The position with Budget was way overdue. She further stated with Grants monitoring, there was no way they could tell where the money was and they must have someone. They need to have someone on the Budget side, there was someone over in the Clerk's Office. She added if CDBG grants were not closed out properly, you would not be able to get any more grants. With Grant Coordination, the grant person was the one that went after the money, the Grant Coordinator in that position, could check on all the other things just named. She stated things such as this should have been taken care of a few years ago, especially when Hurricane Michael hit.

Commissioner Green said he understood the importance of each of the entities, but, it would have been nice to have the opportunity to discuss individually and with more detail of the when and how as opposed to having to look at it tonight to approve. A workshop would have been what several of them would have wanted.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there was no doubt they needed those positions to be able to effectively operate as a government. Looking at the numbers, it was a \$304,720.00 recurring operation and if the benefits and everything else was added, they were talking about close to \$500,000.00 they would have to add to the operating budget to enhance the effective operation of the County. He said he did think it was needed and should not be one-time funded and the Administrator should look into working this into his Personnel Operation Request during the budget workshop. He added they should talk about how and what each position would be doing with regards to the operation of the County.

Commissioner NeSmith said he concurred with the other commissioners and obviously they needed to enhance their plan, but preferred there was a workshop so they could get clarity.

Chair Holt said she agreed there was clarity needed. She asked the Administrator when could they workshop the items.

Mr. Dixon said at their leisure and said if it would be that they approve the spending of the \$60,000 for the Youth Initiative, but it had been approved, but to approve it from this account.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON SAID SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE YOUTH INITIATIVE.**

Chair Holt asked about the \$150,000 for the building.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.**

Mr. Dixon said they had not approved the Chamber. Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought it was in the...

Mr. Dixon stated no.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought it was in the Rescue Plan and Mr. Dixon said no.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

Chair Holt asked about the workshop and Commissioner Hinson said next Tuesday would be good. They discussed different dates and times for the workshop and could not decide.

Mr. Dixon said they needed a motion to table.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TO TABLE.**

**15. 2021 Summer Youth Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a proposal from Commissioner Hinson regarding the Summer Youth Program. He stated it was seeking \$150,000 for the employment of 125 youth for the 2021 Summer. He explained this would pay up to twenty (20) hours per week for up to six (6) weeks at a rate of \$8.56/hour (minimum wage). The amount added up to approximately \$1027.00/youth. Additionally, the request included \$18,000.00 for the hiring of monitors to assist with the management of the youth throughout the County and to ensure compliance with the program rules.

Commissioner Hinson said it also included at least 10 students with special needs. He added that the money could come from the Rescue funds or the CARES Act.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**16. Updates**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**17. Updates**

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**18. Updates**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**19. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson thanked the citizens of the County for being responsible. He said he was seeing a lot of people still wearing their mask.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Administrator for keeping District 3 as clean as they were.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green thanked Mr. Lee and the Administrator as it related to keeping the County clean. He gave special thanks to two organizations that showed up 1) Born to be a Man and 2) The Tau Psi Zeta Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. He also asked for a Proclamation for them for their service to the community.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR THE TAU PSI ZETA CHAPTER OF THE ZETA PHI BETA SORORITY AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he received a text from a citizen about transportation. He said he would convert it to an email and send to the Administrator.

He added they need to elect a delegate to NACo because they were requesting a voting delegate from each body.

Mr. Dixon said they were arranging a meeting with all the cities, the School Board and the Chair for Friday to try and maintain the rules.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said last week they she met with 30 minority farmers regarding USDA funding and asked that the farmers contact USDA for more information.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
June 1, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:58 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

IN A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 15, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, viz:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Knowles welcomed everyone to the workshop; asked for a moment of silence and then led in Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

He then called the workshop to Order at 4:34 p.m.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

He read aloud the COVID statement.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. The CARES Act Residual Funds**

**2. Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners**

He stated he was asked to finish the review of the Rules of Decorum of Procedure.

They discussed the election and removal of the Chair. It was stated the Chair was to be elected by an affirmative vote of the majority of the Board during the second regular meeting in November and the Chair could only be removed by an affirmative vote of a supermajority/majority of the Board.

He then spoke of Commissioners speaking. He said when two or more seek recognition by the Chair, the Chair shall name who is to speak first. No Commissioner shall be interrupted by another without the consent of the Commissioner that has the floor, except by rising to a question of order. He also said the Chair may also recognize himself or herself but may not

\_\_\_\_\_ speak on an item unless he/she has explicitly recognized himself/herself to speak on a particular item.

He then said another suggested addition was that Commissioners shall limit their comments to a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per item and may only be recognized for additional time by affirmative vote of the majority of the Board to extend debate. In no event shall debate on an agenda item that is not a public hearing extend for more than \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented on the time limit for Commissioners to speak. He said as long as they were on point, they should be able to complete their thoughts and not be limited in time.

Chair Holt said the problem was not with the public, it was with commissioners that repeat themselves over and over.

Mr. Knowles said a Commissioner could call the question and once they get an affirmative vote, they take the vote.

Chair Holt said they need to make decisions as to how they wanted to handle.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was the point of what he was saying. If a commissioner was on point and still presenting, they should be allowed to finish. Once they start repeating themselves over and over, they need to bring it to a head.

Chair Holt asked how to end.

Commissioner Green asked if it was possible for them to use a timer? They did start using one last week.

Mr. Knowles said he and the Chair talked yesterday and Commissioner Viegbesie said FAC's best practice was to not limit commissioners to a specific time period. Chair and he said did not want something to drag on for 10-15 minutes when it could have been said in 5 minutes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked when a Commissioner was making a point and have not gotten to the point best practice is to not interrupt the commissioner in the middle of the statement.

*Commissioner Hinson had some comments, but because the commissioners were sitting in the audience and not at the dais, the Deputy Clerk was unable to understand what was being said.*

Mr. Knowles said under FAC's best practices, the Chair should not make a motion without passing the gavel.

Commissioner Viegbesie wanted them to be aware when a matter is called to question, that has to be voted on.

Mr. Knowles said with this scenario, was there limit to calling the question and was told no.



Commissioner Hinson said the Chair was the driver to the ship because they had the gavel in hand. He had more comments that was hard to understand what was being said.

Mr. Knowles said the Chair needed to recognize himself or herself like any other commissioner.

Commissioner Green said was going to piggyback on what Commissioner Hinson said.

Commissioner Hinson said the Chair should close the meeting.

**3. Review and Discuss the June 15, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda**

Mr. Dixon said the first issue to discuss was the CARES Residual funding. He said this was the remainder of CARES Act I money that totaled \$1.3 Million. Staff was requesting \$1.2 Million and asked for a certain number of items to be funded. The list is as follows:

**Programs**

• Building Management System	\$ 15,000.00
• IT Enhancements/Licenses	25,000.00
• COVID-19 Media Campaign	75,000.00
• GRANICUS Website Services	87,000.00

**New Positions**

• Assistant to the County Administrator	\$ 65,000.00
• Grants Coordination (Contractual Services)	50,000.00
• Grants Monitoring	50,000.00
• Senior Housing Specialist/SHIP	45,000.00
• Communications Tech/Motorola, etc.	58,000.00
• Budget Technician/OMB	36,720.00

**Projects**

• Gadsden Youth Initiative	\$ 60,000.00
• Renovation of Public Works Vehicle Repair Area	200,000.00
• Renovation of Public Works Common Area	100,000.00
• Commission Chambers Redesign	150,000.00
• Architecture/Engineering for Shovel Ready Projects	200,000.00

**Total** **\$1,216,720.00**

He stated they were going to look at Granicus as a sole source contract. He said they were showing the meetings on Facebook and it had limitations. He said it was sole source because their system matched what they offered.

Commissioner Green asked if the \$87,000 was annual. Mr. Dixon said it was a one-time upgrade and asked what annual was. Ms. Leslie Steele, PIO, said after the payment of the initial fee, it would be \$32,000/year. She asked they keep in mind that each individual department will have their own customized website.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what was the current staffing in IT. Mr. Dixon said they had three people. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were looking at enhancing staff so they could do more in-house. Mr. Dixon said their intent was to bring as much in-house as possible in every department. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were locked into a renewal every year for a certain length of time and if not, would they be able to operate...Ms. Steele said the contract would be for five years. She said they would never be able to afford the software to do the Agenda Management system. With the type of software, they will immediately record the meetings and break down the Minutes. She gave an example and stated if someone wanted to look at Agenda Item 1, they would be able to go to the County's website and look at the recording of Agenda Item 1. The reason they were sole sourced was they were the only ones in the country that has this software. It is their software. Commissioner NeSmith said they have a monopoly on it. Mr. Dixon said it was like Windows.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was in support of (inaudible-with the Commissioners sitting in the audience and the lack of microphones there, it made it hard to transcribe what was said).

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the annual upgrade was contingent on the initial contract and if they signed the initial contract, they had to also sign the annual maintenance for five years? Mr. Dixon said it was like the Motorola contract. If they bought that and did not get the maintenance contract, they would be in a world of trouble.

Mr. Dixon said they have asked for a couple of new positions; the first being Assistant to the County Administrator and the primary purpose was to help with the facilitation and implementation of Board priorities and policies. The position would be responsible for coordination of complex development projects, government activities and projects including report writing, data analysis and research. He said they did not have contract review ability from the administrative standpoint. Commissioner NeSmith asked if that would be part of that person's responsibility and he said absolutely.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in looking at this, they were looking at \$304,720 and talking about this money coming out of the CARES Act. This would be a one-time source of funding and asked if they were expecting him to add that amount to his recurring personnel operating budget.

Mr. Dixon said that was a presentation and he was correct. They believed, certainly on the grant end that they could not get grants unless they had grant people and would require an investment. He said they already purchased a \$3 Million Motorola radio set and have no-one to manage.

Chair Holt said they were in desperate need of the positions.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he personally saw nothing wrong with the request, the only thing he would suggest was they have an Assistant County Administrator and an Executive Assistant to the County Administrator. Reading the description of the Assistant to the County Administrator seemed to be a duplication because he was seeing what he thought was already in the description for the Executive Assistant to the County Administrator now. He asked why the specifically need that, he felt it needed to be a different title and description. Mr. Dixon said it really should be a Special Projects Coordinator except there was already a title like that but did not perform that function. A re-title would be appropriate. The Assistant County

Administrator was doing money and they needed her to do that. The need the budget to line up and they were not able to break away from that and cannot do so until the had a handle on that. He said they have asked for a Budget Tech as well, they were sorely understaffed on the budget side of the ball. He said there was 100 vehicles they could not account for and they were on the insurance for years. He said it was costing them hundreds of thousands of dollars and may not exist. He said that was what happens when they shrink down staff.

Chair Holt said he was saying exactly what they have been saying over the years.

Mr. Dixon said it pained him to have to ask for that many positions. He said with SHIP, the only professional Housing person they had was Ms. Sonya Burns. He said they could not imagine how hard it was to spend \$2 Million dollars. He said they do not have staff in-house currently to spend the money they already have.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the renaming of the first position and Mr. Dixon said they would change it. Commissioner NeSmith asked if he still wished for them to vote on it and he said yes. He said if they told him a new name, he would write it down. He said if Mr. Dixon saw it as a special project type person, the current person...Mr. Dixon said they would re-title that or they knew they needed to re-title that position. Commissioner NeSmith asked if that would create a new position and Mr. Dixon stated no.

Commissioner Green said regardless of the title of the position, the things listed in those positions are what was needed and Mr. Dixon stated yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about Operations Activities Coordinator and said they would need someone to coordinate the operations of the County and they had too many assistants. Mr. Dixon said he agreed.

Commissioner NeSmith asked to ask Ms. Burns a question and asked if she had ever had a full staff. She said several years ago that department actually was a six-person staff. He asked how much money did they had for allocation \$525,000 with a six-person staff and would do interlocal agreements with municipalities for \$50,000. After 2006, the allocation went down to \$350,000 and was what they currently receive now. Mr. Dixon said there was a time when Ms. Burns was the lowest person on the totem pole and the person he worked with was a former mortgage lender who ran the same program and they were doing as many new homes as rehabs.

#### **Renovation of Public Works Vehicle Repair area**

Mr. Dixon said he was unsure if the Commissioners had been to that area, if they haven't, asked them to go and see what they were working with and the shortcomings they physically had that they cannot get away from each other. There has been no investment since it was built other than putting a top on it. They have not maintained what they own. They would like the opportunity to improve.

#### **Commission Chambers**

He said they talked about not only making the room COVID ready, but redoing the front and addressing security issues. He said they also wanted to look at redoing some fencing outside for safety purposes.

Commissioner Green said he was glad they were addressing that because when he came on Sunday, he noticed liquor cups and bottles in the area. He knew they will be hanging out in the parking lot and looked to see if there were security cameras around the building and Mr. Dixon said there was not. Mr. Dixon said generally on the weekend, they have police cars blocking the parking lot. He added security was a concern. He said they knew money was coming down for architecture and engineering, but they were not ready to accept it. The money coming down was asking for shovel-ready programs and that was 90-120 days they wanted it to be ready. He hoped through the summer to be able to get the budget in order while the Commissioners were at conference and to put it in a position where they could make long-term decisions.

Commissioner Hinson thanked Mr. Dixon for presenting this to them. He added it was only fair to the constituents to have a workshop on what they want in the County. He said they were now telling homeless people they were no longer important to the County because the Board had agreed to put aside \$100,000 for the homeless program. The Board also agreed they would use a majority of the funding for the residential and small business program and none of that was addressed in the \$1.3 Million. He further stated the Board clearly said the majority of the funding would go to small business and residential assistance program and he did not see that. He said they needed to make sure they addressed the issues at hand. He added this was his position and was why he could not support it. The Board needed to have meetings themselves and have public meetings so citizens could air their concerns. He said they have not yet had one meeting about the CARES Act funding.

Mr. Dixon said to give perspective, this was \$1.3 Million that was left over from the CARES Act; there was roughly \$8 Million dollars and \$6.7 Million was given to various programs to citizens. He had stated in no uncertain terms the biggest problem was that was the County did not do anything within the County to protect itself. They have given the Sheriff and others more money than the County had in terms of things the County needed in order to protect itself.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS DECLARED ADJOURNED AT 5:54 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 15, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Nicholas Thomas, Clerk**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting, called it to Order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 6:01 p.m.*

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to add 12a-Approve Funding for the Gadsden County Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Residual Funds; 12b-Appointment to the CareerSource Capital Region Board; 12c Approval of the Addendum to the Gadsden County Broadband Agreement; 12d-Cochran Road SCRAP Construction Bid Agreement; and 12e-Board Approval of the Sub-Grant Agreement Number Z2622 for Hurricane Sally and Authorize Staff to Accept and Execute the Agreement in the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) Automated Grant System

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 6:02 p.m.*

*Commissioner Hinson appeared at 6:03 p.m.*

Commissioner Viegbesie expressed his same concern he has expressed in the past since being on the Commission. He said he has discouraged adding items to the Agenda at the last minute, he personally felt that did not express transparency to the citizens and they should be given an opportunity to preview them and make comments. He further stated he was aware there are some items that were absolutely necessary to be added at the last minute and the Special Projects Coordinator uploads the items onto the website, but the items should be made available in a timelier manner. There were too many items were being added at the last minute.

Commissioner Green concurred with Commissioner Viegbesie’s statement and added it did not give them the opportunity to do their due diligence and hoped they could get handle on this as soon as possible.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**1. Proclamation Honoring Dr. Adrian Cooksey and the Gadsden County Health Department**

Chair Holt asked that they all step forward with Dr. Cooksey and Vice Chair Viegbesie read aloud the Proclamation and it was then presented to her. She said a few words of thank you.

**2. Audit Presentation**

**Ryan Tucker, Purvis Gray**, appeared before the Board to present the results of their audit of the County ending September 30, 2020.

He said overall the results were positive and there was a total of 3 audit findings and all were resolved. He said the main thing was the County was issued an unmodified report and was the highest level of assurance that could be received from a CPA firm. There was a comparison of revenue and expenses County Wide. He said revenues were up \$9 Million from the prior year and most was a result of additional grant funding the County received in 2020 compared to 2019. It was mostly CARES Act Funds, the Ag Center grant for the renovation, bridges were reconstructed and several roads were paved or repaved. There was also the SHIP Housing relief program the County received funds for and expended.

He further explained the revenues and expenditures.

He explained the unassigned reserved level was just under \$3.6 Million at that time and was 17% of total expenses and General Fund net transfers out of about \$21 Million. He said it was down about 3% from the previous year mark of where they were at the end of 2019. He said that was something to keep an eye on, the GFO he recommended a minimum of two months of operating expenses to be held in reserve for disasters and emergencies and the County was just above the two-month requirement in terms of unassigned fund balance. With the long-term debt there were some new items: 1) the purchase of 4 ambulances under Capital Outlay; 2) the Sheriff had vehicle purchases that was \$544,000 of new debt. He said there was \$1.3 Million of new debt and the County paid down almost \$2 Million of regular debt service payments. He also pointed out the Schedule of Awards of Federal Grant Expenditures. He said there were 19 different Federal grants spent awarded and spent during that time period totaling \$6.1 Million and they had to do some additional compliance work related to the CARES Act. On the State Grants, there were 30 different State grants and they had to do additional work on four of them. He said overall there were no compliance findings in the Single Audit. There were two findings on the Board side. One was a transitional item with regards to EMS billing reconciliation process. The person that was doing that retired and some of the information on how it was done did not get fully passed down and they got behind. He said they adjusted for that and it was being worked on getting squared away. The other item was related to Accounts Payable Cut-off. Sometimes invoices come in after year-end that need to be accrued back into the prior fiscal year and found one understated and had to accrue for that. The Board issued their response and their findings will go in the Report.

Under the Sheriff's tab, there was a finding related to Fixed Assets and stated it was very common. He explained Florida Statutes require that the Sheriff's Office perform a physical inventory of fixed assets annually and that physical inventory did not get performed, basically due to COVID. He said they found a couple of disposals that did not get removed from the Fixed Assets ledgers.

Overall, the County is making progress.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked him for the presentation. He said he reviewed the response from the County Administrator regarding one of the deficiencies and asked if he had a chance to review same.

Mr. Tucker said the response would go into the report and they will look to see if it has been corrected during the next year's audit.

Chair Holt stated they needed to accept the audit and needed a motion and second.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO ACCEPT THE FY 2020 AUDIT.**

**CONSENT**

Chair Holt said they were going to need to really look over the Minutes and restate their Motion for approval of items, whatever the motion was so there would be clarity between the Board and the Clerk's Office and there was clarity on the items. She said they would make sure they were voting the way the motion stated. She added that way they would make sure that what they voted for also matched the Minutes. She said for them to read over the Minutes and if there were any corrections that needed to be made, make note at that time.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY NECESSARY CHANGES THAT WERE NEEDED ON THE MINUTES AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

3. Ratification Memo
4. Approval of Minutes
  - May 4, 2021 Workshop
  - April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting
5. Approval of Signatures for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.

If citizens have any questions, comments or concerns, please email [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Mr. Knowles read the statement aloud.

**Alan Dust, 477 Scotland Road, Havana, FL 32333** appeared before the Board. He stated he had concerns with County employees not doing their jobs. He and his wife moved to Gadsden County and built their "dreamhouse" to live out their golden years and enjoy life. Due to a couple of neighbors and the County not doing anything when they are in violation of different ordinances. He said one neighbor on one side was in violation of the County's Development

Standards, Chapter 5, Subsection 5101. He said dwelling units specifically excluded recreational vehicles and they live in them from time to time. He said they were also in violation of Subsection 5204, Standards for Home Occupation and he explained that. Suzanne Lex did not do her job and there has not been a County Administrator with enough impendance to go forward and do their job. He said there is another neighbor that was in violation of noise ordinances. He said he talked with the Administrator 2 months ago, contacted him again and waited; was told they had other things to do and he was on the list; another month has passed and still nothing has happened.

Mr. Dixon said he has met with Mr. Dust and informed him someone would be getting in touch with him and they will. While Mr. Dust is entitled to enjoy his property, so does the neighbor next door. To ask the County to intervene without good cause could be difficult, as he has said, when the deputies are there. These are not easy issues to resolve, staff has been there a number of times over the years. Staff has not had the opportunity to witness some of the things he has and therefore their hands were tied until they can, just as the deputy has said to him. He added they have not ignored him or turned their backs on him. (There was a list that was distributed and a copy was not given to the Deputy Clerk.)

Mr. Dust said when people don't follow up, when they don't return calls, he would not say that was cooperating and the County was not doing anything. He said Mr. Dixon needed to take a look at the violations of the County Ordinances and need to see it.

Chair Holt stated she felt the Administrator would be willing to look at those violations and work with him and they have his list of complaints.

Karen Stansberry

Chair Holt did not read her email but stated there was a link to a video that had also been sent to Governor Ron DeSantis and others.

Marion Lasley (email sent in)

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **6. Public Hearing-Legislative-Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2021-004 to add Subsection 1306, Community Meeting, to Chapters 1, Administration and Enforcement of the Land Development Code**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a legislative Public Hearing for consideration of a recommendation to adopt Ordinance 2021-004 adding Subsection 1306, Community Meeting to Chapter 1, Administration and Enforcement of the Land Development Code.

**Diane Quigley, AICP, Growth Management Director**, appeared before the Board and said this was a request to amend the Land Development Code to add in the Community Meetings language again and she further expounded on same.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 6:36 p.m.*



She said they were asking to add community meeting requirements back into Subsection 1306. She said the purpose of the meetings was to provide an opportunity for the applicants of the proposed development to meet directly with the surrounding community to address questions, issues and to hear their concerns without the formality of a public hearing. A public hearing was held at the Planning Commission's May 15, 2021 meeting. Several members of the public spoke and submitted written comments in favor of adding the Community Meetings back into the Land Development Code to ensure the public was adequately notified. The Planning Commission recommended 8-4 to adopt Ordinance 2021-004 adding Subsection 1306 to the Land Development Code.

*Commissioner Green returned at 6:37 p.m.*

She shared a brief presentation with the Commissioners and explained the difference in Administrative, Legislative and Quasi-Judicial hearings.

She said they have the options of:

- 1) Adoption of Ordinance 2021-004 adding Subsection 1306, Community Meeting to Chapter 1, Administration and Enforcement of the Land Development Code and authorize the Chairwoman to sign.
- 2) Do not approve.
- 3) Board direction.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and asked for comments. She also said Ms. Marion Lasley was in favor of the public hearing per her email.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before Board. He said before he addressed this issue, he thanked the Board for the American Rescue Plan and things that were put in place to help the citizens and Churches. His concern was, he believed the community meetings could be good but felt they were in the wrong place. He said not many major corporations that want to bring their business to the County would be interested in doing so with this meeting in place. This was a unique County. He was convinced they all want economic growth and development and need to be consistent. He asked they remember couple of weeks ago, they had a public hearing and had citizens to come to the meeting and felt that was the proper place for them to come. He asked they not approve this.

Chair Holt asked for other comments and there were none.

Commissioner NeSmith said he was little perplexed. How did this come before them, did the Board ask for it?

Mr. Dixon said yes, the Board asked that they bring community meetings back.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Ms. Quigley the difference in this and the Citizens Bill of Rights.

Ms. Quigley said the CBOR had a super majority in it and few other requirements and this does not. Commissioner NeSmith said currently the citizens have the capability to appear before Planning and she said yes.

Commissioner Green said he was glad to hear the statement about CBOR. He said it sounded like it was trying to be slipped back in. He said they want citizens to have the opportunity to give input as to what came into the community but wanted to make sure they were not allowing something they voted against to come back.

Commissioner Hinson said for the last 7-8 years was a proponent of getting rid of the CBOR and felt it slowed down growth in the County. What he thought he said was he wanted to have community input. Something as simple as a hotel coming in, you have sexual predators floating around and you have no input of the hotel coming into the community; imagine having a plant nursery and you have chemicals floating around in the air and killing the pear trees and other things; causing cancer. He said he was on the Planning Board for years. He thought they need to have input from the community but to have 4 out of 5 votes to pass is a stretch. To have the community meetings was showing they wanted the public to be a part of what was going on.

Chair Holt said she did research and called 8 counties. Jackson County notifies within 300 feet, they do the notification, do not require community meetings. Liberty County does not require community meetings but do notify people in the area. The majority of the counties do not notify to have them come to the Planning or Board meeting. She said she was not in favor of this item and will have to vote against it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he also was not in support of this. He remembered when he was sworn in, the first meeting was to get rid of CBOR, including this portion of it. He said “you cannot run with the rabbits and bark with the dogs”.

Commissioner Hinson said for the record, (he held up a paper) and said it just came out today, he was reading through it and recalled years ago when he looked at this, he was on the Board of Planning and people would have to come to the Board anyway. He said he felt if there was some kind of way they could notify, because they almost lost a business coming because the guy was in another county and could not keep coming back and forth. He agreed they still should send a letter to people outside to encourage them to come to the meetings. He wanted to make sure the public knew they could come to Planning and County meetings to let their opinions be known. He said he had heartburn over the 1000 feet because of chemicals.

Ms. Quigley said that would remain in how they do things.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO DENY THIS AND ADD INSTEAD OF 1000 FEET, THEY MAKE THE NOTIFICATION ½ MILE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THERE WAS DISCUSSION REGARDING THE MOTION. COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO DENY AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner NeSmith said for a point of clarification; the current notification process had been denied and Ms. Quigley said no, to add the additional community meeting.

Mr. Dixon said Commissioner Hinson wanted to readdress the distance of the notification process. Chair Holt asked if it would have to be re-agendaed and Mr. Knowles stated yes because they voted this down.

Mr. Dixon asked for clarity on what they needed to come back on and Commissioner Hinson said the notification requirement of 2640 feet.

Chair Holt said she would like to see this stay at 1000 feet and would also like for the company pay for the notification and the County do the notification.

Ms. Quigley said they do already in their application fee.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Hinson if he wanted the ½ mile and he felt within ½ mile would cover everyone. Chair Holt clarified they had ½ mile and he wanted to add 1000 feet, the company pay the fees and the County does the notification.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were asking the Administrator to add this to the next agenda. Ms. Quigley said it needs to go to Planning first.

Ms. Quigley said the County does notification already and the only change to the process they had to follow by statute is the ½ mile.

**7. Public Hearing-Legislative-Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2021-005 to amend Subsections 5606 and 5607, Standards for Off-Street Parking and Off-Street Parking Requirements of the Land Development Code**

Ms. Quigley said this item was to amend the Land Development Code and under Ordinance 2021-005, it would amend Chapter 5, Subsections 5606 and 5607, Standards for Off-Street Parking and Off-Street Parking Requirements. She added this was minor changes to the Code but could make a lot of difference to some of their residents. Typically, what has been found with churches, when they meet with them, get a plan and issue a development order and go through the review process and it goes into the construction phase, they typically have problems raising money and church development orders does not expire. Typically, with development orders, they have six months to start construction or they expire if there is no activity or start within a certain timeframe. If that happens, the development order is revoked and they have to come back and re-apply.

Chair Holt said she was going to make a comment and some people may get upset with her but, whenever they get upset with each other in church, they start another church. That then restricts the ability to develop in the County. She said they need to look at closing that opportunity and if they do not build within a certain number of years, then other people could develop. She added that a place that serves beer and wine cannot be within a certain footage of a church, but a church could build next door to them. What was good for one should be good for the other.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his comment was on procedure. It was a public hearing and felt Commissioners comments should come after the public had the chance to insert their opinion.

Ms. Quigley said because they have been left open to give churches time to raise funding over several years to develop and build their church, they did an inventory of the open development orders for churches and found they have 16-17 that currently have open development orders in various stages of completing construction. Paving was one of the issues. They took a look at some of the things they could do to help and paving was one of the issues. She said they could

be exempt from paving parking lots if they allowed them. She said they would have to pave handicapped parking spaces, per building code requirements. They would have to provide a firm, stable, level surface and that would save money for the churches and relieve burden. She asked they adopt Ordinance 2021-005 and recommended option 1.

Chair Holt asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak for or against this matter.

Bishop Green re-appeared before the Board. He applauded Planning for bringing this forward. He asked they approve it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he would support it and suggested for a politically correct reference to the places of worship and asked if they could change it to religious organization.

Ms. Quigley said they did catch that and thought the Planning Commission mentioned it as well. They say a “church or other similar religious institutional use”.

Commissioner Green said they get in the habit of saying “church” and may be because the majority of them were from the church but did not want to be discriminatory at all.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the language was in there and asked for her to direct him to it.

Commissioner Hinson said it was so interesting listening to them last agenda item and heard them. He said one thing, they speak one way about growth, but their vote said something totally different and he changed his decision. He said to imagine communities with sidewalks and driveways and then someone brings a church inside that community. It was not required to bring sidewalks and driveways. Property value goes down. Imagine a church purchases a building and does so next to a restaurant. That business can’t expand their services because they have a church next to it. Restaurants can’t come to Gadsden County because of the number of churches. He added, hypothetically speaking, on Pat Thomas Parkway there are two hotels, Applebee’s could not build there because there was a church in the proximity. He said it sounded great but this would put a damper on economic development.

Commissioner Green said he was thinking this was something totally different from what he was stating in reference to the Ordinance with the alcohol and things of that nature and wanted clarity because he wanted to make sure they would have that opportunity to address some of those issues.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was surprised to hear the alcohol relevance in this conversation.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Chair Holt said she would like to have the issues with the churches and the distance for development to be brought back for a future item.

Ms. Quigley asked for clarification. They have the Ordinance that states the churches, developments near bars, etc., their Land Development Code does not allow church

development orders to never expire. She asked if they would like to address each one as separate...

Chair Holt said she would like to address that and the distance and scenario of different buildings coming. Overall, bring it back and they could look at other items.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he said to the Administrator, in developing of that, they need to consider the possibility of grandfathering in those that have already been there because he would hate for a restaurant to be in place and a church come next door.

Commissioner Green said in reference to Commissioner Viegbesie's comments in grandfathering in, if a restaurant tries to come within certain feet, should the church be grandfathered in as well?

Mr. Dixon said to add to the equation, he thought the City of Quincy was now evaluating getting rid of that because even across the street, those places can't open because of the religious institution on the corner.

Chair Holt stated they were there first. Mr. Dixon said it did not matter because the law said and thought they were looking at an opportunity to clean the slate.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **8. Consideration of a Work Order for a Consultant to Assist in Conducting Community Visioning Workshops for the Update of the Comprehensive Plan**

Ms. Quigley introduced the above item and stated it was for consideration of a work order for consulting in assisting in conducting Community Vision workshops for the updated Comprehensive Plan. She said it was to explore approval of visioning workshops in the Fall of 2021.

They were proposing to host four workshops total and will be inviting County Commissioners, City Council members and local government administrators to the workshops and was requesting be able to hire a consultant. They want to use Dewberry that has a contract already in place. They were requesting \$49,775 and funding is in the current budget. She asked they approve the work order.

Mr. Dixon said he has had consultations with Ms. Quigley about drilling down into communities and had a good example last night with the Rescue Plan.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought this was something that was long overdue. He commended Mr. Dixon for his last statement and said was very important they take it down to the basic language.

Chair Holt said the Comp Plan is so difficult to do it in chunks.

Commissioner NeSmith said they need to be up to date on their Land Use Code, Comprehensive Plan and Ordinances they had out there. He channeled Commissioner Hinson at this moment. He asked Mr. Knowles where they stood with the procurement policy. Mr. Knowles said it

amounted to a Change Order if they have an existing contract and the changes are less than \$10,000, it could be put on Consent and go through the Consent Agenda. Since they were piggy-backing on the existing contract, they were using the contract with Dewberry and effectively amounted to a change order. He said it was called a Task Order but was really a change order adding additional funds to it. Commissioner Nesmith asked the Administrator's recommendation. Mr. Dixon said he and Ms. Quigley had this conversation and this is a means to the end. This fits with the contract they have with Dewberry and makes it easier.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the last time the Comp Plan was updated-2018.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9. SHIP/HHRP Housing Rehab-Bid 21-10 Recommendations and Awards**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to award Bid 21-10 for the SHIP/HHRP Housing Rehabilitation Project to the selected contractors.

**Sonya Burns, Housing Program Coordinator**, appeared before the Board and gave her report. Gadsden County BOCC was awarded \$3,055,000 from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation from the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program. In the recent months, an additional \$970,000 was approved and awarded to Gadsden County. She said there were still citizens homeless as a result of the hurricane and in need to major housing repairs. She said this was the third cycle they will be rehabilitating or demo/replacing 21 dwellings and was the first time they have ever bid out such a large number of homes at one time. When this is completed, it will be a total of 41 homes. Staff solicited sealed bids on May 20<sup>th</sup>; with a mandatory Pre-Bid Conference and walk-through on May 26<sup>th</sup>; bids were received until June 8<sup>th</sup> and immediately reviewed from the contractors. A careful review of the applications and bids were done by staff and was determined that Kamryn Construction, LLC, Chief Cornerstone Construction, Blue Chip Construction Co., Jackie Hill, H & O Home Improvements, R. Lockwood Construction Co., and Florida Homes, Inc. met the requirements. The original amount received from Florida Housing Finance was \$3,055,000, one homeowner contribution of \$24,116.71 and out of everyone's services thus far, this was the only homeowner that submitted the money he received from FEMA because his home was completely destroyed and he wanted to participate in the construction of his new home. With that contribution, it gave them a total budget of \$3,079,116.71; total amount spent was \$1,301,129.59. There are two homes currently under construction totaling \$181,320.00 and both should be completed by end of the month. The remaining balance as of June 14, 2021 is \$1,5096,666.12. She said these numbers were discussed on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> with the Finance Director and Assistant Finance Director. No contractor will be issued more than two local government-funded contracts simultaneously unless the ability to perform was proven and three contracts was the maximum for any contractor. Contractors that have not previously completed any work for SHIP, CDBG or HHRP programs will be limited to three contracts until the ability to perform is proven. Contractors with unfavorable performance or work history the awards will be at the discretion of local government. The local government has the right to accept or reject any bid. She said the staff recommended bid awards were as follows:

Jackie Hill, H & O Home Improvements (a new contractor to Gadsden County) was awarded two jobs totaling \$176,350.00; Florida Homes was awarded four jobs totaling \$417,945.00, Blue Chip bid award was \$250,111.36; Lockwood Construction was awarded \$218,060., Kamryn

Construction was awarded \$335,500.00 and Chief Cornerstone Construction was awarded \$182,500.00. She said the total projected construction costs was \$1,580,466.36. That amount does not include any possible change order. She said they do have approximately 10 applicants that have been approved to receive SHIP assistance but due to heir property issues, probate, administrative hearings, etc. have been put on hold but they were working with them and the technical advisor from Florida Finance and have come up with a Lien Leasing Agreement where all the heirs to the property gives one family member permission to receive services for a replacement home. Staff recommended they approve option 1, which would approve staff recommendations and award bid 21-10 selections for the SHIP/HHRP Housing Rehabilitation Project to the selected contractors and authorize the Chair to execute all related documents.

Commissioner Hinson said he just saw the list of names today and was shocked to see a relative's name on the list and will recuse himself from voting. Mr. Dixon said it was his job to announce that and Chair Holt was in the same situation.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was his question concerning contractors. He knew they had some real issues with some contractors. He asked how much of the contractors have been vetted. Ms. Burns said the list of contractors that staff recommended were some of the best. Commissioner Viegbesie wanted to make sure they are vetted and provide the services and not endanger the citizens by short-changing and cutting corners with regard to the repairs.

Commissioner Green asked, if possible, for her to present a workshop in the future so citizens can learn what SHIP is and has to offer.

**Bill and Debbie Herring, Florida Homes, Inc., 13919 NW 145 Ave., Alachua, FL** appeared before the Board. She said they were very passionate about affordable housing. They were the competitive low bidder on eight demo/replacement homes. She added it was stated that no contractor will be allowed more than five jobs unless approved by the Board and one reason was because other bids were excessive. She shared some statistics with some of the bid results they had. The current bid recommendations are spending \$152,688.00 additional dollars by not awarding the jobs to the lowest bidders. She said not just them, there were other low bidders. That amount of money could be used on another home or on an average 6± additional families in the rehab. All contractors that bid, were the low bidder on a job was not necessarily awarded the job they were the low bidder on. If all bids were awarded to the lowest bidder, all contractors who bid would have received some work, saving the County \$152,688.00. Eleven of the jobs were awarded to low bidders and 9 of the jobs were not. She pointed out that in one case, not only was the low bidder not awarded, but the highest bidder was awarded for an additional amount of \$34,022.00 for the one job. She pointed out other differences in the bids. She said they have demonstrated as a company that they were able to complete all jobs in a timely manner and were willing and capable to complete all 8 jobs they were low bidder on. They respectfully requested that at a minimum, they be awarded 5 demo/replacement homes they were the low bidder on. Mr. Herring said they would at least like the opportunity to get at least the 5 that were allowed.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator if he could ask a question of Ms. Burns. He asked if she had spoken with the contractor and gotten the information they have with regard to the numbers they mentioned and an explanation as to why those concerns were not addressed in the awarding of the bids. He said where they were at seemed very fiscal

responsible and would rather stretch the money to fix more houses and would be beneficial to the citizens.

Ms. Burns said to address his question, Ms. Herring called her yesterday and believed she spoke with Ms. Quigley and the County Administrator as well. She also spoke with several contractors that was on the application and bid award and one question she was asked was why was Blue Chip Construction awarded. She said during the mandatory pre-bid conference they had, it was stated that no bid was concrete until it came before the Board and it was Board's discretion to approve, reject or deny the bids. She further added it would be a disservice to the residents if the bids were not approved tonight as there were still people living with blue tarps on their houses and it was raining in their houses.

Mr. Dixon asked her to tell how she arrived at her conclusions and also wanted to make clear not only was price a concern, part of their biggest concern was attracting contractors. They have had a tough time finding contractors and was why they have been sitting on this money for years. They tried something new and also did not want contractors having 6-8 houses because that would mean months before they could get to a house. Even if you took the lowest bid and it took them 16 months to get the house, that to the County, was self-defeating. People have been waiting for years and they need to move. He asked Ms. Burns to tell how they arrived at her conclusion.

Ms. Burns said it was just as he stated, also the cost of supplies. She said contractors were calling her every day about the cost of supplies going up even though they recently went down. Who was to say they won't go back up by the time they start the jobs. She said bids were done based on 15% below and 15% above. She said all numbers were reviewed by rehab services and the Building Department official to make sure the numbers were accurate, as were the bid calculations.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they want to attract contractors; if he heard correctly, if they were comparing apples to apples and one apple cost \$50 and one costs \$20 and they buy the one at \$50, they were not being fiscally responsible. Also, they want to cover as many houses as could that had tarps, why not stretch the money so they get more houses rehabilitated as opposed to doing some at a higher cost.

Mr. Dixon said he met them at the opening and they stressed those factors and hated that they perhaps took a bid strategy that in the end took in only one factor when they were clear they were factoring in more than just a low bid. It was important that not only the jobs get done, but get done quickly. He said also the market was up 30% and contractors were asking what if they get 2 months down the road with a job and it requires more money. There was a lot at play.

Commissioner Hinson said had opportunity to review and asked if this was an RFP or a bid. Ms. Burns said it was a bid and the way they have always done for housing. Commissioner Hinson said it should be an RFP.

Chair Holt interjected and said since the had a conflict, they could not participate in the comments. Commissioner Hinson stated he thought they could comment but not vote.



Mr. Knowles said in the Conflict of Interest section of the Code of Ordinances, stated:

**“Sec. 2-43. Quorum.**

*(c) Conflict of Interest.* Any member of the commission who announces a conflict of interest on a particular matter pursuant to F.S. § 112.3146 or F.S. §286.012, and decides to refrain from voting or otherwise participating in the proceedings related to that matter, shall be deemed present for the purpose of constituting a quorum.”

He said they were treading a thin line and might be better for the two to refrain because they had family members in it and did not want to hinder...

Commissioner Hinson said in all fairness, this was something totally different.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Ms. Burns and wanted to understand the process. He said jobs were awarded, Ms. Burns stated they had not been awarded, just recommendations made. All contractors have been told these were recommendations and nothing was final and nothing had been awarded. He asked about some jobs not being recommended to the low bidders.

Mr. Dixon said everyone understood they would not be receiving 7-8 bids, even if they were the low bidder and all signed Notice to Bidder about the number of jobs. Mr. Dixon said they also understood there could be special recommendation if the Board decided. Ms. Burns pointed out they all signed a Notice to Bidder that was in their packet. Mr. Dixon further explained there could be a special award if the Board decided and they were asking for that special award and the County has not recommended the special award because they want to move the process. They were trying to give people homes and do so as expeditiously as possible.

Commissioner Green said the particular company had the opportunity and had 5 bids.

Ms. Burns explained they were the low bidders of 8 demo/replacement homes. The Notice to Bidders explained the maximum number of bids, at Board discretion. If they were to receive all 8, that would be at Board’s decision, but was not Staff’s recommendation.

Mr. and Mrs. Herring re-appeared before the Board. She said they were not questioning the number of bids, they knew it was up to the Board to accept or reject any and all bids. They were looking at the excessive difference in the money the County was spending on the jobs. There were two very competitive bidders with the new houses. She said to have a bid with \$34,000 difference, why not go to the next bidder and not from number 1 to number 6. She said they were questioning the overall fiscal responsibility of the awards. Mr. Herring said five awards was a given, eight was a special award and they would love to have that and would like to at least have the 5. The recommendation was they have 3 new houses and 1 rehab that they were not even the low bidder on. He said they appreciate the recommendations but were very capable of coming in and taking care of 5 jobs.

Ms. Burns re-appeared before the Board. She said just like Mr. and Mrs. Herring contacted her, all the other contractors contacted her as well. She said different things were taken into consideration and it was not always about the lowest bid.

Mr. Dixon said more was at play than the low bids.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if there were any contractors that submitted and was not awarded any jobs and Ms. Burns said no, everyone was awarded something. He asked the probability of tabling this item and making the awards more equitable.

Mr. Dixon said if the Board were going to meet again, would be optional. If not, they were delaying the process for two months.

Commissioner Green said his concern was the process they had in place was probably properly apprehended for everyone and everyone was aware of the process. He said he knew people need this but he must agree with Commissioner Viegbesie in reference to tabling this so they could make sure everyone had an equal and fair opportunity in the process they had in place so it did not come back to haunt them as a Board in the future.

Mr. Dixon said while they may not agree with Ms. Burns and Ms. Quigley's thought process, he was sure they agreed that everything was out in the open in terms of what their process was going to be. He said before he left the meeting, someone offered up that everyone received three houses and go home. He said there was no question about the quality of the contractors. Whatever the will of the Board, they will make it work.

Commissioner Green said there was a process in place and every contractor had the opportunity to follow that process and staff followed the process in selecting the people they wanted to grant the jobs to. Ms. Burns said correct.

Mr. Knowles suggested:

- 1) They could remove the two things that have a conflict and the Board could vote on that; or
- 2) If that was not amenable, the ones that was not up in the air or in question, they could vote on and those people could get their relief and not be held up.

Mr. Dixon said the problem with that, they want an award of houses that have been recommended to be awarded to someone else; an award that they understood at the beginning may not be recommended and would require the action of this Board to give them more and was not due anything unless the Board decided they were due more.

Commissioner Viegbesie said "procedure, procedure, procedure". He said they do not draw procedure up on the fly. That was the process and the process in abstaining from a vote. They were not "in the kitchen where we draw up rules as we go". Secondly, everyone did know they wanted roofs fixed but they needed to be fiscally responsible as to how they spent the money and stretched it as far as possible. They should follow the process and the procedure and do what they need to do to serve citizens of the County. If they want to approve this recommendation, someone make the motion and approve up or down.

Chair Holt said regarding on withdrawing, that was not on the fly, they could always put a motion in to withdraw that one and then could get a second and vote or they could stop the whole process and table it. If they did that, no one would get a home for two months and they would hold up everything.

Commissioner Green said based on the questions he asked, the person they put in that position, you have to trust the judgment of people in leadership positions.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 2-1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 2-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON AND CHAIR HOLT REMOVED THEMSELVES FROM THE VOTE.**

**10. Approval of Hurricane Michael FEMA Claims and Insurance Claims Audit**

Mr. Dixon said he was asked to look at all programs since coming on and one thing he spent a great deal looking at was their FEMA and insurance claims. It did not strike him as being appropriate and in doing research looking at the process of how they got their insurance claims, it struck him as “needful”. He said the buildings were in the historic district and that was not a carpenter coming, they needed an artisan to work on those buildings. He said what they have been given for their insurance claims seemed light to him and they reached out to some folks, including Integrity, to look at how they could re-look at insurance claims, if possible. He said they were bringing a request to do an audit because those claims were so woefully inadequate. He said they have gotten with Integrity, who has gotten with Phoenix, who appeared before the Board prior to his arrival, and been able to put together a team of building and storm damage experts to look at their buildings and if necessary, file a supplemental or adjusted claim that they believe might yield additional money to the County. If it does not yield additional money, the County will not incur any expenses. However, should a claim be received, the County will receive 70-80%, depending on the stage it takes to conclude the matter. He said it was an urgent matter that required immediate action and was why he brought it to them. The Statue of Limitations will run out in October of this year. He said they own upwards of thirty buildings, 50 he thought, and have been able to research that they did not do a good job. They believed what the insurance company gave them and took it. He said they were in sad shape when it came to their facilities. He said they need someone to look out for the County and see what was really out there. He asked for permission, through the Integrity contract, to conduct this audit and come it back before the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Integrity and Phoenix has done work since he has been aboard. He asked if this would be in addition to Integrity’s fee and Mr. Dixon said they will split 20% of the adjusted claim.

Commissioner Hinson said he remembered 4-5 years ago there was a law firm that came and did the same with EMS and said they have a law firm that worked for them and may have the capability to do the same thing.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:59 p.m.*

Commissioner NeSmith asked the Administrator, they were talking about 70-80% of any new resources located by the consultants and Mr. Dixon stated yes. He said they have a deadline of October and Mr. Dixon said it was October 10<sup>th</sup>.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 9:02 p.m.*

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Hinson said, even though he suggested they take off July, he also suggested they come back to work in July to make sure they save money for the County and have staff there. He said he would like to see the RFP go out and meet those deadlines if they came back next week or week after. He wanted to make sure they put RFP out.

Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board and stated they had to be mindful this disaster has already occurred and according to FEMA's guidelines Public Assistance Reimbursement, they cannot be reimbursed if they go out and procure another consulting firm. They already have the contract with this firm and was what FEMA required in getting the contract ahead of the disaster.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he could get that information before making that decision. He said they brought Integrity in and their job was to go out and get grants, etc., not pull in different costs. He felt it was fair to have the information in front of them before making those decisions.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he knew there was a motion and second but the reason he was supporting this, Integrity was brought in to help deal with COVID relief expenditures and this was an entirely different matter that happened in 2018. Now they were saying since Integrity was under contract, if they use whatever they have

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure he understood Ms. Daniels. Whatever the amount of the 20-30% they incur to Phoenix, they have the opportunity to apply for reimbursement of those funds and Mr. Dixon said no. If they have \$1.00 in claims, the County receives .80¢ and they get 20¢ of it. Commissioner NeSmith asked where FEMA came in.

Ms. Daniels said they could not stop administrative costs related to the hurricane through FEMA and would fall under their direct administrative costs.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought it was customary as well, things that affect the budget, they had to have all the information first. This was not properly advertised, they did not receive the information, it was not on the website and they are going to vote on something the citizens did not have the opportunity to look at. It was not properly advertised, was not on the website at all. How could they vote on something they did not have a chance to review?

Commissioner NeSmith said, point of clarification, he asked the attorney if they could legally vote on it and Mr. Knowles stated of course.

Chair Holt said she wanted to say, they were not paying out any money, they would really be receiving money they would not have received.

Commissioner Green thanked her for the clarity but some situations where they may be presented information and not like it but have been elected because they trust sporadic judgment sometimes and they needed to decide and move forward.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Oak Grove Tower Site Generator**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to purchase a Generac 10KW Generator and Automatic Transfer Switch for the Oak Grove Tower Site. That site does not have a generator purchased for it until it could be sized appropriately to the equipment.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. American Tower/Oak Grove Lease Amendment**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the American Tower Corporation Tower Site Lease Amendment for the Gadsden County Radio System. He added for the record, the fiscal impact would be an additional \$298.00 and the total monthly payments would be \$968.30.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12a Approve Funding for the Gadsden County Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Residual Funds**

Mr. Dixon said this item was for approval of the funding of the CARES Act Residual Funds.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR APPROVAL CONTINGENT ON CHANGING THE JOB TITLE OF ONE OF THE NEW POSITIONS FROM ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO COUNTY OPERATIONS COORDINATOR TO CHANGE GRANICUS TO A SOLE SOURCE WEBSITE SERVICE. COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson stated as he said earlier and still stood firm with the statement, \$100,000 was to go to the homeless program and was now being taken out. Then he asked the Board about \$1.4 Million going toward the Small Business program and only have \$100,000-\$200,000 remaining from that and have \$1.2 Million for the residential assistance program because it was difficult for the residents to get into it and they only used about \$400,000-\$500,000 and had a total of \$600,000-\$800,000 remaining. Now they were saying they were not going to do that. They felt it important to put \$150,000 into the Commissioner Chambers redesign and architectural/engineering for shovel ready projects \$200,000; five positions at almost \$350,000 that would be reoccurring costs in the future. He said this was the time they could give funding to the citizens and could not go against his word.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**12b Appointment to the CareerSource Capital Region Board**

Mr. Dixon said this item was for appoint of Commissioner NeSmith to the CareerSource Capital Region Board.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12c Approval of the Addendum to the Gadsden County Broadband Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the next item and said the Clerk asked them to bring back this item for clarity and for them to revote now that it has been signed.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A STATEMENT.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said when he was reading this item, he had questions that needed answers and will say what he says on every item and has already been addressed today. His question on this item was exclusively for clarity and for nothing personal. He has always stated that he did not, have not met nor spoken with anyone with FCI.

- 1) What is the status of the County's verification of the devices previously distributed?
- 2) How many residents did we reach? How many residents said they did not receive a device?
- 3) How many residents said they received a device that did not work?
- 4) How many residents said they received a device and it works?
- 5) Do we have an Excel spreadsheet to show for these determinations?
- 6) Is the County responsible for paying for devices that residents said they did not receive?
- 7) IF FCI's assertion is to have provided devices to residents who responded during verification that they didn't receive them, why should we continue to discussion on any operation with evidence of questionable integrity?
- 8) Finally, now that the school year has ended, businesses are re-opening and overall COVID-19 infection rates have dropped, what is the necessity and urgency for spending almost \$1.7 Million of taxpayer funds for broadband hotspots?

Mr. Dixon said he gave a document this evening of their report on the verification situation. Staff attempted to verify the allocation of 617 devices based on the attestation from Figgers Communication and they wanted to verify their identity, home address, if they received a hotspot, if they did, to get the serial number. Based on those calls:

- **143** devices were acknowledged as received (multiple individuals confirmed receiving two devices).
- Of the 143 confirmed devices received, **32** serial numbers were provided for said devices and were deemed eligible for payment.
- Of the 143 devices received, **16** devices were confirmed operable for minimum of one day and was deemed eligible for payment.
- The remaining **111** devices were unverifiable via serial number and was deemed **ineligible** for device payment and therefore the remaining 111 devices were reported as inoperable/inactive and was deemed **ineligible** for service payment.

**Based on the above verification Figgers Communication is entitled to \$1,253.20 (\$38.60 x 32 devices) in "Device Fees" and \$512.00 (\$32 x 16 Services) in "Service Fees" for a total amount owed by Gadsden County BOCC of \$1,765.20.**

Commissioner Viegbesie stated he had not had the opportunity to see this.

Mr. Dixon said they conducted the survey over time, over days and evenings and where they could, leave contact information, staff was available to receive any information that was sought. If they could not verify by phone, they continued to attempt to contact based on information given for weeks and was as far as they were able to get as far as confirmation.

Commissioner Green said they have a citizen that wanted to be heard regarding this matter.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** re-appeared before the Board. He hoped this was the last time this item would appear on the Agenda. He was hopeful they would approve and move on from this item. He thought the process, as he heard Mr. Dixon speak to the verification process that was in their contract and what they were obligated to do based on what he saw and read was to only pay him for those devices that were verifiable and operational. He believed it was time to move on from this issue and honor the contract. If there were only 18 devices that were operational and he could not justify any more than that, that was what the contract allows. His question was, why is this item still coming up as an agendaed item. He said he has sat through many meetings over the past six months where they have gone back and forth on this particular issue. He felt if he were this vendor, he would be suffering from vendor abuse and it frustrates him as a concerned citizen. It was a waste of taxpayer dollars every meeting to go back and forth on this item. He said he was hopeful they would deal with this tonight, approve this item, live by what was in the contract, respect the vendor, allow him an opportunity to address any issues he needs to address, they had a competent attorney working and they should be held liable for any of the issues that were outside the bounds of this contract. He added that he had the privilege of addressing a group in another County, that Chair gave advice and said they could not vote against the Bishop.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the attorney if he had read this draft of the contract. Mr. Knowles said he wrote it. He stated it was the same document and there were no changes except what the Board requested at the April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Knowles stated the W-9 requirement was removed and the 30-day verification they requested was removed and 100% verification was added.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his concern was, if the assertion was 617 devices were distributed and upon attestation of the asserted item that was distributed was there were only 18 that they were asking to be paid for out of 617. He thought that was a cause to satisfy what have been verified and terminate that particular contract was his position. What they have attested that were provided should be paid and that contract should be revoked and should be cause for termination. When a provider said they have delivered and upon verification they see something totally different and the gap is so wide, to him was questioning the integrity and truthfulness of the deliverables and services provided and was a cause to terminate. He had no problem to pay what has been verified and to end the contract and it not be placed on the agenda any more. By doing so, they have honored the request of Bishop Green.

Chair Holt said they were going to vote and asked the will of the Board. Commissioner NeSmith said they had a motion and second. Chair Holt asked the will of the Board, they had a motion and second.

**THE BOARD VOTED BY VOICE VOTE AND NOT EVERYONE STATED 'AYE'. CHAIR HOLT STATED THE ITEM PASSED 5-0.**

Commissioner Viegbesie stated they were voting for the Addendum. Chair Holt said they already had the contract signed and needed to make sure they were voting for the contract. She said to the Attorney to remember what the Clerk said, you voted for the Addendum. Mr. Knowles stated they had approved the Agreement, they had not approved the Addendum. She said she wanted to make sure so there was no problem when they come back. Mr. Dixon said if there was a question, to approve the Agreement and Addendum.

Chair Holt asked for a motion to approve the Agreement.

Commissioner NeSmith asked point of clarification, was it on the agenda.

Chair Holt stated it had already been approved one time, they were just doing it for redundancy. She asked for a motion for approval of the Contract and Addendum.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT AND ADDENDUM AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED THE MOTION.**

**12d Cochran Road SCRAP Construction Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12e Board Approval of the Sub-Grant Agreement Number Z2622 for Hurricane Sally and Authorize Staff to Accept and Execute the Agreement in the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) Automated Grant System**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval for the Sub-Grant Agreement Number Z2622 for Hurricane Sally and for authorization for staff to accept and execute the agreement in the Division of Emergency Management Automated Grant System.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**13. Updates**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**14. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said there will not be a meeting for the month of July and asked for a Proclamation honoring June Immigrant Heritage Month.



**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

He reminded them that Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> was the Budget Workshop.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**15. Updates**

Mr. Knowles stated he had no updates.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**16. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson thanked the citizens for their strength during the pandemic and asked for updates on the virus at every meeting. Mr. Dixon said Dr. Cooksey has agreed to come on Tuesday nights and provide an update.

He asked the status on Midway for the mailboxes being moved on Brickyard Road. Mr. Dixon said Mr. Lee and his staff has been in touch with DOT.

Justin Ford, Dewberry, said this was a DOT project. The County's hands have been out of it. He said the concerns were raised originally by the City of Midway and they were put in touch with DOT and did not get the answer they were looking for. Ultimately, it is not the County's decision. DOT's stance is the brick mailboxes within the clear zone they don't allow it. The County, over the years have allowed them to be constructed in that area, but if DOT is paying for those to be relocated, they will not pay for that brick mailbox to be removed and replaced. Mr. Dixon said for the record, if it was on that side of the ditch and is a brick mailbox, it is illegal.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned this is Mental Health Awareness Month.

**Subcontracting Lawn Services**

He said they had talked about this and might need to have a special meeting within the next two weeks because the grass was growing heavily all over the County. He asked for this to go on the Agenda.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Administrator, Staff and Public Works and said the community was looking much better. He thanked Ms. Bradley for keeping up with the schedule and Ms. Robinson for keeping up with the training he has to attend.

He said he also met with one of the City of Quincy Commissioners and asked if they could establish a consortium. Mr. Dixon said the Managers have agreed to sit down and talk along with a representative of each body to start a conversation. He said they had met with the City of Quincy within the past few weeks as well as the School District on broadband and other

issues and certainly appreciated the cooperation. He said there will be a meeting with the School district on Thursday regarding the broadband.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green thanked those that participated in Shiloh Day.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR THE TAU PSI ZETA CHAPTER OF THE ZETA PHI BETA SORORITY AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. (MOTION WAS PREVIOUSLY MADE AT JUNE 1, 2021 MEETING.)**

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie made a request and said at one point in the past, they had an email group for citizens of the County, when Ulysses Jenkins and Olivia Smith was PIO. They had a email batch of citizens and when information was sent out, it also went out to that group of citizens and if still have email bank, suggested they continue to use it. If they no longer have the list or have access to what was put together then because of changes in Administration and PIO’s, asked they try to find a way to collect and email a group of citizens across the County so when there are things going on and announcements need to be made, they could get information out. He said he has found the information was no longer getting out as it was in the past and they may not have access to that email bank.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt asked if the Administrator if they had a Development and Review Committee. She said that was something some other counties had when there was a large development coming. Another thing, they talked about churches not having to do the paving, they may want to consider to increase the size of the ditch so water would slope that way.

She said Commissioner Hinson mentioned about a cutting crew and she wanted to look at road striping in District 4.

Also, when cities annex, they need to look at them taking or not taking the roads. Mr. Knowles said he was working on it.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
June 15, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:06 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 17, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Hannah Pope, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Ms. Daniels called the workshop to order at 4:02 p.m. Chair Holt asked for a moment of silence then she led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

***Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.***

***If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email***

***[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.***

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

Commissioner Viegbesie informed the Board of the time he needed to leave. Then he read the above statement.

*Commissioner NeSmith exited the workshop at 4:04 p.m.*

*Commissioner NeSmith returned to the workshop at 4:05 p.m.*

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. [Introduction / Summary Highlights \(Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator\)](#)**

Mr. Dixon came before the board to thank them for appearing at this budget meeting. He informed the board that he would be leaving early due to an unforeseen ailment. Commissioner Viegbesie stated this is why Mr. Dixon had a very capable Assistant County Administrator.

Mr. Dixon stated that Ms. Daniels will be stepping into his place to run the workshop. This was going to be an informational on how staff has gotten to this point and what staff sees for the Constitutionals. He stated that the Constitutional Officers have turned in their budgets and those budgets will not be growing that much since the County’s revenue sources were limited. Staff will be walking the Commissioners through the available revenue sources and hoped to give them options. Mr. Dixon stated that he hoped they would not just look at the short-term projects but

the long-term projects as well as policies that affect long-term plans such as the dirt road policy and how that affects the citizens.

Ms. Daniels then came before the board to inform the board regarding the budget process.

**1. Funds Balance Summary**

Ms. Daniels stated that page one (1) showed the fund balances of the major funds as of September 30, 2020. The amounts that are presented for the fund balances are what has been determined by the auditors. She stated that the General Fund has \$5.4 Million dollars in it. Then she stated the General fund has \$3.5 Million dollars unassigned and \$1.8 Million dollars that were already assigned to certain projects. Ms. Daniels stated the amounts of the following funds:

- The Transportation fund has \$2.8 Million dollars which comes from the gas tax.
- The CARES fund has \$2.7 Million dollars which includes the \$1.7 Million set aside for broadband funding.
- The Emergency Medical Services fund has \$538 Thousand dollars.
- The Library fund has \$277 Thousand dollars.
- The Fire fund has \$644 Thousand dollars.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 4:13 p.m.*

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the Commissioners were allowed to ask questions at this time.

Chair Holt in response asked Ms. Daniels what would be easier for her. Ms. Daniels stated they could ask questions while the presentation was going on.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the \$3,584,011 unassigned section of the general fund was a part of the County's reserves.

Ms. Daniels stated that was the general fund and County did not technically have a Reserve Fund. The General fund has been considered the Reserve historically. She stated that this amount could be used in an emergency or the Board could pull some of that money out to budget it for the next fiscal year.

Commissioner NeSmith asked was there a carryover from the previous years. Ms. Daniels stated that it could be from previous years or it could be from building up that amount from 20 years ago. Commissioner NeSmith asked was the amount in Reserves what was collected this year. Ms. Daniels stated no, that it is a cumulative amount from over the years.

Commissioner NeSmith asked based on the reserves right now "where are we". Ms. Daniels stated the auditors said that it is recommended that the County have two months of reserves to cover the operating expenditures. The current amount is a just above that amount.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how was the amount that was in reserves currently related to the amount that has historically been in the account.

Chair Holt stated that very seldom do they drop below that amount that is in the account now. There was a time where the General Fund was below that amount. She stated that the County needs more than what is in the account since it only can cover a little over 2 months of the County expenditures. The County needs to have enough in reserves to be able to run for three months in case of natural disasters.

Commissioner NeSmith stated so in order to protect the citizens the County needs to have a significant reserve. He asked Chair Holt how significant has the reserve account been and what was the highest amount that was in the reserves at one point.

Chair Holt stated that depends when they get the taxes in because when it comes in, it may sit at a higher amount. Yet, this is before all of the money that has not been paid out which covers the bills. That Board has to account for whatever may happen. The one thing that the Board needs to think about is how the General fund balance may change due to Covid. She stated that was another impact that has to be taken into account when discussing these funds because the County may not get any more federal dollars to assist in the relief.

Commissioner Green asked how does the County get from where it is currently to where it needs to be regarding the reserves.

Ms. Daniels stated that the Board decides the amount that is acceptable and start setting aside a reasonable amount of money to increase the balance until that goal is reached.

Commissioner Hinson was called upon via Zoom platform and due to technical difficulty had to restate his statement. Commissioner Hinson stated the best person for the two (2) new commissioners to discuss the budget with was the Clerk of Court (Nicholas Thomas) and see/speak with the Finance personnel. Those individuals could help the Commissioners navigate this process. He stated that other than when hurricane Michel happened the General fund balance was over \$5 Million dollars, and that the funds dropped because of that unforeseen cost.

Chair Holt asked if they could pull those numbers.

Ms. Daniels stated that certainly they could. She stated, to clarify, aside from making the commitment to place money in the reserves, any money that is not spent from the different budgets can go to reserve. That is if those funds are not assigned for any other uses or other departments have not over spent from their budgets. She stated anything that is not allocated, could be placed into reserves.

Commissioner Viegbesie reiterated what Ms. Daniels stated if there is amount that has not been spent it goes into the General funds. He suggested that the Board create their own assigned expenditures categories to show what is in the assigned General fund. He

stated that it could be confusing to the public since they can see that there is \$5.4 Million in the general fund, yet \$1.8 Million is already assigned for different projects.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the line items that were for positions that have not been filled, would those salaries designated for those positions go into the General fund?

Ms. Daniels stated that it depended, if that position was vacant and did not get filled, that was a salary saved. There may be where someone has been hired but may have been hired based on their qualifications and their experience may have been a little higher than what was budgeted for that position. Sometimes there is an offset there. Anything that is not spent in the current year's budget, automatically falls to Fund balance if it is not assigned to something else.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what was the percentage of staffed personnel.

Ms. Daniels stated that the County was pretty much fully staffed and that most of the unstaffed positions were in the library system. She stated there is a lot of extra advertising that has been done this past year for different meetings and different public hearings, more so than has been done in the past, due to COVID. But there has been savings in travel since they have not done a lot of that. This means that there have been funds pulled from the remaining amounts from other budgets to cover those costs.

**2. Ad Valorem Tax Revenue Summary**

Ms. Daniels stated at the first workshop there was a summary of the Ad Valorem Taxes and estimate of the growth in the property evaluations. The preliminary property evaluation has been given by the Property Appraiser for the County as of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Based on that, they made an assumption that the property values would rise by approximately 5 ½% this year but did better. They went up by 7.3%. She stated based on those evaluations on the \$1.6 Billion dollars, the County would generate around \$937,000 extra dollars for the next fiscal year. Staff has to budget the Ad Valorem Taxes at a 95 percent collection rate since there are some portions of property taxes that they will not be able to collect. She stated that this is if the Board to decides to keep the taxes at the current millage rate.

**3. Major Revenue Sources Update**

Ms. Daniels stated that staff took a look at the major revenue sources for the General fund as well as other funds to see where they projected they would end the fiscal year with the Gas Tax, Ad Valorem Taxes, State Revenue Sharing, Telecommunication Tax, and others that were their major revenue sources. Staff has budgeted \$26,585,508 and projecting that the County will collect a little over \$26 Million. These are projections off of how the County has collected money in the past. She stated that a majority of the Ad Valorem Tax is collected in November because most people pay early to get the discount on those taxes. She stated at this time, Ad Valorem taxes were trickling in.

Chair Holt asked the Commissioners if they see the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in the top corner in the Ad Valorem taxes. The reason that they are in parentheses was They collect the tax, the County does not. She stated since the Board has nothing to

do with them, they can ask for a report on the CRA's. She stated that if you were to look "across the street" with the upgrades, that is the CRAs taking effect.

Commissioner Green asked how often does the County get CRA reports and could it be requested for the them to give a detailed report.

Chair Holt stated that the CRAs have been very confrontational topics of conversation in the past. They do not have to give the County updates on the CRA. The County can set up CRAs as well to be able to capture tax revenue.

Commissioner NeSmith asked in addition to Commissioner Green's question, does the County contribute to the CRA.

Chair Holt stated that they get the money before the County receives any money from taxes.

Ms. Daniels stated that the State freezes property taxes at whatever the taxable value may be and whatever property taxes come out of this area at this given date is what is going to be given to the County as taxes. Anything over that amount is placed into CRA's for them to revitalize the area. Since it is given directly to them the County does not get reports on those funds unless it is requested. She stated that it would just be property taxes that would be accounted for in the budget if those CRA's were not in place.

Chair Holt stated that the problem is when the funds are disbursed and there has been no sign of production. When asking for signs of production from them is not the County trying to stop the CRA's but asking for signs of accountability.

Commissioner Green stated he had served on the CRA Board for Quincy. He stated they are very approachable on letting the County know what is going on with the projects. The transformation of the facelift that is taking place on the square as of now has had painters and other workers working on the buildings, he knows that they are working.

Chair Holt stated the City of Quincy has improved a lot since the last time.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that one of the things that happened when he was in Tallahassee was the downtown area was not part of the CRA. Yet, there was need for improvement in the downtown area so there were changes in the map to include some parts of downtown. It became controversial since it took money from the lesser economic areas of Tallahassee. That is some part of the agreement when approaching the CRA's that the Board wants to help with. They would need to annex the area for it to be a part of the CRA. He asked if they have to annex for it to be a part of the CRA.

Chair Holt stated she did not think so.



Commissioner Viegbesie stated that was something that could be a part of the collaboration with the CRA and have an approved quality of some of the areas that really need help.

*Commissioner NeSmith exited the workshop at 4:47 p.m.*

#### **4. Potential Revenue Options**

Ms. Daniels stated this portion of the budget presentation was to see the possible tax increases for potential revenue options. The Board may want to look into using the Local Option Fuel Tax (1-5%) and the unrealized rate (5%) would produce \$1,145,540 in revenue. Yet, some of the Local Option Fuel Tax revenue would have to go to the municipalities. The Ninth Cent Fuel Tax is not currently in place and the unrealized revenue would be \$245,827. There could be an increase in the Tourist Development Tax which would be one (1) percent with an unrealized revenue of \$208,625. She stated that there are other options such as an increase in the property tax rate, imposing a fee assessment, and CARE funds. The Board could also pay off the library debt and re-use pledged revenue.

Commissioner Green asked when would the Board make the consideration of the options.

Ms. Daniels stated the Board has to adopt the preliminary millage rate at the second Board meeting in August. Once the Board adopts the preliminary millage rate the Board could decrease the amount but the Board may not increase the amount once it has been voted on.

*Commissioner NeSmith returned to the workshop at 4:51 p.m.*

Ms. Daniels stated that the Board needs voter approval for Local Option Fuel Tax and the ninth cent sales tax to be implemented.

Commissioner Green asked if they decided to utilize or adopt the Local Option Fuel Tax, was there a timeframe to place on the Agenda.

Ms. Daniels stated it was a ballot issue and probably would not have time for this upcoming budget but was something they could look at for the future.

Commissioner Green asked if this was approved, would some of that fund go into the Reserves.

Ms. Daniels stated that Ninth Cent and Local Option Fuel Tax was restricted to the Transportation fund. Those types of taxes are implemented to improve the conditions of the roads and bridges.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if both required a referendum, even though there may not be time to include the referendum for approval of this budget, did it matter?

Ms. Daniels stated that it depended on what the referendum said of when the County could begin collection.

Commissioner NeSmith stated so it can be structured into the referendum and Ms. Daniels stated that was correct.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated there was enough time as the election was not until 2022 and the General Election was in November. The good thing was, this is a tax that those who pay, is called "Economics Benefit Principal Tax" so most of this was generated on I-10 by those traveling and stopping at Flying J and Pilot. The Board would have to sell why this tax would be beneficial for the citizens. The reason that the hospital tax was not executed properly was because the promises were too lofty. This is how the County can fix the roads that are in dire need of repair.

Chair Holt stated what would be heard is the County did not do what was promised last time this tax was imposed. She stated that a "good why" is needed to get the tax passed and an example could be to get rid of the dirt roads and pave them. The Board has to have the whole County pass the referendum so it must resonate with all of the County. They must have a good marketing plan in order to pull the votes and if not, would be running a Referendum that was doomed to fail.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that those experiences allow for new growth and planning from the Board. There are some major challenges regarding all the roads in District 3. The Board needs to look at all available revenue sources to get "boots on the ground" types of projects to provide safe roads for the citizens. This is a basic function of government to make sure that the people have safe and navigable roads to travel on. He stated that he would like to begin seriously looking into that.

**5. Constitutional Officers FY21/22 Budget Requests**

Ms. Daniels stated that the Clerk of Court has a 9% increase in the 2022 budget compared to the 2021 budget amount.

Chair Holt asked for clarification on those increases.

Ms. Daniels stated that staff is looking into clarifying what the Constitutional Officers were requesting at this time.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if Staff could work with the Constitutional Officers to get itemized requests, they could work with them. This is so each item can be discussed for the approval process and not just lump sum amounts.

Mr. Knowles interjected that the fuel tax can be approved by the Board via referendum or by majority plus one vote, not necessarily by ballot.

Chair Holt asked if that was the Ninth Cent or the Local Option Fuel Tax.

Mr. Knowles stated that was the Local Option Fuel Tax. He stated that it is located in Florida Statute 336.025(3)(b).

Chair Holt stated that the people will be coming for the Board if they passed a vote like that. She stated that if an increase is done it should be done via referendum.

Commissioner NeSmith asked so the best approach was via referendum and Chair Holt answered that was correct. Commissioner NeSmith asked what passes the referendum. Chair Holt stated she thought was "50 plus one". The best person to ask was the Supervisor of Elections because she would know the percentages.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if Mr. Knowles would know since it was a Statute.

Mr. Knowles stated the statute Commissioner NeSmith was referring to stated it must be by referendum, which meant a 60% requirement.

Chair Holt stated that anything dealing with a vote should come from the Supervisor if looking at a referendum.

Mr. Knowles stated that the super majority is for the Board and the referendum is for the citizens.

Chair Holt stated that the best thing is to market to the public and allow them the opportunity.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated the reason he said 60% was because there were some State referendums that have failed due to the percentages. The 60% is the goal for the State and did not know about the percent needed for local approval.

Chair Holt stated that its two-thirds (2/3) on the state level and on the lower level those in charge of voting "looks at what the majority wants". She stated that she wanted clarity from the Constitutional Officers because there has been issues with raises amongst the different offices of the county.

Ms. Daniels stated that county staff has that information yet it is not provided here.

Ms. Daniels proceeded with the remaining percentages for increase in the budgets for Constitutional Officers:

- Property Appraiser 6%
- Sheriff 11%
- Supervisor of Elections 25%
- Tax Collector 0%.

She stated that the Supervisor of Elections has a mandate to provide updated election equipment and that is included in the request. Also, that the Tax Collector has a different time frame for submittals than the rest of the Constitutional Officers.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if that is a mandate for the Supervisor of Elections is funded or not funded.

Ms. Daniels stated that it is not funded so the county must come up with the funds to meet the state mandate requirements.

#### **6. New County-Wide Positions**

Ms. Daniels stated that these are the new positions that the Board approved from the CARES Act funding. The following are the positions and the budgeted salaries:

- Government Operations Coordinator \$ 65,000
- Grants Coordination (Contractual Services currently) \$ 50,000
- Grants Monitor \$ 50,000
- Senior Housing Specialist/ SHIP \$ 45,000
- Communication Tech/Motorola \$ 58,000
- Budget Technician/OMS \$ 36,720

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if that totaled \$313,720 that they had to work into Personnel Operations budget and Ms. Daniels answered yes.

#### **7. Departmental FY21 vs FY22**

Ms. Daniels stated that last pages of the presentation are the departmental budgets that are being looked at, and these have not been recommended, just things that have been requested by the Department. She stated if they looked at the very last page, they would find the totals for the fiscal year for all departments was \$51,265,374 and the requests equate to \$52,858,873. These are requests and have not been approved at this time. The amounts will be in a fluctuating state until the budget is approved.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this amount took into consideration the percentage increase requested by the Constitutional Officers as well as the new positions. Ms. Daniels stated that she believed so. Commissioner Viegbesie stated that the request is reflected in the \$52.8 Million and Ms. Daniels answered yes.

Chair Holt stated there are improvements or projects that may be cut in order to have the budget balance. The State needs the budget on time and it has to be balanced. In order to have some of the projects funded the County is going to need to receive grants.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that the budget reflected the County's values, goals, and vision. He stated that the Board needed to generate new revenue so the County could provide resources for the citizens. Right now, those resources are not in place to give the citizens an enhanced quality of life.

Chair Holt stated right now the County has a good Board and they need to go to work on getting those resources.

Commissioner Green stated the County may be able to use those proposed revenue sources. He stated he was excited about the grant writer position that is being created.

Chair Holt stated once that money comes in someone has to say where it goes and meeting those deadlines was a job in itself. The Board needed to pull all contracts and check to see if those contracts were providing good products. The Board did not have a minority or local preference on contracts and that was something the County needed. Chair Holt asked Ms. Daniels if enterprise zones were still in effect. Ms. Daniels stated she would have to do research on that issue.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that Former Governor Rick Scott removed enterprise zones. Also, that Enterprise Zone and Development Agency is different now than when those were instated.

Chair Holt stated when businesses were in enterprise zones, the government paid for a portion of their wages if they came from low-income areas. This was used to hire more people in those areas. That larger farms were now being broken up and turned into subdivisions. If the developers are not putting in roads, you will still have the same problem, if not worse. When those developments are being built instead of waiting years to do that may aid in the dirt road problem. She stated that the Board's conduct needs improvement. Due to the behavior of the Board, businesses do not want to work with the County. Business people have stated they have been embarrassed on how the Board acted.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that Commissioners are getting emails from citizens and businesses that are not getting to Administration. He urged the Commissioners to please forward emails from personal emails to the Administrator's office. He stated that staff and commissioners should also be looking for funding. The grant writer should not be the only person looking for funds needed for projects. Also, once individuals find grants, they should inform the grant writer of them as well.

Chair Holt stated that they need to send those messages to the Administrator's office in case those emails are subpoenaed. She also stated that small grants may not be worth the grant writer's time.

Ms. Daniels stated that all departments are always looking for grants. "These revenues and expenditures are early in the game." She stated that some of the revenues are not known until July 1<sup>st</sup> and that starts the clock for the budget development process. The budget has to be completed by September 30. The other thing is the personnel expenses, which staff still needs to get the new FRS (Florida Retirement System) rates and medical insurance rates. The amounts for those line items in the budget are preliminary at this time.

**2. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction**

Ms. Daniels stated that staff needed direction from the Board regarding Non-Profits and how did the Board want to aid those programs. She stated that direction is needed on how staff will handle the process. Did the Board want staff to take applications from the nonprofits and bring it before the Board? She stated that Leon County has a human services board that takes staff and commissioners out of the process so it is not seen as biased.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that this issue needs a workshop to determine the process. Commissioner Viegbesie stated Leon County officials visit the nonprofits and sees what services the nonprofit provides. He stated there is not enough time to create a program like this for this fiscal year, and determine the amount of funds the nonprofits could receive.

Commissioner Green asked if there was a little bit more detail of how the process for nonprofits are normally ran. Also, what was the amount that is typically appropriated for the nonprofits.

Ms. Daniels stated there was never a specific amount appropriated for the nonprofits.

Chair Holt stated that the nonprofits would present the program to the Board and then they would possibly approve funds for them. She stated that having an outside force to divvy up allotted funds would be better so the Board is not seen as biased. The staff could get the program ready for a trial period then the Board could decide if it would remain active.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that nonprofits have the ability to apply for funding through the Recovery Act and Ms. Daniels stated that was correct. Commissioner NeSmith stated there was time to create a program for the future and take the time needed to make it a success. He asked if the Recovery Act had a way of disbursing the funds to the nonprofits.

Ms. Daniels stated that was correct. This was to get direction regarding the nonprofits and how the Board was willing to address this issue.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that the Commissioners needed aides. Chair Holt stated Human Resources stated they had to be an employee, had to be accountable, and follow other things. She then stated she did not know how they would be able to afford it. There were five of them and if one Commissioner had one, every Commissioner would have to have one. Commissioner NeSmith said they came up with a strategic plan and it stated they would help the people. In order to help the people, there are more and more events, they were being asked to attend more events. There are meetings with Commissioners that are being requested, Commissioners work during the day and there are still citizens that have needs. The budget is a reflection of their priorities and their priorities were the people and the people have needs. They need help in moving the County forward because the County was behind.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated his recommendation to staff was to explore the Leon County model for nonprofits. He commended Commissioner NeSmith's passion, other Counties have it. He said "the grass is always greener on the other side; the water bill is also higher on the other side". Chair Holt stated it was also greener over the septic tank.

Chair Holt asked what the Medicaid costs were and Ms. Daniels stated right at \$1 Million. Chair Holt stated that the County does not receive any of that money back if that Medicaid card was not used in the County. All of the citizens are going to Tallahassee to receive medical care.

Ms. Daniels stated that she had a few announcements before the workshop adjourned. There will be a policy update on the dirt road policy and if the Commissioners want to get the roads paved, those roads will have to be brought up to certain standards before it could be taken into the County's inventory. There will be an update on the Reserve policy so they have a goal in mind they will be working toward. Also, they were looking for direction regarding the multipurpose complex and if they wanted to start setting aside money for that because even if they were able to get some grant funding, it would probably require a match from the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they were talking about the dirt road policy or private road adoption and Ms. Daniels stated it was dirt road private roads.

Mr. Knowles stated he and Mr. Dixon had been working on that and the problem now is if you want to annex a road into the County there had to be a certain amount of "fix-up" work and a lot of times the owners of those roads do not have the funds to get the roads up to standards.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER DISCUSSION, CHAIR HOLT ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AT 5:51 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 6, 2021 AT 1:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the Emergency Meeting, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

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

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

There were no citizens that requested to speak.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Approval of Resolution 2021-027**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above Resolution 2021-027 regarding Emergency Management and said Major Shawn Wood was present to speak on this matter.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON STATED HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE PRESENTATION.**

**Major Shawn Wood, Director of Emergency Management**, appeared before the Board. He stated after 17 years, FRS has told him he has to retire. He introduced Tashonda Whaley.

Ms. Whaley appeared before the Board and said while the County was not in the cone, a slight shift to the west could impact the County. There are several roads under construction, it was very important to take pictures as they are now in case of damage during the emergency.



Chair Holt said there was already a Motion and Second and called for the vote.

**CHAIR HOLT SAID THERE WAS ALREADY A MOTION AND SECOND AND CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Chair Holt also said BOCC was responsible for Emergency Management

Commissioner Hinson said that was why he had tried to get in touch with Mr. Dixon. He heard Major Woods was retiring. He felt they needed to have a meeting to interview for the job. Chair Holt said the contact they have now is with the Sheriff's Department, not an individual. Commissioner Hinson said the Board needs to approve the person put in charge.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson raised an interesting issue, since Major Woods was here and has been here for his length of time, he asked him a question.

Major Woods said he has been the Director for approximately eight years and the County changed the policy. The Sheriff picks someone and the Board approves it.

Commissioner Green thanked Major Woods for the service he provided to the County over the years and have also witnessed Ms. Whaley and believed they would be in great hands.

Chair Holt said it was almost right, but kind of wrong. She said the process comes from the Board going down. It was like a contractor; they contract with Motorola, etc. The Board has to be in charge.

Mr. Dixon said they have a number of contracts like that; the Department of Health was like that.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was about to say what the Chair just said. The Chair is the spokesperson for the Board.

Chair Holt said if the Chair was not there and the Resolution was not signed, the County could not get paid for it. The Chair has to sign the paperwork.

Commissioner NeSmith also commended Major Woods for the phenomenal job he has done. He said also, FAC has New Commissioners Orientation but the County does not have any orientation for new Commissioners. He asked that something be created for the future so they know the intricacies of what to do.

Chair Holt said none of them have had that. They get sworn in and get right to work and she felt that was a good idea.

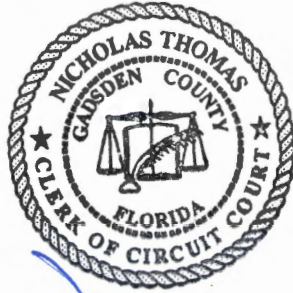
Commissioner Hinson asked for a Proclamation for Corrine Herring. Chair Holt said they could only vote on the Emergency Resolution. He said he also went to conference and was why he had a pleather of knowledge about it. He asked the Board to consider having a meeting in July, there were a lot of issues going on that needed to be addressed.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
July 6, 2021 – Emergency Meeting

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:34 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

**AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 27, 2021 AT  
10:00 A.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD,  
VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda A. Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2 - Absent  
Eric Hinson, District 1-Absent  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m., led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag and then asked for a moment of silence.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the Agenda.

**UPON MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 3-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

**Awards, Presentations and Appearances**

None

**CONSENT**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD**

Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator’s Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on Monday, July 26, 2021. 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.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**It appeared that Commissioner Hinson had joined the meeting by Zoom, but no-one was able to hear him in the Chambers.**

1. **Approval of the application submission of the State-Funded Small County Emergency Operations Center Design Initiative Grant F0073**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval of the application submission of the State-Funded Small County Emergency Operations Center Design Initiative Grant. He said the amount of the award of this grant was \$200,000 and was a cost reimbursement agreement.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the cost reimbursement agreement. Mr. Dixon explained the County must spend the money first and get reimbursed, up to \$200,000.

Commissioner Green asked about the project design. Mr. Dixon stated they would hire an architect firm to design it. They already had the plans from Wakulla County and another county that has already gone through this and may be a minimal situation.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they had to do an RFP for the engineering firm or design firm or bid it out?

Chair Holt asked if they were using a design that was used by someone else, was there a need for a bid? Mr. Dixon said he was unsure at how that would work, but would find out. He said they were not looking at a single building but co-locating buildings of like uses and perhaps could co-locate an EOC, EMS and a COVID Shelter into a single multi-use facility. They were looking at all the options.

**Tashonda Whaley, Emergency Management Gadsden County Sheriff's Office**, appeared before the Board. She said other counties have already started this process. The grant actually came down in 2019 but COVID happened and it stalled in a lot of counties.

Commissioner Green asked if this was just for the design plan or in talking about location or places to put the center, could it possibly be at the old Stevens School? She said in speaking with FDEM Bureau Chief and other counties that were already doing it, they felt initially they would retro-fit a building already standing. However, now they felt they were moving toward a new facility and as the Administrator stated, could use as multi-purpose and was what lot of counties were doing to cohabitate for EMS, Sheriff's Office, EOC as long as it did not interfere with the everyday operations of Emergency Management and activation of the EOC, they were fine with it.

Chair Holt asked for them to try to contact Commissioner Hinson, because it showed he was on and she did not want him to not be able to comment if he wished to do so. She asked they text him to ask that he call in.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Ms. Whaley if she was familiar with the operations center in Tallahassee? She said yes. Was the County planning to have a multi-purpose operations center? Mr. Dixon said was why they talked about a co-location and there was a minimum standard of who had to be in the room. The unit they currently have was too small, too old and was why they really needed this grant. They will be building a new facility and will be designed to hold all those people in-house. Mr. Dixon said they were planning to build new facility that was 300,000 square feet, it might come to Quincy, or at least to Midway and did not think it was off the table, the County just may be low on the list. It had to be centrally located to Tallahassee with easy

access and would have to get big trucks in with the staging equipment. He said it was not just a building, they were talking the staging to go with it.

Ms. Whaley said even though this was just for the architectural design, the reason the State was doing this was so when monies come down to actually build, the counties that have done this will have the opportunity to get funds also.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:19 A.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA



  
BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners


ATTEST:

  
NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk

AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 3, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4-arrived late  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5 – appeared remotely  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

 Vice Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*


*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*


**PUBLIC HEARING:**


**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**2. Introduction**

 Mr. Dixon said they would talk today about the big picture, they were going to discuss the TRIM Notice and the process from this point on. He said they will be meeting individually and collectively as they see opportunities that will present themselves. He said there were re-allocation of dollars they were looking at and wanted to make sure they were hitting the vision the Board was laying out.

*Chair Holt arrived at 4:12 p.m.*


 **Georgette Daniels, Asst. County Administrator**, appeared before the Board. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, they received the certified taxable values that came out and did not have any meetings during the month of July and was presenting that to the Board today. They have not finalized the final budget yet, this was preliminary requests. She then gave a history of the fund balance.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked about fund balance between 2018-2019 and if they had to reach into fund balance to recover from the hurricane.


Chair Holt said she knew had overtime pay but was not sure where funds were gotten. They did have assistance from FEMA and the State. Commissioner Viegbesie said they were reimbursed and replenished what was taken for overtime. Chair Holt said there were several things they applied for and some could still be applied for.


Commissioner NeSmith said in reference to the Asst. County Administrator's statement that sometimes they have to reach into fund balance to balance the general fund, was that the primary reason why they have to reach into it sometimes? Chair Holt said they do not always know what may happen, any emergency could come up but was not something they normally have to do.


### **3. Summary Highlights**


 Ms. Daniels said the Millage rate has remained slack from 2008 until now. She said they have to set the millage rate today and it could be lowered after today but could not be raised. If they keep it at the current rate, they will receive approximately \$1 Million.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked about the millage rate.

 Commissioner Green asked if he heard correctly that they could not raise it but could lower. Ms. Daniels explained they would have to raise it today if they chose to do that. She further explained they could raise it later but would have to send out corrected TRIM notices and would have to send out new TRIM notices to every property owner at BOCC's expense.


 Commissioner NeSmith wanted to understand this was the last day to raise and they could also reduce the millage rate up to the last public hearing in September.


 Commissioner Viegbesie wanted to state on record, should they decide to set the Millage Rate at a higher rate, it does not mean they have decided to raise the millage rate for the County. He said they were doing this for precautionary reason to be safe and, if they need to, they could do so but he was not saying it will be raised.

 Commissioner Green asked if she could explain the possible benefits if they decide to raise the rate. Ms. Daniels said it would be an increase in revenue that the County could collect.

 Ms. Daniels said this was setting the tentative millage rate and it had to be done within 35 days of receiving the certified taxable values from the Property Appraiser's Office and this was the 34<sup>th</sup> day. She further explained the Department of Revenue was very serious with their time schedule and they had to adhere to that schedule and if not, it would put in jeopardy the ability to collect shared revenue.


 Chair Holt said she did not remember ever not meeting the deadline.

 Commissioner NeSmith said this was the 34<sup>th</sup> day and the deadline was 35<sup>th</sup> day. Ms. Daniels explained there were no meetings in July.

 Chair Holt said if they did increase, they normally have a focus as to what they want to do with it.


 Ms. Daniels said everything was ready, they were just waiting on the vote.


### **Fund Balance Summary**

 Ms. Daniels said in looking at some of major revenues and how they anticipate they will end the fiscal year. With Ad Valorem, they collected a little more than budgeted and was good there. With the Ad Valorem or property tax revenue, they get the majority of that in November because most property owners have some type of mortgage on their property and was paying through escrow with the mortgage loan company and they take advantage of the discount.

### **Community Redevelopment Agency**


She said there were two in Quincy; one in Midway; and one in Havana. The intent is to take a blighted area and revitalize it and was usually downtown areas. She said they have received approximately \$12.6 Million in revenue.


 Chair Holt said they have CRA contracts and have not checked them in a while.


 Ms. Daniels said there was a contract and was for certain number of years and it is usually for 20-30 years. Once that timeframe is ending, the County can agree to enter into a new agreement with the CRA or they could let it sunset. She said she could bring back information.

Commissioner NeSmith asked where the two CRA's were located within the City of Quincy. Chair Holt said, like Ms. Daniels had stated, it was in blighted areas. He asked if there were two separate Boards and Chair Holt explained there was one Board.


Ms. Daniels said they could bring that back as there was one more workshop scheduled.

 She said they also looked at things like the State Sharing revenue and where they were with collections. She added there was a little lag time when they were receiving it from the State. She added they were looking to finish the year a little ahead of what was budgeted.

 Commissioner NeSmith asked Ms. Daniels if this was what was projected for the 2021-2022 year and she said this was for the current year to give everyone an update.

 She said they were projecting the ½ cent sales tax to be a little better than what was budgeted as well.


### **Ad Valorem Tax Revenue Summary**

 She said at the last budget workshop, there was some areas they were not exploring that they could to get some additional revenue and the chart gave them an idea if they decided to explore some of those areas and how much revenue it would generate. On the Property Tax revenue, they were currently at 8.9064 and if they went to 10 mills, they would get approximately \$2.8 Million. On the State Sharing revenue, they were where they could be with



that. With the Local Option Gas Tax, they were already utilizing 1-6¢ portion and could generate up to \$1.1 Million if they went with 5¢, they have the option there if they increased it 1¢, they would get \$230,000; with 2¢ they would get \$450,000; with 3¢ they would get \$680,000; with 4¢ it would be \$900,000 and 5¢ they would get \$1.1 Million.


 Commissioner NeSmith asked with the State Revenue Sharing, was \$850,000 all the County received?


 Chair Holt said it depended on if it was a good year and how well the lobbyists were working. Ms. Daniels said they currently were budgeted at \$821,000 and was projecting they would receive approximately \$860,000 this year. She also said it was based on the spending in the State and how much sales tax revenue was being collected by the State.


Chair Holt explained it depended on what the economy looked like and how the distributions were being done because if you were a fiscally constrained county, it would not generate high taxes.

Commissioner Viegbesie also explained one of the factors that determined what each county received from revenue sharing was the population of the County and was why it was so important to turn in the census data. The smaller the population, your share of the revenue sharing would be less, even at the national level. Ms. Daniels said they also receive a distribution for being a fiscally constrained County.


Ms. Daniels said the other area they would be able to receive additional funds was the County Fuel tax. The maximum tax rate was 1¢ and they currently taxed at 1¢ and there was no room there. The only other was the 9<sup>th</sup> cent motor fuel tax; the maximum tax rate and they were not currently utilizing that tax. If they were to levy the 1¢ tax, they could receive \$245,000. On the transportation tax (fuel), they have to remember they could only go to Roads and Bridges but there was a small portion of General Fund money that they utilize in their Public Works area as well as the Small County surtax. The Small County surtax can only be used for EMS and Roads and Bridges, but they could make changes to that Ordinance. To institute the 9<sup>th</sup> cent, that would go to Roads and Bridges and if they changed the Ordinance and move additional monies and they would be able to do additional things in EMS. She said they were still restricted and the freed-up money could only be used in certain areas.

 Commissioner NeSmith asked if they had not been using that motor fuel tax and Ms. Daniels said no. Chair Holt said when the Ordinance was passed, it was passed to build the jail. Then it came back and was passed to be used for road and bridge; then it came back and was changed to use part for EMS.

 Commissioner NeSmith said Gadsden County was in desperate need of road resurfacing, road paving, curbs and could they look at it. Chair Holt said they could look at it and they could choose another time to do so. He added they needed as much revenue as possible.

 Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator, while they were playing with numbers, he would like to seriously consider adding street lights to their projects, as well as striping, etc.

### **Major Revenue Sources Update**


 She said they would now look at the expenditures for next year. She added this was tentative recommendations in the budget and nothing was carved in stone because they did not have a set millage rate yet.


She then gave a list of items that have been requested by the Departments.


She said they need to look at replacing and putting fuel tanks at Public Works underground and it would cost \$400,000 to do so. She said they were currently above ground tanks and would get water in them.

She said the requests in the Fire Department, a pumper truck, a multi-purpose truck was needed, work was needed to be done at the Concord Fire Station, the Havana Fire Station and the Chattahoochee Fire Truck.

Building Inspection was requesting two vehicles because they had one that was swapped out and was no longer serviceable and they added a new position.

 EMS was looking at new additional ambulances to fill out their fleet and getting a Captain's Response Vehicle that will be equipped with items but not used as transport. They also needed to do some work at the Havana EMS site.


 Facilities was requesting some items. Two were grant match items, one was St. Hebron park phase II and a generator for the Butler Building. She said there was some work that needed to be done on the elevators in the Butler Building and the Courthouse, work at the Guy Race Building, and a radio tower that was left that needs to be de-commissioned and moved.

 Chair Holt said page 7 were requests and not things that they have approved. She wanted to look at what they have to do now.

Ms. Daniels added that they had already tentatively taken a look at some of the things they may have to do.


### **Potential Revenue Options**

#### **Constitutional Officers FY22 Budget Requests**


 Ms. Daniels said they have received requests from Constitutional Officers and the County Department.


The Sheriff and Law Enforcement looking at approximately \$480,000 increase and the justification is increase in salaries, taxes, retirement and health insurance and Detention and Corrections was looking at approximately \$248,593. Chair Holt added this would be reoccurring.


Ms. Daniels said Supervisor of Elections was mandated to get some new equipment and that was \$110,000.


 Clerk Finance had an increase in health insurance and the FRS rate and in the Finance area they were looking at about a \$30,000 increase.


She said for the past few years, the Clerk had been taking care of the Property Appraiser's accounting at no costs and will now be charging for that going forward and they were asking \$72,704 to cover that expense and they needed a dedicated IT person and was asking for funding for that.


 With the County Commission, there has been several insurance claims that have hit. When there is a settlement, they must pay a deductible of \$10,000 and have had an increase in their liability insurance.

 With the County Administrator budget, they were granted new positions with the CARES residuals and moved some positions around that was being budgeted somewhere else such as Grants Coordinator and a position being budgeted in Budget Office and moved that under the County Administrator as well as a couple of other positions.


 Chair Viegbesie asked in moving the Special Projects Coordinator to PIO, that should have no additional impact in the current budget because that position already existed and did not see how it would require that sum of money as it would be a part of \$320,076. Would the grant writer remain contractual or be position? Ms. Daniels said they took the money for the position, which was in the current year's budget and was budgeted in the Office of Management & Budget. They used that funding to pay for the contract. The position was still there and instead of it residing in the OMB, they will move it over into the County Administrator's Office and will be moving a position out. She said they moved three positions into the County Administrator's Office and moved one out.

 Commissioner Viegbesie said the way he was reading was a re-organization of the organizational structure and should not have any changes to the overall expenditure because they were merging and moving positions around.


 Chair Holt asked what positions were needed. Ms. Daniels said the Assistant to the County Administrator but it was named something else, a Grant Coordinator position, a Grant Monitor position, and one other position that was located somewhere else. Chair Holt said there was a swap-out. She said before, they had an Asst. Administrator position that was disbursed before and the salary spread out and they stopped making progress. They had a person over the budget and had two people there and when this happened, they only had one and it threw the budget off. That's why they need to look at these positions, what do they need to run to get there? Just like with the Sheriff, if they approve for the increase in salaries, they will have to do next year also. That draws off what they say they want to do. That was why she said they have to look at what they have to do and then what they want to do.


 Commissioner Nesmith said they have already voted to add additional staff, that was not the issue and he asked about the \$320,000. Ms. Daniels said the \$320,000 was not new money, it was realized from someplace else. Commissioner NeSmith asked about the new positions that


were approved earlier. Ms. Daniels said that did include two new positions and Commissioner NeSmith said more than two were approved. Ms. Daniels explained yes, in other areas.


 Commissioner Viegbesie said he was looking at the move of the Special Projects Coordinator from under the County Administrator to the PIO and that was not an additional cost. How will that impact the \$320,000? He said he was questioning how the restructuring of the organizational chart has an impact on the organizational budget if it did not involve an increase or decrease? It should not change.


Ms. Daniels said they could provide a breakdown of what positions were moved.


 Commissioner Green said for the sake of clarity, millage rate that could be increased, could it be used for general funds to provide for these positions?

 Commissioner NeSmith said he thought what he was asking (the reception was bad), could the millage rate be used to cover an increase in salaries? Chair Holt said it depended if the funds were restricted.


 Commissioner Viegbesie said he could see now what the document was saying. With the reorganization and new positions, this is the amount of what will change the County Administrator's operating costs by.

 Ms. Daniels said the HR Department and the Purchasing Department were combined and they had a hard time seeing who spent whose money and so they split them up and can see better below on the attachment. They also moved because her salary was only in one place and moved a portion of her salary into the Purchasing budget as well.

 Commissioner Viegbesie said he appreciated the presentation, without the questioning and explanation, when the actual budget will be presented, someone may question the expenditures.

 Ms. Daniels said there were a lot of ends and outs but wanted to show significant changes and tried to provide an explanation.

Ms. Daniels said one of the positions that was created from the CARES Act residual was a Radio-type Administrator and was unsure of the correct title. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the cell towers could produce revenue. She explained they were radio towers and not cell towers but she was not the expert in that matter. Commissioner NeSmith said he would have that conversation with the Administrator.

 Chair Holt said to make a note, they need to inventory the equipment on the radios and equipment so they could keep a track.

Ms. Daniels stated, as they knew, one of the positions that was created from the CARES Act Residual was a Radio Administrator type position. Chair Holt commented when \$3 Million was spent on a contract, they needed to know where everything was.

Ms. Daniels said with the Fuel Tanks systems, they were looking at replacing the tanks. There is \$436,000 in one column but they were recommending only \$36,993 because there was a re-alignment of a portion of the Public Works Director and the Director of Operations salary that would not be charged there instead of all of it being charged in Roads and Bridges. A portion would be charged to the Fuel Systems.

She said Information Technology had several new projects coming up and they budgeted \$107,610 for that area. She said they were looking at adding email access for all County employees. Currently it is only available to employees that were in offices that were using email. The employees in Road and Bridge and EMS do not have access to the County email. She said that would take care of those things as well as a new position.

She further explained that Public Information Office, there was an increase as they moved positions around as well as some other areas that needed to be handled from the PIO's office. There was no budget there last year and some was moving the budget out of the County Administrator's Office and moving it there along with that position.


In the Office of Management & Budget, they gained a position but to offset that position, part of her salary was going to another place.


Growth Management was looking to amend the Comp Plan and have to have some studies done in order to do that. Veterans Services were looking for an additional part-time driver in order to split the transport. The Medical Examiner submitted their sent in their budget for the next year and there was an increase of \$60,000. The County has been notified by the State of what the Medicaid spending was and there was a reduction. There is an increase of \$50,000 for Contingency to give a total of \$100,000. She said the reserve for non-profits (not the Boys and Girls Club), the portion of money that was not allocated to non-profits, will go back into the coffers to be spent somewhere else. The transfer to Capital Projects encompasses the projects that were on the Grant Match list (grant match for St. Hebron's park, for the generator for the Butler Building and repairs, etc.) were added in. She said when they decided to finance the site work with Motorola earlier this year, it increased the debt service on the loan they already had and was an additional \$75,000. She said with the Building Inspection fund, they were looking to increase two staff positions and increase the expenses related to the new positions. They felt it was not enough to sufficiently support that as well as their fund balance so they have not made that recommendation. Fire control had some one-time capital projects and this is the projects that were in the current budget. They could look at pumper trucks and some other things without any increase in revenue, but these were one-time projects and would be a reduction to that budget. With Roads and Bridges, they have reallocated some salaries off the Transportation Fund onto some other funds and was showing the reduction.


#### **Departmental FY21 vs. FY22**


#### **Enhancement/Reduction Summary**


**4. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction**

 Chair Holt said on the Building Inspection, if they were planning on doing some improvements, that had to make sure they were giving good service. If they were not picking up any revenue, was there a reason why? Ms. Daniels replied the revenue they have could currently support what they were currently doing. They also have the issue where clients have decided to go with private providers to provide their building inspection and not receive building inspection services through the County. Chair Holt said on the funds allocated for Road and Bridge, they needed another cutting crew. She said over the years they have gotten temporary (summer) help and need to look at hiring a total crew for cutting and pick up trash. She said they were not able to do these things and they needed another crew. With Building Inspection, if other Commissioners were getting the calls she's getting, it shows a problem in-house and they should be able to take care of it.

 Commissioner NeSmith echoed what Chair Holt said earlier. He did have the opportunity to meet with the County Administrator earlier about the roads and medians and they need to give the roads attention.

 Commissioner Green asked what happened to them considering contracting out the cutting to lawn services to help.

 Mr. Dixon said they were considering all options, it was not a light duty task and they need to consider what to do with the manpower in the winter.

 Chair Holt said if they come back to look at the budget, to see they set aside for that.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

 **THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THEM, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:48 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 3, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**        **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                     **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                     **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                     **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                     **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                     **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                     **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                     **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he needed to add a Grant application as Item 17.

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at 6:02 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie said he had not had the opportunity to read Item 10 and suggested they pull until the supporting documents come and they have a chance to review.

Mr. Dixon said he was going to pull that item.

Mr. Knowles requested they move Item 17 to Item 5b and the Grant application will become the new Item 17.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Quincy CRA Audit Presentation**

**1a Proclamation in Honor of former County Administrator Dee Jackson**

Commissioner NeSmith read the Proclamation aloud and it was then presented to Ms. Jackson. She had a few words to say.

**1b. Proclamation Honor of the 65 Anniversary of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc, Tau Zeta Graduate Chapter**

Commissioner Green read aloud the Proclamation and then presented it to the Sorority.

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

2. **Ratification Memo**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
  - **May 4, 2021 Workshop**
  - **April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting**
4. **Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts-State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Hurricane Repair (HHR) Emergency Repair Program (ER)**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on Tuesday, August 3, 2021. 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.

Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the statement.

**Debra Harstfield, 261 Reeve Lane, Havana, FL 32333**

Ms. Hartsfield appeared before the Board. She said there had been several inspections at her home located at 261 Reeve Lane, Havana, FL. She said after the first inspection, Al Smythe gave her seven days to correct issues she had with her house. He told her that he had the authority to close everything, and she would have to vacate the premises. One of the biggest complaints was the size of her home and her master suite. When they first met, she thought he was a genuine person but over time, he made sarcastic comments about the size of her home and made her feel as though she had crossed him in some way.

Chair Holt thanked her for sharing her story.

**Danny Hunter, 202 E. Lake Road, Quincy, FL 32351**

Mr. Hunter appeared before the Board and said as an organization, they had been very diligent and would appreciate the Board's support.

Commissioner Green asked for something in writing to present to the Administrator to be able to consider the proper steps and procedures.

**Dr. Joe Parramore, 6079 Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy, FL**

Dr. Parramore appeared before the Board to speak regarding the Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department. He said services were still being provided through Sycamore, Mt. Pleasant and Wetumpka and Gretna where available. He wanted to take a couple of moments to share what they have been doing as a Florida Non-Profit. They have engaged in the following:

- solidified a Letter of Determination from IRS on 501©3 status and was made on July 22, 2021;



- volunteers have continued to serve their communities through other departments;
- They have entered into conversations with a number of property owners regarding the donation of property for the fire station at the I-10/Highway 12 corridor;
- They have developed a capital fund-raising campaign;

He added that on July 1<sup>st</sup> Chief Hunter and he met with Senator Ausley and Representative Alexander and will be working with their offices along with the County through an LBR and in addition, had a conversation about emergency rights-of-way between Greensboro and the County line on Interstate 10 of which there is no emergency right-of-way on that stretch. In less than two weeks of that conversation, they now have one paved right of way and working with their offices to increase additional ones.

He further stated while all of these things were a step in the right direction, Greensboro fire district was still in need of an operational fire department that could respond in a time of need. With departments responding outside their district, time delays are a matter of life and death. The Greensboro Fire Department, Inc. has a roster of 13 volunteers that include firefighter I's firefighter II's, firefighters in training, emergency medical responders, emergency medical technicians and paramedics. They believe they are uniquely qualified to resume duties to the Greensboro Fire district and asked the Board to do their due diligence and strongly consider in the new contract year awarding Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. the interlocal fire service agreement.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **5. Approval of Value Adjustment Board Members**

The Administrator introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Value Adjustment Board members. He explained the members last year were Gene Morgan and Eric Hinson and the Commissioners; Gay Steffen was the Homestead Property Representative; Frederica Young was the Commercial Property Representative and Steve Scott was the appointed School Board representative. He stated that Ms. Steffen had expressed an interest in continuing to serve, but the Board could appoint anyone of their choosing. He also stated that Bradley Munroe had served as private legal counsel to assist the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Commissioner Hinson if he wished to continue to serve and if so, he wanted to nominate Commissioner NeSmith as the second Commissioner.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO RE-APPOINT COMMISSIONER HINSON, APPOINT COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND RE-APPOINT GAY STEFFEN. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

He said in years past, he asked the Board to appoint Marva Davis as this attorney and was not sure what happened.

The Deputy Clerk, Ms. Blocker, said he was correct, she was appointed to serve that year but it was up to the Value Adjustment Board to make that appointment, according to statute.

Chair Holt ask that the motion be restated.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE RESTATED HIS MOTION TO RE-APPOINT COMMISSIONER HINSON, APPOINT COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND TO RE-APPOINT GAY STEFFEN AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOTION.**

**5b. Approval of Settlement Agreement**

Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and stated it was presented to the Board for settlement regarding a case filed by former Public Information Officer Olivia Smith.

Commissioner NeSmith said obviously this matter took place before he was on the Board. He then asked why they were settling.

**Mr. Eric Krebs, Esquire**, Counsel representing Gadsden County, appeared before the Board and explained there have been some pre-suit negotiations and they had been successful in getting the case dismissed the first time. However, there was an order from the Judge to give them leave to amend the complaint and the Judge did find there were enough facts alleged to go forward with the lawsuit. They were going to have to change the procedure of the lawsuit to separate out some claims, a procedural nature on that respect. He said the fact that it was a \$20,000 settlement was low enough from the carrier's prospective and this was something that probably not be resolved in a Summary Judgment stage and would have to go to trial. At this stage it is set for trial in February and the expenses related to a Federal trial could be pretty big, much greater than \$20,000. It was purely a business decision from the carrier's prospective. He said they felt there was defenses to this but before they reached that point, there would be a series of 10-15 depositions, lot of people deposed, additional motions, and mediations. He said this was a FMLA and ADA claim and if for some reason a jury decided the County was liable, attorneys' fees would be recoupable by the Plaintiff's attorney and that is not paid by the carrier, it's paid by the insurance company. There is a reservation to rights that has been issued by the insurance company that says if the County lost, the County would have to pay the attorneys' fees if awarded in the lawsuit. He further stated at this point, it was a business decision.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about the reference to the neutral reference for all future employment. Mr. Knowles said as he understood, the County does not provide references in the sense of a private employer that might write up one stating good job or bad job, etc. All that is provided is salary, dates of employment and title. She would receive a neutral employment reference if she had left under other circumstances. He added Mr. Krebs could speak further regarding that matter. He also stated that was in the Settlement Agreement and if they were to give a negative reference, they would potentially be in violation of the Release. He also stated if they did not approve this tonight and it went forward and do not prevail at trial, any amounts above and beyond the \$20,000, the County was on the hook for.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked what if an employee of the County wrote a non-neutral reference for employee if contacted by a future employer and not given circumstances of the situation, how would that apply and implement the County. He added he would not want the County employee writing a reference on County letterhead and then cause a legal ramification.

**Lonyell Butler, HR Manager**, appeared before the Board and said all department heads are to direct any such request to HR.

Commissioner Green asked if that was made verbally or was it something they had to sign for future reference. Ms. Butler said it was not in writing but they are informed of such. They could err on the side of caution and could make that happen.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**6. Approval of the Gadsden County Multiple Projects CEI Selection Bid No. 21-08**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval on multiple projects that was selected by FDOT and FHWA. They were as follows:

- Construction on CR 156 Dover/Scotland Road;
- Construction on CR 153 Iron Bridge Road;
- Construction on CR268;
- Construction on Ralph Strong Road; and
- Construction of the Havana Middle School Sidewalk.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE FOR OPTION 1 AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Mr. Dixon said on the issue of CEI services, Mr. Ford and he have talked about a master CEI contract coming back before the Board that would knock 30-90 days off the road building program to have that in place.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if that would keep the costs competitive?

**Justin Ford, Dewberry**, appeared before the Board. Mr. Dixon added it would not cheapen the costs, it would save them from having to go out for bids every time. Mr. Ford said the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act was a statute and explained it was based on qualification and not fees.

Commissioner Hinson said he noticed the evaluation forms had a lot of cross outs.

Mr. Dixon said when they make corrections, they should initial the cross outs.

**7. Appointment to the Quincy-Gadsden Airport Authority**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval from the Board to appoint Mr. Robbie Maxwell as one of the Gadsden County Representatives to the QGAA for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2021 and there was no fiscal impact.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT MR. MAXWELL.**

Commissioner Hinson said normally they have someone in his district to give some type representation so everyone has representation. He said he talked with someone in his community, Terrance Bethea and he was interested in it, he talked with him last year about this.

He felt it would give diversity and have someone from every district. He hoped to give this to Terrance Bethea to give representation on the east side of the County.

Chair Holt asked who was appointed by the City and who was appointed by the County. Mr. Dixon directed her to page 4, which showed that Mr. Ralph Higdon and Mr. Clifford Hill was appointed by the County Commission. Chair Holt said the County chose two, the City chose two and those four would choose the fifth member if she was correct.

Commissioner Hinson said normally they have representation throughout the County and everything east does not have representation. They wanted representation from the Havana/Midway/Lake Yvette area and part of Quincy. He said Terrance Bethea was a real estate person, banking...

Chair Holt said she had no problem to bring this item back, but asked if Lee Woodruff was from Havana. Commissioner Hinson said he did not look into that.

Commissioner Hinson said the interesting thing about Havana, it split. Part was in District 1 and part in District 2 and wanted to make sure District 1 received representation.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not know where Rev. Hill lived, Mr. Higdon or Mr. Maxwell, but the County only have two appointments to this Board. If they want to make district representation on this Board, they need to establish the methodology where the appointment was rotational so each district will have someone represent it.

Chair Holt suggested to bring all the Boards they have and then they could look at who they want to appoint to the Boards. She said they had all kind of boards that were lying dormant because they were not working them. They need to set up guidelines. She asked if this was not an urgent matter what did they want to do.

Commissioner Hinson said they could table this because he received some breaking news from someone whose wife is a banker that lives in the Lake Yvette area, Shannikia Bethea.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if a motion to table was needed because he thought they needed information.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO TABLE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. MR. DIXON ASKED IF THEY SHOULD BRING BACK ADDITIONAL NAMES. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TO TABLE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Approval of Road Name Change Application Form**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of a Road name change Application Form for Mr. and Mrs. Shepard Eubanks.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Green asked if other homeowners lived on the road and approved of the name change. Mr. Dixon said they attempted to contact other homeowners on the property and there was no opposition to the name change.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if there was a fee for the name change and was told yes, \$500.00.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they had been in contact with the Smith family and Mr. Dixon said they attempted to contact everyone. The house on the road was uninhabitable and they were unable to reach anyone else. He also stated they had not heard anything from anyone.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the fee was \$500.00 and Mr. Dixon stated yes, it was to keep people from moving in and changing road names.

Chair Holt said they were correct to get all documentation, as much as possible because once they do that, the County would then contact and get everything physically needed and that was it.

Commissioner Viegbesie wanted to make sure it was stated on record, this name change was not in any way, shape or form a consent from this County that this road would be a county-maintained road. It will remain a private road with a private name.

**Mr. Sheffield Eubanks** appeared before Board. He said in 18 months, they will have been there for 100 years. The County already grades that road and pulls ditches and does a wonderful job.

Commissioner NeSmith said in given this information, does the County maintain some private roads and Mr. Dixon stated no. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the road sign was blue or green and Mr. Dixon stated it was green, it was a public road. Commissioner NeSmith said the County had yet to receive the road.

Mr. Eubanks said it was a green sign indicating it was a public road.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated if it were a green sign, that was a public road.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9. Approval of Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding Annual Certification Statement.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**10. Approval of Granicus Contract**

Item pulled

**11. Approval of Health Insurance Rates**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approve of their health insurance rates with Capital Health Plan. He said no-one provided the benefits to the employees as CHP with great satisfaction. He stated the committee recommended to accept option 1.

**Lonyell Butler, HR Director**, appeared before the Board. Every year they receive the renewal rates from CHP and this year it was received with a 4.47% increase and was 2.48% higher than last year's renewal rate. When the increases are received, they are taken before the Insurance Committee made up of representatives from every Constitutional Office. She said two recommendations were made. The first was to change the premium rate for single coverage to not allow the employee who had single coverage to pay any amount but have the employer pay 100% for that premium and for the remaining tiers, which was the employee + spouse and employee + dependents and family coverage that the premium rate currently would remain the same for them as was currently and the employer absorbs the increase. The second recommendation was to allow the tiers to remain the same, the employee with single coverage will continue to contribute towards the premium amount, however the current rates for employees would remain the same and the employer would absorb the increase.

Chair Holt asked if the Constitutionals pay into the insurance and Mrs. Butler said yes. She asked if they had looked at combining with the Cities and she stated no.

Commissioner Green liked the suggestion made and asked with the increase, was it still comparable to other insurance agencies? Mrs. Butler said yes and surprisingly, with the percentage considering the health impact COVID brought about.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they had other providers with Blue Cross/Blue Shield? How does this compare to BC/BS? Mrs. Butler said there was no comparison. In the past they have asked the agent to shop and they did look at BC/BS as well as United Healthcare and the proposals presented was not comparable to what CHP provided.

Mr. Dixon said the deductible meant if he had to go to the hospital, he had to pay \$1500 first before the benefit of the plan kicked in.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mrs. Butler about the dental insurance. She said that had not come before the Board because there was no question of the premium for dental that the Board contributed to, it was 100% funded by the employee.

Mr. Dixon said what was before them was the policy change if they wanted to provide single members coverage for free or continue to have them pay into that service.

Commissioner Hinson asked with the family plan, how much would employees pay? Mrs. Butler said for family coverage, currently the employer pays bi-weekly \$256.33; for employee and spouse pays \$205.07, single coverage is \$51.27 and Employee + dependent is \$174.31 bi-weekly. Commissioner Hinson said the Chair brought up a great idea about partnering with other agencies.

Mrs. Butler said that had been brought up in the past about possibly bringing in the School Board. She said there was a reason why school boards were separate and she will bring that back to the Board.

Commissioner Green asked if there were the same constraints with other cities and municipalities. Mrs. Butler responded it did not, however that would need to be a discussion at a later time.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was leaning toward option 1 because, as Commissioner Hinson pointed out, it would help retain quality employees.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. Approval to Amend Ordinance 2014-002**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for discussion to look at Ordinance 2014-002 which was the criteria and procedures for road adoptions within the unincorporated areas of the County. He said private roads were not all built by wealthy folks that want to be at the end of a cul-de-sac, there are a bunch of subdivisions in the County that pre-dates the Comprehensive Plan and the Ordinance.

Commissioner Hinson said, as they know, there are rough roads in his district, especially if it was raining.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was an item for them to visit and there were four or five in his district as well. He asked that they look at procedures on the adoption of private roads and how to work with developers when developing roads.

Mr. Dixon said they will look at it.

Commissioner Green asked for clarity when Commissioner Viegbesie spoke of developers.

Chair Holt said they need to do some heart-searching on how to do it.

Commissioner Hinson said lot of folks want private roads.

**13 Supplemental Insurance Rates**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said the County was impacted by Hurricane Michael and suffered significant damage. An initial assessment was conducted by the insurance company. However, upon further review, it was determined that there was an opportunity for the county to recover additional private insurance funds that were covered under their private insurance company. They have secured Phoenix and Integrity to look at the insurance and have found things and they need to retain attorney. They were asking to approve a Letter of Representation to enable Phoenix to be able to speak with the insurance carriers and to retain Berger & Singerman in this specialized legal area of the insurance claim. He added that it would not require the County to put up any funds, they will only be paid if funds are recovered.

Commissioner Hinson said thought this firm was a law firm that would be taking care of this and Mr. Dixon said no.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson touched on his comments. He asked the Administrator how this would impact the portion of what was recovered and came to the County. Mr. Dixon said it would not impact the percentage.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if that were the case, why was the County the one that had to retain and employ Berger & Singerman.

Mr. Dixon said the County was the client.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Mr. Knowles for his opinion; if Phoenix was the sub-contractor of Integrity, could they say they want to retain Berger & Singerman as the law firm that they would work with.

Mr. Knowles stated Phoenix could engage anyone, Integrity could engage anyone, as he was sure the Board knew, attorneys did not have to be bid out pursuant to statute and services were not required to be bid out for RFP's. It could be a cost, if the Board desired, could be borne by Phoenix and could come from their cut but could not speak as to how they would handle their claims process. He said he believed there was a 10% fee on recovered amounts and a 20% fee if it went to litigation plus the outstanding costs.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the contract entered into with Phoenix would need to be revised to add the law firm?

**Mark Glover, Phoenix, and Gina Lozier, Esquire, Berger Singerman**, appeared before the Board. He said he has worked with Berger Singerman closely in the past. He said they were trying to position and Gadsden County is the only one able to engage Berger Singerman. Ms. Lozier said in order to represent the County, she needed to be able to go to the insurance company and explain she was the attorney and would be assisting Phoenix. She said there was a three-year limitation coming up in October to put in their notice of claims.

Commissioner Viegbesie said based on the contract signed with Phoenix through Integrity, if County received \$100,000, Phoenix would receive 20% or \$20,000. If the legal services provided was \$10,000, would that amount come from Phoenix's \$20,000 and would not touch any of the \$80,000 that would come to the County. Mr. Glover said that was correct. Commissioner Viegbesie pointed out he was asking the questions so they would be on record.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Knowles if that was how he read the contract and Mr. Knowles stated no. Mr. Knowles read from the contract (page 3 of 10).

“Client agrees to pay to Attorneys an attorneys’ fees if Client recovers money after execution of this Agreement, whether that recovery is due to voluntary payment, appraisal, arbitration, settlement or verdict/judgment. If this case is resolved by a trial, judgment, or arbitration, the fee owed to the Attorneys will be greater of the percentage of recovery described below or the court-awarded fee, if any.

If applicable, the percentage recovery is as follows:



A. If this case is resolved before a lawsuit is filed, Client understands and agrees that the minimum attorneys' fee due will be 10% of the gross amount recovered, the hourly fee negotiated with the Insurance Company, or the attorneys' fee awarded by the Court. This minimum attorneys' fee is contingent upon recovery and will not limit any court awarded fee in any way..." He went on to explain the fee recovery. He further stated as it read now did not reflect a removal of the amount from Phoenix's money, it was from the County's money. He said if the desire of the Board was to have that money come from Phoenix's money, the contract would need to be revised and brought back to the Board.

**Chris Crowell, Phoenix**, appeared before Board. He said when they initially began this process, they had a fee structure as 20%, but due to the nature of the situation on this opportunity and the timeline, it became obvious to bring in specialized legal counsel to have collaborative effort to put this together. He said they agreed to reduce the percentage from 20% to 10% to make an allotment for the 10% of pre-litigation fees, etc. He said the gross expense would be the same unless there was eventful litigation and then there would be an additional 10%.

Chair Holt said if they need specialty help to get this ready by October, they will need someone to get the information ready and it was already August. They went from 20% to 10% and will split the other 10% with the attorneys' fees. She asked if there was other litigation, he was saying there may be another 5%?

Mr. Knowles stated that was on the appellate review; there were three tiers. The first was you receive a settlement; second tier was you go to trial; and the third was you win or lose and have to seek appellate review.

Chair Holt said 100% of 0 is 0; if they don't recover anything, they would not receive anything.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to get the percentages right. He said if they recover \$100,000, Phoenix, based on the previously signed contract, will get \$20,000. If the law firm litigated that \$100,000, they get an additional 10%...

Mr. Dixon said the total amount from Phoenix was 20% and the law firm would take from that 20%, not the County's 80%.

\*\*There was further discussion regarding this matter. Please see the audio/video at [www.gadsdenclerk.com](http://www.gadsdenclerk.com) under Archived Minutes to follow the discussion.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked for the numbers and he would read them into his motion.

Mr. Knowles said Phoenix will receive 10% of all recovered amounts; Berger Singerman will receive additional 10% of all pre-litigation amounts recovered; Berger Singerman will receive additional 20% of all amounts recovered after a lawsuit has been filed; Berger Singerman will receive an additional 5% if any matters result in appellate review.

Ms. Lozier stated that was correct.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID THAT WAS HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said they went from 35% to 45%. It was 10%, 10%, 20% and 5%.

Mr. Knowles pointed out the 20% was only if it resulted in litigation. Commissioner Hinson stated regardless, it was 10%, 10%, 20% and 5%.

Commissioner Holt said she thought they should say “additional” 20%, because the 20% would nullify the 10% before.

Commissioner Green asked if they could state “up to 35%” and someone (unclear who spoke) said “not more than”.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE SERVICES OF THE LAW FIRM WITH THE BREAKDOWN IN THE RECOVERY DISTRIBUTION AS STATED AND NOT MORE THAN 35% OF ALL GROSS TOTAL AND ALLOW DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSURANCE COMPANY AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14 Approval of Language Amendments for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Programs**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was to approve language amendments for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Program.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Hinson asked about the Small Business Assistance Program. He said a lot of people were hurting and still felt they should increase more than what it was. He added he knew they had food cards but lot of people needed help.

Mr. Dixon said that was correct. They knew that portion of the population received additional food stamps, additional services directly from the Federal government and those folks were taken care of. He said they were trying to help the next layer of citizens who did not qualify for anything and there was no program for them to qualify to receive anything for programs under the American Rescue Plan. The Food card was a way to help the working class of the County.

Commissioner Hinson said the reason he brought this up, a lot of Senior Citizens received as little as \$19/month in food stamps and if they receive food stamps, they could not receive the food card.

Commissioner Green said this item was only to vote on language at this time.

Chair Holt said what he was addressing was a whole other matter.

Commissioner Hinson said once this was approved changing the language tonight, it meant the Clerk could write checks tomorrow.

Commissioner Green said for clarity, it was not that he was not fighting for people, his understanding was to have clarification for the sake of the Clerk, not for the sake of changing and amending. They have already voted on and approved this item. It was worthy of discussion at the appropriate time.

Commissioner NeSmith called the question.

**THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE IN APPROVAL OF THIS ITEM. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**15 Approval of Funding for Travel to Golden Triangle**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval for travel to the “Golden Triangle” located in Starkville, MS. He added they have tentatively scheduled the trip for August 25-26. The total costs would be up to \$15,000 for accommodations. He added non-County staff would be responsible for their meals.

Chair Holt said she needed to know, in this scenario, was it included for the Planning and Zoning Commission to go? Mr. Dixon said they had added as many people as they could safely seat, including Planning and Zoning, along with the School Board, some managers along with local business partners. She said this was a learning activity. She said she would rather have \$20,000 and if not needed, they could put the \$5,000 back. The money was not going anywhere if not used.

Commissioner Green said he loved the idea of seeing somewhere progressive, however, they all needed to be dollar conscience. He felt they should give something themselves and take care of some of their own expenses.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was one of his concerns as well. The dates that were selected were the first two days of classes in the fall and he would not be able to make that trip.

Commissioner Hinson said he felt it was a great idea and would approve for staff, but thought in looking at it now, the Federal government was giving them so much money and the School Board received \$11 Million for things such as this so why pay the School Board to go on this trip. They could pay their own trip. He also did not think it was a good idea to ride on a bus with the Delta variant out now.

Commissioner Green said that was a very valid point and liked the idea of splitting costs. He also agreed they may need to table the date because of the increase in the virus.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he also was in opposition of the County footing the bill of other constitutional governments. They have their own budgets and revenue sources. If any of the municipalities were into growing this County, then each government should invest in a portion of this visionary retreat. He added he would not support other individuals other than staff.

Chair Holt said to ones that were watching on Facebook and other media, the Board was responsible for economic development, not the School Board or anywhere else. Everything they have discussed in the budget workshop requires money. They could not have money unless the enticed businesses that could come here and offer good jobs. Now they were fussing

about \$15,000 and it really should be \$25,000-\$30,000. She said if they were going to worry about who paid for what, they will never have anything.

Commissioner Green said her point was well taken and he heard her passion. But he felt the timing may be wrong as it related to the virus.

Chair Holt said when they can pull up 4,000-6,000 jobs, all she wanted to 200-300.

Commissioner NeSmith said you have to spend money to make money. The community has expressed how proud they are Gadsden County was moving forward. They need to take the trip as soon as possible to bring economic development to the County.

Mr. Dixon said the trip was not designed for staff.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the last person they wanted to convince about investing in economic development was an economist, which he was. He knew what economic development was and his only concern was the these are Constitutional Officers that they were going to be paid to go to do what was good for the county. He understood the fact that when districts were moved some years ago, there other cities and groups that joined. He said he would dare to say that those groups, it was the Chamber of Commerce that pulled everyone together to make the trip. This is what they do in Tallahassee every year. He added he was surprised they were not on the list and assumed that GCDC would be, since they were a part of the County and if he was not going to be in class, he would be going on the trip.

Commissioner Hinson said they invest in a lot of different groups. The one heartburn he had was the delta virus, Tallahassee hospitals were at capacity right now.

Mr. Dixon said this trip was designed after listening to board members and was his perspective it was difficult to lead if not present. The Board was gathering up everyone. It was their leadership that had people excited about what tomorrow might bring. He said it was important to participate.

Commissioner Green said he heard the conversation and they were all on the same page, yes, it will be there when COVID over. But he did not want to be responsible for others contracting the virus, he added that money was not the issue, but the timing was not right.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his concern was still the same. His question was to the attorney. His concern was with them traveling at this time at the rate the virus was spreading. He felt they should consider the danger and reconsider and his concern was health.

Mr. Dixon said he heard the members and they will postpone until a later date.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**16 Approval of Millage Rate for TRIM Notification and Set the Date**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said the talked about this earlier. He said they could lower it after this date but not raise it. He added that up to now, the answer to the problems have been to ignore them and they might go away.

Commissioner Hinson had a question about the taxable value and it was explained by the County Attorney.

Commissioner Viegbesie said before making a motion, he wanted to let the community know this motion was so they would have this in place and they had the opportunity to come down.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO SELECT OPTION C, WHICH WAS 9.5 MILLS AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.**

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 4 OF 10 MILLS AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.**

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION B WITH 9 MILLS (PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE B) AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**17 Approval to Submit a Grant Application to the Department of Commerce**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a grant application seeking funds to expand broadband. He said this was what they have been able to find and they need to get the grant out as they have until August 17<sup>th</sup> to submit the grant. They could be able to receive up to \$30,000. They have been working around the clock and the fiscal impact at this time was unknown. He said they were asking them to approve the submittal of grant application and this was a big program.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was the type of thing he has been talking about and had heard this was coming down the pipe when they were discussing this issue. This was seeking approval of submittal of the grant application.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON AND COMMISSIONER GREEN HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Green said this package was placed in front of them without an opportunity to review it.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**13. Updates**

Chair Holt asked why there were so many Minutes on the Agenda and what was the delay. Deputy Clerk Marcella Blocker explained they have had that many meetings and workshops and with no meetings in July, allowed her to catch up transcribing.

Mr. Dixon said it not only allowed them to catch up, but did not think they realized how many meetings, how long the meetings go on and what happens after the meetings.

Deputy Clerk Blocker explained also the delay when there were four- and five-hour meetings that had to be transcribed.

*Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 9:57 p.m.*

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **14. Updates**

Mr. Dixon had updates.

##### **American Rescue Plan**

He said they will be sending out the first round of funding and will also be bringing back to them for re-allocation, probably at the next meeting.

*Commissioner NeSmith returned at 10:00 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said he will also be bringing some staffing issues to them.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 10:00 p.m.*

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

##### **15. Updates**

Mr. Knowles said regarding the Dollar General litigation, two claims brought against the County have been stricken, there is still have one claim and the hearing is scheduled for September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Dixon said also they will be running through a bunch of contracts that will expire at the end of the fiscal year and later in the year. He said they have just gotten around to it in freeing up time, space and people and there were quite a lot, some will need direction on how to proceed.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

##### **16. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

##### **Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson stated he had some Save the Dates.

Florida Rights in Restoration Coalition bus tour will be at the North Florida Fairgrounds on Saturday at 3:00 p.m.

The Second Annual Back to School will be August 6<sup>th</sup> at MLK Track and Field across from Carter Parramore School.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 10:03 p.m.*

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, the 1 Gadsden Foundation, Inc. in partnership with MLK Foundation will be the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Back to School Community Resource Fair with school supplies giveaway from 2-5 p.m. along with COVID vaccinations and screenings.

He asked about the Summer Youth employment. Mr. Dixon said they did not reach the numbers they wanted to and will have a report tomorrow on the things found. What they dreamed it was, it was not and kids were not what they used to be. He felt they will have to go lower in age as 17 might be too late.

### **Broadband Hotspots**

Commissioner Hinson asked how they were coming with the broadband devices. Mr. Dixon said they had reached out to Figgers/FCI a couple of times to let them know they were ready and that was where they were there.

Commissioner Hinson said he received word today that someone died in the jail recently and this was the second one he knew of. Mr. Dixon said he would look into it.

He said they gave Ms. McGriff a Proclamation a couple of years ago and she just passed away. Want to give Resolution to Ms. Herring, just turned 100 years old.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO GIVE A PROCLAMATION TO MS. HERRING ON TURNING 100 YEARS OLD AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

He then mentioned his Uncle JB Jones passed away yesterday.

Commissioner Viegbesie said on point, if any of them would be able to, Ms. Rosa McGriff's funeral will be Saturday at 1:00 p.m. at the Havana Middle School.

Commissioner Hinson said also, if able, donate to the schools and different programs to help the kids.

### **Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith sent condolences to the Jones family.

He said Chattahoochee Elementary School has a new principal and was doing a phenomenal job. They are organizing a clean-up campaign Saturday morning.

He thanked the Board for emphasizing the needs for the residents. He said District 3 and 4 were in desperate need of additional resources for roads.

He said to the Administrator and Mr. Lee, thank you for resurfacing Cochran Road and for the work at the Massey Building.

He said he was coming up on the anniversary of his tenure on this Board. They need an evaluation process of their two employees. They have to have a workshop.

### **Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green asked for clarification on the food card distribution.

Mr. Dixon said he talked with the Clerk's office on how to keep control of the card.

He thanked the PIO with what has been done with the "Love Where you Live Campaign".

Mr. Dixon said they were moving from Mondays to Saturdays for the pick-it up Campaign to be able to encourage people from the neighborhood to participate.

He asked that Public Works to look at a huge hole on Spooner Road.

He said there was a lot of informative information given at the FAC conference.

He congratulated Commissioner NeSmith on completing his certification.

He gave his condolences to Commissioner Hinson and to Georgette Daniels who had her sister transition.

He asked that the security of the building go on the next agenda. He said he will share a video of a major fight that took place a few weeks ago on this property. Also, staff should not have to come to work on Monday mornings with beer cans, bottles, etc. all in the parking lot.

**Commissioner Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said the conference was very informative. He suggested to the County Administrator that he reach out to a group to come make a presentation of what they can do for the County.

He said there was a workshop they attended that Joyful Hearts Foundation presented. She requested that every County pass a Resolution to join forces to bring attention to domestic violence, human trafficking, etc.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOTION.**

He said Byrd Technology made a presentation and the part that interested him was this organization could help them in identifying and writing grants for treatment of drug addiction and mental health. He said he will provide the County Administrator with the information.

He said there were a lot of presenters that got his interest and he will be discussing that also with the County Administrator, one of those had to do with school districts and he has already forwarded that information. There was a group he wanted to invite to come make a presentation on their services to supplement what they already have on Procurement and Grant Assistance.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said she told the young lady to come that complained about the Building Inspector because she has been calling forever. She said there were also two others. She thought they need to have some type of evaluation for the departments when they have community contact



and the departments have negative reports. She said she had mentioned before that the departments need to have “How am I doing” cards. She said the lady did have a nice home and if those comments were made, she did not deserve that type of treatment. Mr. Dixon said he will follow up on those allegations. She said they also need Complaint Resolution forms.

She said they were not getting the dollars the County would be getting on the inspections as people were going to private inspections and were complaining about the same thing.

She said she wanted to see if they could have something established to require County workers to get vaccinations or get tested every 2-3 days. She said she would like for the attorney to look into this and there were two to three other Counties already doing this.

She said she wanted to look at contracts, performance and wanted a flow chart. She said they must remember who put them here and this was people that were dying. She reiterated she wanted something in place.

**Animal Control**

She wanted to see the contracts with the cities.

She asked why there was a mobile home in front of a \$3 Million-dollar building (Ag building) and said that was not something you should do. If anything, it should be on the side or in the back. They need to look into that.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:40 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 13, 2021 AT 10:00AM  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Clerk’s Office

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Chair Viegbesie called the Emergency Meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. He asked everyone to bow their heads for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Chair Holt appeared at 10:05 a.m. and Vice Chair Viegbesie informed her of where they were at on the Agenda.

**Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.*

*If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email*

*[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.*

*The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.*

Commissioner Green read the above statement aloud.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Approval Resolution 2021-029**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said they were aware that (Hurricane) Fred was upon them and was the reason for this emergency meeting. He said Ms. Tashonda Whaley, Interim Director of Emergency Management was present.

Ms. Whaley appeared before the board and stated as mentioned by the Administrator, there was a system, Tropical Depression Fred that was upon the County and was expected to affect the County Sunday night into Monday morning. She explained it was a depression but once was back into the gulf, it was expected to strengthen back to a Tropical Storm. She explained with the roads and leaning trees from (Hurricane) Michael, there was a concern. She did say at this

time the State had not executed an Executive Order regarding this system but was looking to see what the counties in the area were doing.

Chair Holt asked what type of PR was being put out.

Ms. Whaley said they were preparing to use their “Alert Gadsden” and did encourage citizens to register for that to receive text notifications and was using social media.

Chair Holt mentioned to consider using the grocery stores to posts signs. Ms. Whaley said they had been pushing the 2021 Disaster Guide they had published in May and have been pushing that out.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2021-029 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**2. Approval of Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement**

Mr. Dixon stated there was no need to approve this item as it would remain in effect.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:12 A.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 17, 2021 AT 4:30 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1-Appeared Remotely  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Clerk's Office

**\*\*THE COMMISSIONERS SAT IN THE AUDIENCE DURING THE WORKSHOP AND MAY BE HARD TO HEAR THEM ON PORTIONS OF THE AUDIO\*\***

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

County Administrator Ed Dixon called the workshop to order at 4:35PM., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.*

County Administrator Dixon read the above statement.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

Chair Holt explained that with them sitting in the audience shows an openness to invite citizens and constituents. She said they were worried by them sitting at the dais, it intimidates citizens from participating in the meeting and coming to the microphone and speaking. It was the hope that sitting in the audience would give off a less "authoritative" feel.

**1. Review and Discuss County Contracts**

Administrator Dixon introduced the purpose of the workshop and said it was in hopes of being able to give the Board some clarity especially in contracts that automatically renew, called them evergreen contracts. He added that this gives the Board the ability to review contracts before they are due/renewed. He made notice of the inability to choose new contracts because of contract rollover before the county is notified. This workshop was an attempt to give light to that. He stated "we need to manage not only our future but our costs...When we have problems, we tend not to know how to respond..."

Commissioner Viegbesie pointed out the position the board approved of the Director of Government Operations should enhance government efficiency.

Mr. Dixon pointed out contracts need to be discussed with the attorney routinely.

Chair Holt brought up points of expiration dates and stated research about contracts need to be done before the expiration date was too close, otherwise bids could not be placed. She also would like to know what amounts the County was paying for the contracts.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were any contracts that expired between January to June as they were not on the spreadsheet they were provided. Mr. Dixon said if they were not on the spreadsheet then he was not aware of them.

Mr. Dixon pointed out that one of the main issues is that the contracts are not stored in a central place where everyone on the Board can view them.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if all additional contracts have to come back before Board to be addressed and was told yes.

Commissioner Green asked what was the better remedy for the accessibility of the contracts would be.

Mr. Dixon suggested putting them on certain computer drives. Contracts get lost if management changes so the manager will continue to manage the contract but the Administrator's office would oversee it. He said a position was created that will discuss with the attorney the contracts and if they will need to be adjusted long before they are due.

Commissioner Viegbesie thought this information was really good but this conversation was not one they could have in a short workshop due to limited time. He added he would like to see how efficient/effective the contracts were.

Commissioner Green asks who made the decision if autorenewal contracts were renewed? Mr. Dixon said it was made within the contract.

Chair Holt remarked renewals should be coming from the attorney and wanted to look at Capital Regional Hospital contract.

Chair Holt mentioned the county uses one bank, should they look into using one bank or two? She said at one time, funds were moved over to another bank.

Commissioner Holt also wanted to build a new hospital. She pointed out that the Board was not a member of the Chamber but makes payments to them. Members get to vote but the Board does not. She also wanted to look at the federal dollars to provide larger transportation buses through grant dollars.

Commissioner NeSmith asks for clarification regarding the 20-year Capital Regional hospital contract.

Commissioner Green asked if this was a common practice among other counties especially of our size. Mr. Knowles explained it was pretty standard to do long-term agreements because of the infrastructure. He said one county had a 50-year agreement.

Chair Holt referred to the hospital contracts but noted Gadsden County only has an emergency room.

Mr. Dixon pointed out that the Board has due diligence when it comes to managing contracts, which they have not been doing.

**2. Review and Discuss County Committees/Boards**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above agenda item.

He said they started going through the different boards and stated the importance of the Gadsden County Industrial Development Authority that was a Legislative created Board. He said they had the authority to bond and what it gave them was an alternative group that did not tie up the County's pockets. It was another funding source that was able to leverage money to bring into the County for development on the industrial level.

He said the Construction Industry Licensing Board would meet as needed to generally discuss contractors, their conduct and their licensing. The Library Commission, the Gadsden County Planning Commission, which they often hear a lot about and they have made plenty of appointments to. The Public Safety Coordinating Council they tend to make little use of and generally meet annually. He said that Board also has some authority as well but the Board hasn't made much use of it either. He named other active Boards.

Commissioner Green asked for dates for when the committees, boards or people who were serving on the Board were about to expire or when the members were not active. Mr. Dixon responded they were in the process of putting a spreadsheet together.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS  
ADJOURNED AT 5:50 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 17, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Nicholas Thomas, Clerk**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                  **Sara Green, Clerk’s Office**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence, and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the Agenda.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Quincy CRA Presentation**

**Rob Nixon, Manager of Quincy CRA**, appeared before the Board to give the Board an update and to present the most recent audit report. He said there were no material findings from the audit and pointed out that they were in compliance with 218.415, Florida Statutes. He then explained a number of programs they were involved with.

Mr. Dixon asked him to describe the CRA districts, what it encompassed and where the money came from that the Board provided. Mr. Nixon stated it stretched from Strong Road to Barack Obama Blvd. and Highway 90 South to the border of Quincy and explained the funding.

Commissioner Green asked the amount that the County gives to CRA? Mr. Nixon explained it was calculated based on the revenue, recently it was \$300,000 approximately.

Chair Holt said they appreciated what they were doing and asked about where the funds were used. Mr. Nixon said the funds were used strictly in the district, they could not be used outside of the CRA district.

**1a. Robbie Jones - Agritourism**

Robbie Jones appeared before Board and his presentation was not ready and the Board skipped to Citizens Requesting to be heard and will come back.

Robbie Jones re-appeared before the Board.

*Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 6:34 p.m.*

**Lena Juarez, Executive Director**, appeared remotely before the Board. She said Florida Agritourism Association was developed in 2013.

Lisa Ard appeared remotely and spoke on agritourism and presented a slide program.

*Commissioner NeSmith returned at 6:37 p.m.*

Ms. Ard explained agritourism and said it was activities on the farm that the public can do to experience the farm and it needed to be a working farm. (Florida Statute 570.85)

*To view more of the presentation, please see the audio/video of the meeting at [www.gadsdenclerk.com](http://www.gadsdenclerk.com) under Archived Meetings.*

#### **CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

#### **2. Ratification Memo**

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

- April 6, 2021 Pre-Meeting Workshop
- February 11, 2021 CARES Workshop
- March 16, 2021 Pre-Meeting Workshop
- May 18, 2021 Workshop
- July 6, 2021 Emergency Meeting
- July 27, 2021 Emergency Meeting

#### **4. Approval of the State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP/HHRP) Annual Reports**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

***Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.***

Commissioner NeSmith read the above statement aloud.



**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL- agenda item: general**

Bishop Green appeared before the Board and had two concerns. He said the first was a thank you to the Board for their heartfelt concerns for the needs of the citizens. Second, he said Gadsden County has an endangered species – the County’s young people. He asked the Board to include the future, new leaders and young people as an integral part of the County.

**Robert Presnell, 508 Smithtown Road- City of Chattahoochee fire truck funding in the 2020/21 BOCC Budget**

Mr. Presnell appeared before the Board representing the City of Chattahoochee. In 2019, the City had to replace a pumper fire engine. It took some time to come and when it did, he had become employed with the City. He said they made an inquiry and it was the middle of budget year so it was a no go, was told to wait until the budget process and it would be put in. The amount that was agreed upon was \$150,000 and would have been effective last October 1<sup>st</sup> to be included in this fiscal year’s budget. In accordance with that agreement, the Council paid cash for truck of \$350,000 anticipating a reimbursement of \$150,000. After Christmas, he phoned the Administrator, wrote a letter with the history and it did not work out. He said he kept communicating with Commissioner NeSmith, he recommended he bring the mayor over for a meeting and they did that and were still at the same place. He said the BOCC included it in their budget through their process last year and he was asking that those funds be released. He asked if there were issues, the City was asking them to clear any obstacles there might be. He pointed out the end of the fiscal year is September 30<sup>th</sup>. He said he had requested to be placed on this Agenda and was told it was moved to the first meeting in September. He stated he had a conflict with that meeting as they meet on that date and was why he was present tonight. He stated the Council takes this very seriously, they put a lot of money in their fire service and most of what they provide is in unincorporated areas of the County and they are a full-service fire department. He further stated he was told 6-8 months ago that payment was being processed. He added he felt it was their intent and was not sure where the problem lied, if there was something they needed to do on their end, they would be glad to do so.

Mr. Dixon said they are scheduled for the next meeting.

(They then returned to the Agritourism presentation.)

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mr. Dixon took a moment before starting the Public Hearing said they were going through some change-overs at the County and Chief Maddox and Chief Murray have taken new positions elsewhere. He introduced Kris Hood who will take reins with EMS. He then appeared before the Board, introduced himself and said a few words.

**5. Public Hearing-Legislative-Approval of Resolution 2021-030-Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2021**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of Resolution 2021-030 for Grant Budget Amendments. He stated these budget amendments were not required to be advertised as they related to internal fund transfers, donations or grants and asked they be approved.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

Chair Holt then stated since this was a public hearing, she needed to see if there was anyone that wished to speak on this matter and there was no-one.

Chair Holt asked for the motion and second again.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**6. Approval of the Agreement for Billing Services between Gadsden County, FL and EMS Management and Consultants, Inc. (EMS/MC)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said this was for approval to renew the agreement for billing services between Gadsden County, FL and EMS Management and Consultants, Inc for a period of one year through a partnership with Ft. Myers Beach and was piggybacking a contract that has been in place. He stated they have looked at other opportunities and none have fit the bill or give sufficiency and savings that they were experiencing with EMS/MC.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if he recalled correctly, this vendor was brought in during Ms. Jackson's administration and they have done a great job and they needed to continue with their services.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**7. Medical Director Contract**

Item Pulled

**8. Approval of the Fairbanks Ferry Road SCOP Construction Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to award the construction of Fairbanks Ferry Road SCOP resurfacing project to Peavy & Son Construction Company, the low bidder, in the amount of \$1,914,628.50.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he would have liked to have seen the tally sheets for the vendors that applied so he could see the comparison. He also asked that there be no change orders at any point before the contract was completed. Mr. Dixon stated as much as he would like to say no, they do not seek any change orders, they were very upfront with all vendors regarding change orders and did not expect any at this point.

Chair Holt said she had the same question as Commissioner Viegbesie and the reason was she usually asked for them anyway. She said they do need to look at the tally sheets so they have some idea and also need to change up people evaluating bids every so often.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

The Board was informed that Commissioner Hinson had lost his connection.

**9. Approval of the Potter Woodberry Road CIGP Construction Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to award the construction of Potter Woodberry Road CIGP resurfacing project to Capital Asphalt, Inc. in the amount of \$595,915.00.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. Approval of 2021 Small County Consolidated Waste Grant Application with Florida DEP**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of a funding agreement between the Gadsden County BOCC and The Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Solid Waste Program.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**11. Approval of Task Order with Joel D. Sampson Architect**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of a task order with Joel D. Sampson Architect, Inc. The task order would include design, construction plans, detailed specifications for bidding, coordination with the County of the Guy Race Court Annex roof repairs and the W A Woodham building roof replacements of the lower roof areas and metal storage building roof. He added this would be money spent from insurance that will be recouped from FEMA.

Chair Holt stated the roof did not change so why was an architectural design needed. Mr. Dixon explained some things like roofs require architects to... Chair Holt stated she knew and was going to start asking for things to be bid out instead of just having things “in-house”. She said they would move this but look at being more competitive.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith said even with being reimbursed from FEMA, this could still be bid out? Chair Holt responded it was not just the amount, you would not get new things in and new contracts if not bid out.

Mr. Dixon explained Mr. Sampson was the architect of record, he was chosen as the go-to guy just as Dewberry was.

Chair Holt said it was not that he was not doing a good job, but once you put things out, people up their game and you start getting good ideas.

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Commissioner NeSmith asked if it was a written agreement or a process that was adopted or accepted. Mr. Dixon stated he believed it was competitively bid and he was now their architect of record.

Mr. Knowles explained they have an agreement for continuing architectural services and was the master agreement and this item was like task orders or sub-agreements for Mr. Sampson.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE.**

**12. Approval of the Chattahoochee Library Roof Replacement Re-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the 21-09 Chattahoochee Library Roof replacement bid. He added this was not a re-bid, it was a bid for a roof replacement that sustained damage from Hurricane Michael. This was for approval to give the bid to Professional Roof Systems.

Commissioner NeSmith asked in light of what Commissioner Viegbesie said earlier, could they look for efficiency as well as effectiveness and the lowest bid was not always the best contract. Has the County done business with Professional Roof Systems before this?

**Allan Meeks, Facilities Manager**, appeared before the Board. Mr. Dixon said they were acutely aware of the Board's desire to get the best bid, not just the lowest bid.

Chair Holt said if she was looking at this company as opposed to any other company, what was the difference in materials, because one bid was \$68,000 and one was \$31,186.00. She said she also did not see where they gave points for local contractors.

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:27 p.m.*

Commissioner Viegbesie asked, in line with Commissioner NeSmith's concern, \$31,000 and \$68,000 were responses to the same specifications in regards to the job to be done.

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at the meeting at 7:28 p.m.-he was previously attending by Zoom.*

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were all in line with the same specifications.

Chair Holt said the first thing she wrote was materials and labor. If she was looking at doing a roof, the materials were the first thing she would look at and there is a \$37,000 difference. Mr. Dixon said more prominent was the majority of bids were in the same wheelhouse.

Mr. Meeks explained they bid on 30-year warranty shingles, architectural, 130 mile an hour wind rating; Grace ice and water shield to cover the roof that would enable them to have a second barrier there in case they have shingles blow off in another storm. All had bid that.

Chair Holt said if the requirements were the same, the materials should be the same and the square footage would not change.

Commissioner Hinson said another situation he had heartburn about, East Gadsden and Havana Magnet School, cannot get phone service because of this type of roof. They need to make sure

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the roof will not interfere with the internet. Mr. Meeks explained this was asphalt shingles and not a metal roof. Commissioner Hinson asked if this was a bid or RFP and Mr. Meeks explained it was bid out. Commissioner Hinson said there was a difference in the two. If they had a RFP, the vendor could explain the difference in the shingles, etc.

Commissioner NeSmith said the information that just came to his attention, with bids, they have to accept the lowest bid? Mr. Knowles stated they did not have to and read from the Procurement Policies. He added that they needed to look more deeply at their Procurement Policy as it has not changed in a while. He further stated they need to workshop and look at and there was nothing saying they HAD to take the lowest bidder.

Mr. Dixon said they just approved a task order for the architect and he develops the scope of work that needs to happen at these facilities. It is then put out for bid and is the same scope of work everyone bids on.

Commissioner Viegbesie said what he was hearing was this was a competitive bid. If the practice is going with the lowest bidder and they change that in their Procurement, that could open the County up to litigation in his opinion. He said that was the best practice to go with and his position was he would not support a change order.

Commissioner Green wanted to make sure he understood Commissioner Viegbesie that he will not support change orders if it comes before the Board.

Mr. Knowles read from their Procurement Policy.

Chair Holt said if they put cheaper materials on the roof and the shingles blow off and the barrier is cheap, it will not last. The bidder needs to know up front that it should be held to up to certain standards. This was not something to be taken lightly. There is leeway in the bidding process. She further stated it was not acceptable to accept the lowest bid but instead the best quality bid.

Hinson said in the past they had contractors appear before Board in case the Board members had questions. He said they want to have good structures and if they can provide the same thing, he was willing to go with the lowest bidder. Why not bring everyone back?

Chair Holt asked Mr. Dixon for his response. Mr. Dixon said they will do what the Board asks, but they put out the scope of work and in this case, to assume materials were insufficient would not be proper. If they bid, it was what Staff put out that they thought would be sufficient and if they would like, they will do a bigger and deeper dive into what comes before them, they will do.

Commissioner Green asked in the future if they could have more details. If they table this, would it delay? Mr. Dixon said their biggest problem was not delays but costs that would affect them.

Mr. Dixon asked on the contract, was the materials the same? Mr. Meeks said they all had to meet the same requirements as far as the wind rating and the 30-year warranty.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought they had a conversation earlier, where they had to pull the roof off and make alterations. Why rush? He thought they should table this, have a workshop and then come talk to explain.

Commissioner Green asked when they say workshop, just have them come before them when the item comes before them? He said he did not want to have a workshop just for this one item.

Chair Holt said she had no item voting for these items tonight so they could get this done but they need to revisit their procurement process and tighten it up. She said for them to move this and to workshop the bid process.

Commissioner Viegbesie was going to say what she alluded to. The only one item they needed to work on was the procurement. They had a lot of things coming up.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner NeSmith said he met with the Administrator this week regarding some work that was going on in District 3 and 4. He said he wanted to make sure whoever did the work, that they do so by maintaining a standard of excellence they discussed. He added the issue was not the quality but how it was applied.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE.**

Mr. Dixon said they will also have the Building Official sign off on the jobs as well.

Mr. Hinson said he made a motion to table and it was not followed through. Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson did make a motion but there was no second and it died for lack of second.

Chair Holt asked if there was a motion for reconsideration by who made the motion and a second.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID FOR PEACE AND HARMONY, HE HAD NO PROBLEM AND HE WILL RECONSIDER THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 TO APPROVE.**

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE MOTION TO INITIALLY TABLE THE ITEM BUT THEN CHANGED TO MAKE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ITEM AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13. Senior Services Roof Replacement Re-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was a re-bid of a roof replacement on the Gadsden County Senior Services building.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**14. Approval and Signature on the E911 Rural County Grant Application for E911 System and MapSAG Annual Support and Maintenance**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of the E911 Rural County Grant Application for E911 System and MapSAG Annual Support and Maintenance.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**15. Approval to Amend Ordinance 2014-002**

Item Pulled

**16. Approval of Granicus Contract**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Granicus Website/Agenda Management contract. He stated the Board approved for the website to be paid for through CARES Act residual fund and it presents an opportunity to install the Gov delivery system and will help with county services, filling out forms, applications and making payments to county departments individually including Building, Planning, Human Resources, Public Works, SHIP program, Animal Control, Department of Management Services, Mosquito Control and Library Services.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Hinson said this was for a 4-year contract and Mr. Dixon stated yes. Commissioner Hinson asked if money was coming from CARES or General Revenue and Mr. Dixon stated from CARES residual dollars and will be a budgeted line item. Commissioner Hinson asked what was the motivation for 4 years because things change every year. Mr. Dixon stated it would allow them to upgrade the system as they move through and they have to invest in a package they believe will be a good enough package to take them into the future. This would allow them to go into lockdown if need be and allow them to remote work if need be. He added they had not been good stewards of upgrading and have had to make large purchases to get them to a level where they could move their technology forward.

Commissioner Hinson said as he started thinking now, technology changes every six months or faster and did they want to commit to someone for 4 years and they might be stuck. Mr. Dixon said he agreed that technology changes and does so quickly, but they needed to believe in someone enough that would take them into the future and could adapt to future changes that will come and believe that is with Granicus.

Mr. Knowles said there are termination provisions within the contract if they are not satisfied with services.

Commissioner NeSmith said for clarification, if they terminate the contract, would they still own it and Mr. Knowles said they would still own the data.

**Brittany Catalozzi, Granicus**, appeared remotely before the Board.

Ms. Steele explained it was not one website, there will be 13 websites. Each department will have their own website.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:08 p.m.*

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. (Commissioner Viegbesie was not present when the vote was taken but upon his return, stated he wished for the record to reflect he was in favor of this item.)**

**17. Approval of the Quincy Airport Authority (QGAA)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the item and said this item was tabled last meeting.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THEIR RECOMMENDATION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT SAID WHEN SHE WAS CALLED SHE SUGGESTED A COMMISSIONER SERVE ON THIS BOARD AS THEY NEED TO KNOW THE GOINGS ON WITH THE BOARD. SHE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0. (Commissioner Viegbesie was not present when the vote was taken but upon his return, stated he wished for the record to reflect he was in favor of this item.)**

**18. SHIP/HHRP Emergency Housing Procurement Process Waiver**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it sought Board approval to waive the County procurement procedures and the new home limit for an emergency housing replacement project and to award the SHIP/HHRP Housing Rehabilitation Project to the selected contractor. Mr. Dixon stated the living conditions were in such a degraded state they felt to wait another day to help these citizens would not be worthy.

Commissioner Green said he was aware of the situation and asked what were the repercussions. Mr. Dixon stated it was the Board's right to do so.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 8:11 p.m.*

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD COMMENTS.**

Commissioner Hinson commented he wanted to make sure everything be done in line as this was Federal dollars. Mr. Dixon said they will make sure everything done in-line but with time constraints and money constraints would not allow them to move quick enough to help the citizens in a meaningful way. Commissioner Hinson said this was heartburn for a lot in the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated he had stepped out when they voted on the Granicus item and he would like for the record to reflect he was in favor of the two items.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**



**19. Approval to Procure/Purchase the Mobile Health Unit Funded by the Legislative through a Cost/Reimbursement Plan**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to purchase, in a cost reimbursement, a mobile health unit that was funded by the Legislature.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH ASKED FOR DISCUSSION.**

Commissioner NeSmith said to the Administrator they had a chance to meet earlier in the day and asked if this item was for appointment to the Gadsden County Health Council and Mr. Dixon stated no, this was for a purchase.

Commissioner Hinson stated that under the Health Council's Goals and Timelines, it stated:

**Year 1**

1. With funds received from the State of Florida the Gadsden Community Health Council will purchase a mobile health unit outfitted for our purposes along with operational supplies.
2. Contract with medical and mental health professionals to provide services.
3. Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the mobile unit and services.

**Year 2**

1. The Gadsden Community Health Council will request additional funding from the State of Florida in the amount of \$192,044. The Gadsden Community Health Council has received a total of \$75,000 from the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners' CARES and the Gadsden American Rescue Plan towards the operation of the Medical Mobile Unit for year 2.

Commissioner Hinson asked if that was \$75,000 from CARES and \$75,000 from American Rescue. Mr. Dixon stated it was just from the American Rescue. Commissioner Hinson stated they also did \$75,000 from CARES.

Chair Holt said that was used to get people to get the CARES because they could not get people out there and signed up. They were missing all kind of opportunities.

Commissioner Hinson explained he was saying in general, they gave \$170,000 total. He went on to read:

**Year 2**

1. The Gadsden Community Health Council will request additional funding from the State of Florida in the amount of \$192,044. The Gadsden Community Health Council has received a total of \$75,000 from the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners' CARES and the Gadsden American Rescue Plan towards the operation of the Medical Mobile Unit for year 2. There are plans to request additional revenue from the County ½ cent sales tax.

**Year 3**

1. The Gadsden Community Health Council will request additional funding from the State of Florida in the amount of \$170,000. The Gadsden Community Health Council will also request funding from the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners' Gadsden

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American Rescue Plan and from the County's ½ cent sales tax towards the operation of the Medical Mobile Unit.

Commissioner Hinson asked if there was any attachment from Department of Health confirming reimbursement for the unit?

Mr. Dixon said he did not have it at the meeting but would get it to them and stated they received approval from the Legislature and the Governor's Office for the budget. There is a document and he will make sure to forward it to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he could contact the Gadsden Community Health Council so the Commissioners would know exactly what they were doing. He also wanted to have a presentation from the Gadsden County Health Council mapping out the usage of the mobile unit and services that would be provided to the citizens to have a clear picture.

Mr. Dixon stated Rev. Hanna was there but would get them to come and make a formal presentation. Commissioner Hinson asked if he was the Chairman and Mr. Dixon stated Howard McKinnon was the Chairman.

Commissioner Hinson stated the only reason he had heartburn, not because of this, they had the same heartburn with the Fire Department. They do not own it even though it is a non-profit, but they do not own it. He added he did not mind getting it and the County own it and Mr. Dixon said the County would own it. Commissioner Hinson continued and stated "During last session, the Gadsden County BOCC and the Gadsden Community Health Council were awarded \$400,000 by the Florida Legislature and Governor Ran DeSantis to purchase, outfit and staff a mobile health unit. This unit will be operated by the Gadsden Community Health Council along with the assistance of the Florida Department of Health Gadsden. The FDOH and the Gadsden Community Health Council request the County to procure/purchase the mobile health unit through a cost/reimbursement plan, ie, the County would purchase the unit and the FDOH would reimburse the County its cost one hundred percent. The State's procurement process requires the vendor (in this case the County or Gadsden Community Health Council) to procure the mobile unit (and equipment) and then send an invoice and evidence of payment to the state (in this case the Department of Health). Once received, the Department will reimburse the purchase(s). The requirements for invoices and processing the invoice are outlined in the following reference guide for State Expenditures attached." Commissioner Hinson asked once reimbursed, if the County would still own it and Mr. Dixon stated yes, the Council wrote the request/grant but the gift was to Gadsden County.

Chair Holt stated the County set up the Health Council, they were under the County. She stated they were not purchasing a mobile health unit for anyone other than the County and if it needed to be specified a little more, they could do that. They could not be responsible for something they purchased for someone else, it had to be for the County.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the County would own the mobile unit and Chair Holt stated yes. Mr. Dixon explained the reason they went that way was something they were now experiencing in having a delta virus breakout across the State. The Department of Health hands are tied and unable to move because the Governor's position was different than other health experts. The

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freedom the mobile unit would have is to do the County's bidding as opposed to do vaccinations and testing, regardless of what was happening with the State.

**CHAIR HOLT STATED THERE WAS A MOTION AND SECOND FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE MOBILE UNIT AND CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**20. Updates**

Mr. Thomas was present and mentioned he had sent emails and spreadsheets and wanted to follow up on undisbursed money from the ½ cent Indigent tax as a result of the new contract with CRMC. He pointed out to the Commissioners they have about \$703,000 not disbursed. He wanted to reinforce the Board had not dealt with how they wanted it distributed.

Chair Holt said that was a good thing because of what they were experiencing with COVID, etc.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the money could be used for transportation? Because some people have issues and had no way to get back and forth and transportation was needed in Gadsden County. Mr. Thomas said it has to be indigent health care tied to the Ordinance, the health plan and that statute, which may need to be revised or looked at. He stated the original health plan focused a lot on the hospital and now with the new contract, that was money that used to go to the hospital to defer indigent health care costs that was not going there now. He said that probably needed to be discussed as to the priority at this point.

Commissioner Hinson asked for him to explain "indigent" and Mr. Thomas explained it meant the money was not available for medical healthcare. It was used to reopen the hospital. Commissioner Hinson said people said they could not get in because they did not have the \$10.00 necessary.

Mr. Dixon said they were trying to look for a more holistic, bigger picture and opportunity instead of a "quick fix" and a workshop was coming.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**21. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said it had been a long month and a couple of long months to go. He said opportunities are out there with grants they see coming down the road to provide more permanent health care. He said they were looking for more permanent opportunities and not necessarily the Emergency Room.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**22. Updates**

Mr. Knowles asked that he be skipped, he was trying to find information for Commissioner Hinson.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**23. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson felt they need to have someone from the Health Department to show at every board meeting to give a brief overview of what was going on. He said they received a letter last week and they had 141 people that died and had some in Havana that passed away. He said they had a back to school drive Sunday and had 300-400 people show up.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith said he did not want to interrupt his question for the Clerk.

Commissioner Hinson said the question was for the County Administrator but sometimes it is said the Clerk has to answer and wanted to make sure it was gotten straight. Peavy and Son sent an email and said they have not been paid, then there's the issue with Figgers Communication and the City of Chattahoochee. Mr. Thomas said in general, they cut checks for Board vendors every week, but we have been frustrated too because things have been held up and not gotten to Finance and sometimes vendors call Finance. He said they have to make sure things are signed off on by the County and then Finance has to receive it. He said he sent an email not long ago about a situation with the Bank of America card because it was held up and not did not received in Finance until after the due date. He said they pay bills every week and the deadline is by Tuesday noon. If there is no problem with the item, checks are cut every week. The thing with Chattahoochee, he only recently heard about the agreement, but have not seen anything. He asked the Finance Director and she's not received anything. He said based on what the City Manager said and was unsure if it was a verbal agreement, but said it was worked out in the middle of the fiscal year, they saw money was budgeted in an equipment line item in a previous fiscal year that was unspent but Finance never received anything to pay. By law, they have to pay within 45 days and try to pay sooner. He said he has heard this from previous Administrators that the Clerk was not paying bills and turned out they were being held on a desk and was frustrating. They pay bills every single week. He said to get it to Finance by Tuesday in order to get checks cut. They pay between \$3-4 Million a month. With the City of Chattahoochee, he was not sure which County Administrator they were dealing with, Finance has not received a bill to pay. He added that usually there are Interlocal Agreements and they do a Fire Agreement each year with each municipality and this must be on top of the regular fire agreement. Finance has not received anything. It's a matter of the Board deciding that was what they wanted to do. Commissioner Hinson asked about Peavy & Sons and thought it was worked out. Clerk added in their Public Works Department, they have had a major turnover. He came to them approximately 1 ½ years ago and told them that Department of Transportation was threatening to cut off road paving grants because they were concerned about the paperwork and inability of staff to properly handle it. The point was, Finance pays bills every week and there are a lot of grants out there they need to manage them in a timely fashion, get everything signed off in an appropriate way and get it to Finance.

Mr. Dixon said the Clerk was right, since he has been here, they have had to move and he has said numerous times, they do not have staff in the proper place. He thinks they have gotten on top of those issues and was better than it was. The Clerk's Office has a very diligent and stringent process. He added they will look into the Peavy issue. He asked Ms. Daniels and she

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said they claimed they did additional work and it could not be verified and had controversy about additional work they claimed was done. Mr. Dixon said they will follow up. He also said the Clerk was right about the City of Chattahoochee, he had not seen any documentation. An agreement with a staff member was not an agreement, it has to be with the Board and there was no Minutes to that degree. He said the Board did not agree to it. As he told Mr. Presnell, there is an option, he could go before the Board and if they agree, he would send it over, otherwise he will not send over.

Commissioner Hinson asked about Figgers Communication. Mr. Dixon said they met two weeks ago, and sent over paperwork to be paid. In the meeting, clearly by their actions, was dissatisfied when they talked about the roll-out of the program and have not heard from them since. Commissioner Hinson stated they may be back into a situation like last year.

Commissioner Hinson said when he emails the County Administrator, he never receives a response. When he asks to have an emergency meeting because of pressing issues, he never gets a response. Chair Holt suggested he get the information and bring it to each other. Commissioner Hinson stated he would bring it to the next meeting. He said because they disagree with them, does not mean he did not like them. He said a County Commissioner has emailed and texted his employee that he hired and the employee refused to entertain him at all.

Commissioner NeSmith said when he has vendors call, if they have issues that are important, if he has to sit down with the County Administrator, he does so in his office and they talk it out. There are other avenues also.

He added there were three issues-one in particular, he wanted they did not forget the guidelines that govern the Board that the County Attorney was working on and it was not tabled. They also need to complete the performance evaluation.

He said he received the 2020 Census information, in Jefferson County in 2010 there was 14,761 and in 2020 there was 14,510 and population reduction of -1.7%; he said Wakulla had an increase of 9.7%, Leon had an increase of 6.1% and could not remember the percentage increase for the State of Florida. He said according to the 2020 Census, there were 43,826 persons in the County and was a reduction of 5.5% and was unacceptable as the State was growing, counties around us was growing and we're getting smaller. He asked that they have a workshop on this matter and said it was a "five alarm fire" and needed to be addressed immediately.

Chair Holt said it was a great idea to have a workshop. She added that the committee got together to do the census and when COVID came, the committee fell apart. She said also if people could not find jobs here, there were not going to stay.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said he saw the numbers and it startled him but assumed it had to do with the lack of having people go door-to-door due to COVID and it was a very limited amount of people working. He said he did not think the numbers were correct.

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He wanted to make sure they were being cautious with the caution lights and buses that were running.

He thanked Ms. Whaley for being pro-active with regard to the storm.

He added that COVID was real as well as the Delta variant. They need to take precautions.

He asked at the last meeting for an Agenda item for the security of the building and also asked if they could have a contact number for Talquin. He stated they could not control when lights go out but if they could have a contact person when there is a problem with power. He said also the security of the building.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said to Commissioner NeSmith great minds think alike. The population issue needs to be addressed. He said he was the census leader for 2010 and he was concerned about it. If they continue to have a decrease, they need to be aware what it will do to their revenue sharing funding. They need to look at projections.

He suggested they should be thinking about forming a Recovery and Resilience Coalition with surrounding counties as there was power in numbers. He said with disasters that were happening, they could not handle them themselves and asked if they could explore.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said she was looking to get more local people on the ground to answer phones with the distribution; there seemed to be a little distance and people were not aware of some of the things and could get people that could meet the public and deal with local items to help with Integrity.

She said she felt sorry for kids going back to school and there were no mandatory masks. She requested they have documentation requesting that all County employees were required to have vaccines.

She asked about the Courthouse COVID monument and how it was going. She asked that parents please protect the children and have them wear masks.

She said with the Issue of providing, they have agreements with cities that they have always had. She said they could not do what they want to do with public money, they must have something in writing.

She said she has been asked by several people for them to curb what was being said, and was told they were talking too long. They need to choose their battles. She added they work for the people, not for themselves.

**Receipt and File**

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:20 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 19, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Clerk’s Office

**\*\*The workshop was delayed waiting on the County Administrator to join the workshop\*\***

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 4:11 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

***Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners to continue the practice of social distancing, Commissioners want to continue to hear from citizens under the Citizens Requesting to be Heard section of the agenda.***

***If citizens have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email***

***[CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.***

***The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.***

Commissioner Green read the above statement aloud.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

County Administrator Ed Dixon said the purpose of the workshop was to address the budget so the Board could meet all the dates and requirements. Also, he said they were looking at the requests from members regarding everything from matters such as neighborhood lighting to road paving and striping, development of open spaces, and the increase of mowing capacity. He expressed the need for internal improvements and to bring in more money and get payments out faster along with creating a maintenance schedule. The workshop was also meant to be a time to discuss grants.

**1. Introduction**

Assistant Administrator Mrs. Daniels introduced the proposed budget. She stated they had presented the Board with different options regarding raising the millage rate. At the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Board voted to set the millage rate at 9 mills. The County had a 7.9% property increase in property valuations for this year. Based on the millage rate of 9 mills, the County would generate approximately \$14.7 Million in revenue from that. She said they could not budget for the entire amount the County would generate. By law, they could only budget for



95% of that. Based on that 95%, the County would generate a little over \$1 Million in additional revenue. She reiterated they could not raise the millage rate but could lower it. She said they had a small decrease in the telecommunication tax along with a decrease in the indigent tax. She said they had about \$327,000 in other revenues and emergency sales tax. She said they would net \$1.4 Million increase in revenue from the past year.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the 9<sup>th</sup> cent additional gas tax, how much additional revenue would that bring in. She said county-wide, about \$245,000 dollars annually and the County gets a major percentage of that but the cities get some as well. She thought the County received about 78%.

Commissioner Green asked what was the maximum the gas tax could be. Ms. Daniels stated the County has one cent on the ninth cent gas tax and could can go up one since they were at 8. She stated they were at 9 already on the diesel fuel and have 5 cents that they could go up on the local fuel.

Chair Holt asked for a sheet regarding taxes and where they go and where was the money generated from regarding the gas tax? Ms. Daniels answered the trucking industry was bearing the brunt.

Mr. Dixon said a big generator of that number was Flying J and Pilot and a third was going in now in Midway. He said once it was ready, they were the big generators as 60-70% of the gas tax come from them.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the gas surcharge have to come through a referendum or a super majority?

Ms. Daniels said it can now be voted on by BOCC but has to be a supermajority vote.

Commissioner NeSmith asked for clarification on which taxes that would apply to. She responded local option gas tax and the 9-cent tax. It is already maxed on diesel.

Ms. Daniels explained page four showed the recommendations based on the new millage rate. She made note there were no raises for BOCC staff and Constitutional Officers because of the pandemic and the County did not know who was going to be affected by the pandemic (citizens) and they may not be able to pay property taxes.

Commissioner Viegbesie pointed out BOCC raises were state and population based, Ms. Daniels clarified that she meant in regards to the County Commission staff.

Ms. Daniels stated there was a need for a new ADA compliant voting equipment which will run roughly \$110,000.

Ms. Daniels explained the Clerk's office now needs to be paid by the Property Appraiser for services it previously didn't charge for. The Clerk's Office can no longer provide these services at no charge.

Ms. Daniels explained funds need to be dedicated to the Property Appraiser's office as it needs its own IT staff.

Commissioner Green asked with this increase, was it dedicated to hire other staff? Ms. Daniels explained this was not the cost of a full position but rather they have combined some duties so monies would allow duties to be combined and have someone be dedicated to IT along with paying the Clerk for services.

Vice Chair Viegbesie requested a comparison column for the next meeting regarding the millage rates.

Ms. Daniels explained the County has proposed setting aside money for future revenue and capital items. She explained there were some new items, they were trying to set aside funding for future capital projects and were looking at an estimate of \$150,000 to be set aside, they have not identified what those projects will be but “we have to start somewhere”.

Commissioner Viegbesie asks if the County would be able to use that \$150,000 in the future for municipalities who had issues regarding monies not being paid, if supporting documentation is found that the County did indeed need to reimburse them. Mr. Dixon responded “once the meeting occurs and prior to the full approval of the budget, we’ll make arrangements”.

Commissioner Hinson asked in reference to the \$320,00 for the new positions, if the money came from CARES money? Ms. Daniels explained yes, but the CARES Act funding was a one-time funding and the County has to pay them in the future which was what this was showing. Commissioner Hinson suggested putting the hiring off until October 1<sup>st</sup> to not “comingle” with other funds. He added that positions that were not approved by the Board were advertised. Mr. Dixon said that was incorrect. Commissioner Hinson responded that he would find the listing and send it to the County Attorney as well as the other commissioners.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the Board decided to call the position Commissioner Hinson was speaking of the Government Operations Coordinator. If the position was mistitled, then the Administrator’s office should pull it and retitle it.

Commissioner Green stated “regardless of title, we’ve approved the position”. Ms. Daniels confirmed the position has been approved within the budget.

Chair Holt asks if the Board would like to look at the millage rate and asked if there were any suggestions.

Commissioner Viegbesie said each Commissioner should meet with the County Administer and submit their concerns and interests. He further stated the commissioners should have been doing that and there was no need to discuss that idea today.

Chair Holt stated she was referring to errors.

Commissioner NeSmith encouraged all Commissioners to meet with the County Administrator. He reinforced “our population impacts our budget”

Commissioner Green asked Clerk Thomas when the last time the County had an increase on the local gas tax.

Mr. Thomas replied the .6¢ goes back to the 90's and was renewed just a few years ago.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the numbers they had now were the numbers that were to be used for the budget for the next year. He added the Attorney had a better understanding of things we could do to make this better for the next go round.

County Attorney Clayton Knowles responded that there were ways to challenge census data regarding the decrease in the population. Originally, the census estimated Gadsden's population would increase by 11% and UF, who assists in gathering and organizing census data, suggested a 6% increase. Counties like Gadsden who has large agriculture populations, larger Hispanic populations, heir property, agriculture areas, and minorities, etc., may not get counted as accurately. He explained that folks who live with their grandparents or others may not get counted if their house looks uninhabitable. Every town saw a decrease aside from Midway and Quincy. He added they have 90 days to challenge the census numbers.

Chair Holt stated if the Board does decide to challenge, the County needed to set aside funds for that. The funds could always be put it back if they were not used. She pointed out that there may have been people living in homes with relatives that were counted but they were not. Vice Chair Viegbesie agreed and saw it as an investment for the next 5+ years.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the Board challenges the census numbers, could we pause current numbers based on last numbers? Mr. Knowles said not to his knowledge. Mr. Dixon said they won't stop it but they become a part of every walk of life, in regards to representatives and federal money, so the County needs to review them now. Commissioner NeSmith asked what was the mechanism in Gadsden County (if there is one) to follow the population from year to year. The County Administrator referred to BEBR- Bureau of Economic and Business Research- who provides the State with numbers on population on a continual basis. The County can ask specifically for numbers and updates of the population. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the County could install some mechanisms so they could monitor the population on their own without having to rely on others.

Chair Holt said they have not been monitoring, but look where people go, jails, tag office, etc., to collect the data and get an idea.

Commissioner Hinson agreed the decline in numbers of the census was because of COVID in the communities. He mentioned the loss of the high school, threat of losing the elementary school, and the decline in workers at the state hospital as contributors to the population decline but also noted the Havana/Midway area was still growing. He asked if there was room in the budget for senior citizens? Mr. Dixon stated yes.

Ms. Daniels stated if a point was not on the spreadsheet before them, then there was not an increase/decrease. The spreadsheet was only showing the items that had a difference from last year.

Commissioner Hinson asked if \$1200 would still be given to public works. Mr. Dixon said every county employee would receive it, it was in the budget for this fiscal year.

Chair Holt expressed her concern about funding for the jail, it needed to be set aside so the Board could look more in depth at it since the Board was in charge of the Jail. It was up to the Board who ran it and the Board was responsible. She also said economic development money needed to be set aside to pay for trips to find new businesses.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was an assessment for what it would cost to bring the jail up to standard.

Chair Holt responded that a federal lobbyist came and \$43 Million was what they estimated years ago. It was recommended the County should set aside money every year.

Mr. Dixon reminded the Board that COVID has changed how renovations need to be looked at. Now, compared to years in the past, the jail needed quarantine suites, more medical room and supplies, etc.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how much was currently in the new proposed budget for BOCC economic development? Chair Holt said they give money to The Chamber and GCDC. Commissioner NeSmith asked what they allocate for their own economic development and Chair Holt said they do not. The County is open for business.

Commissioner Green asked if the Board was able to get the number on phases to renovate the jail. Chair Holt says they'd have to hire someone who is specialized in that but said they could budget and look into it.

Commissioner Hinson said the work program within the jail helped decrease the incarcerated population. He suggested subcontractors for lawn/mowing care since inmates currently could not due to COVID.

*Chair Holt stepped out at 5:31PM.*

Commissioner Hinson suggested commissioner aides for 2 years and it could be funded through the American Rescue Plan and be used as a training opportunity.

*Chair Holt returned at 5:33PM.*

Chair Holt said the County's infrastructure funds need to be discussed, empty space at the hospital may qualify as infrastructure so appropriate funds could be used for it. She wanted to encourage another hospital to enter the area especially if the two in Tallahassee were overrun. Gas tax, what were the local agencies receiving from that? New rules and regulations for the Supervisor of Elections Office, if any? Annexations, CRA's, what are the responsibilities of the Commissioners versus the annexed/CRA themselves. Example: Roads of annexes, who takes care of them.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if annexations by cities in unincorporated areas been selective or total annexation in regards to maintenance? Chair Holt referred to Midway and the argument over county vs city roads. She stated it depended how the annexation was written.

Commissioner Hinson brought up the subject of jobs. He said the Board needed to be having meetings regarding jobs and things that impact the whole County. They need to reinvest in Midway and Havana, suggested purchasing land to control the flow of commutes to and from large projects such as the new Amazon warehouse. He also would like to discuss how to bring revenue and jobs to the Chattahoochee area.

Chair Holt asked if the County Administrator had everything he needed to make sure there were at least two people on the budget. Mr. Dixon said yes.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned teachers and police officers who were working throughout the pandemic, says he wanted to look into how to increase wages to keep them around. He said they needed it in writing to only use certain money for wages.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 5:49PM.*

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 5:49PM.*

Commissioner NeSmith said the County needed revenues to provide services. Gadsden County could not compete with Tallahassee but it could compete with itself.

Commissioner Green commented in reference to wages being raised, if they were last raised in the 90s then the County will still look like the 90's.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented that the Board seriously needed to look at coming up with a regional growth planning committee because other counties were putting the effort in. The County should work with other counties to retain citizens and grow as well. He also commented that a Recovery and Resilience committee needed to be added to the economic plan.

Mr. Knowles followed up and said the 6¢ fuel tax was in the years 1985-2015 and extended in 2015-2024.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if it could be revised before 2024. Mr. Dixon said they did not want to bother that one but rather the new .6¢ tax. He also said they needed to communicate and convey that working regional development was not an attempt to take the County over.

## **2. Summary Highlights**

- **Ad Valorem Tax Revenue Summary**
- **Major Revenue Sources Update**
- **Potential Revenue Options**
- **Enhancement/Reduction Summary**

## **3. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Direction**

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
August 19, 2021 – Budget Workshop

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS  
DECLARED ADJOURNED.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 30, 2021, AT 4:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5 marks  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 4:04pm., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the pledge of allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, Public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsgdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsgdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 30, 2021. 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.*

Mr. Knowles read the above statement allow.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Review and Discuss Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

Chair Holt asked the County Administrator Ed Dixon to introduce the topic. The County Administrator Dixon said the presentation was coming from County Attorney Knowles today. Mr. Knowles introduced the Ordinance as a combination of previous rules and current corrections based off previous suggestions from other workshops. He said the main change is on page 6 of 14, Rules of Decorum and Civility.

County Attorney Knowles begin reading Section **V. RULES OF DECORUM AND CIVILITY BOARD TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE DECORUM AND CIVILITY** on page 6 of 14.

*Commissioner Hinson entered the workshop at 4:10 PM.*

Mr. Knowles requested Board direction in regards to Section V and the length of speaking time per commissioner. He said it could be any number of minutes they wanted and if they wanted to keep a running clock, they could certainly do that.

Commissioner Green asked if the Board needed to vote on having a clock/timer? County Attorney Knowles said if he was directed to change it, he would and once they had all the changes the Board wanted, it would be advertised for the first public hearing and they could still change it within the timeline of that and there would be a second public hearing. Commissioner Green said he might be the only one that wanted a clock because a lot of the time people repeat themselves to prove a point. He suggested saying what was needed to be said and be done. He explains he doesn't have a problem with a shut-in as long as there is a purpose to the meeting and business is being done.

Commissioner NeSmith agreed with Commissioner Green. He asked if there has been a timeframe in the past? He stated being passionate was okay but repeating it over and over was not. Chair Holt said there was a time limit but it got narrowed because a previous commissioner said "we need to be more civil". Chair Holt agreed the clock was good and could help to get the skills to limit yourself. She added the clock could always be put away.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the best practice of time limits. Mr. Knowles said citizens comments are limited to three minutes and that is pretty much adhered to and Commissioners comments are five to ten minutes. Ten minutes should be the limit for public hearings. He said there are no statutes that limits time.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if additional time is needed, could the speaking commissioner ask the Chair for more time. Mr. Knowles responded if the Board needed to give itself more time on an item, suggested they call for a vote for additional time. There are items that could take longer than 10 mins so a vote could be handled that way. Commissioner NeSmith asked if he needed more time, how would that work? Mr. Knowles answered that the commissioner would need to ask the Chair to call a vote to extend the time.

Chair Holt explained that commissioners will not be yielding time and giving away minutes. She asked who would be keeping up with that? She said commissioners should make their point and say what needed to be said.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if commissioners ever yield time? Chair Holt responded they always do. Commissioner NeSmith asked if yielding time is addressed in rules, Chair Holt responded no.

Mr. Knowles asked if they were not yielding time did they need something that says yielding of time was not permitted? Mr. Dixon asked if that would take away from true discussion. Chair holt said it did not mean there would not be any input or discussion.

Commissioner Green asked once a commissioner was done, was there is no yielding? He suggested a change of time from 5 to 7. Chair Holt said if you look at the clock that was a long time to speak and suggested a change from 5 to 3 and 10 to 7.

Mr. Knowles asked for clarification of how long they were giving the commissioners. Chair Holt said at public hearings there will be several opinions brought up at the podium on an item, especially land issues. She said an attorney told them if someone comes to the podium they have a set time but they also have the right to bring up other items.



Commissioner NeSmith asked about time limits and then someone else speaks, would he have a chance for rebuttal? Chair Holt said there would be rebuttal time. Mr. Knowles said there was not any rules but you want to be able to be heard and give due process, hear other commissioners because they represent the public also so within 4-5 minutes unless it's something outside the realm of normality, they should be able to get through it. Chair Holt said that's why she mentioned rebuttal time. If you went to 3 minutes for presentation there would still be 2 minutes for rebuttal.

Commissioner NeSmith stated he was concerned that someone was going to have to keep up with the time. Chair Holt explained everyone would have 2 minutes for rebuttal after the 3 initial minutes. Commissioner NeSmith asked how much additional time if the Board approved? Chair Holt stated 2 minutes. Mr. Knowles said they could extend the time by majority vote of the Board. That way if it was something the commissioner was passionate about and it was going longer than anticipated, the could be extended as long as the colleagues were on the same page.

Commissioner Green felt they should have it in written format to give 5 minutes to start per Commissioner, they should not give beyond 5. He felt 2 - 3 minutes would work. He suggested 3 minutes max. Chair Holt asked per commissioner and Commissioner Green said per commissioner.

Mr. Knowles thought that it would be for everyone. He asked what would happen when the next commissioner wanted additional time? Chair Holt said they would vote. Chair Holt pointed out if they gave a commissioner extra minutes, it could sink any commissioner with negative comments because the commissioner would not have time to respond and could lead the negative comments hanging. They should give each commissioner the opportunity to have one more minute. Commissioner Green said he wanted to have fairness. Chair Holt said no more than a minute for closing statements.

Mr. Knowles wanted to make sure they were on the same page. For example, Commissioner Hinson talks and has 5 minutes, every other commissioner gets 5 minutes to speak, if no other commissioner wants to speak then you vote. Chair Holt said every commissioner has the same amount of time to speak; 3 minutes for discussion and 2 for rebuttal. It was up to the board if they get extra time after the overall 5 minutes is over. Then the commissioners have rebuttal.

Commissioner NeSmith said one extra minute for closing sounds good. Mr. Knowles said four and a total of 6 and everyone said yes.

There was then discussion over availability of agendas being ready two weeks prior and the Commissioners would be able to go over the items beforehand.

Mr. Knowles said for clarity, five total minutes for initial debate, two of minutes for debate, three minutes for rebuttal with option by majority rule of the Board for an additional one minute of rebuttal or debate per Commissioner.

They then moved to item 6.

Mr. Knowles said because of being elected, he did not advise dismissing a commissioner outside of imminent threat of violence to the Board. He could see them getting in trouble for it. Chair Holt asked him to bring some legal standings regarding that because commissioners should be held by the same standards as they were held by. Mr. Knowles said he would argue they were not constitutionally held and Chair Holt stated it did not matter. She asked what if a commissioner would not let the meeting continue.

Commissioner Green said they were all mature adults, or should be. He said he would rather excuse himself from the conversation than sit through a personal issue argument due to the immaturity of the conversation. He said they should not sit there and tolerate any backlash or derogatory behavior.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there has been discussion regarding removal of a commissioner and was that with them? Mr. Knowles said yes, at a 4:30 workshop. Commissioner NeSmith said they were all constitutional officers and asked the remedies or steps to be taken to remedy for it to not continue? Mr. Knowles said probably to adjourn the meeting for a cool down then come back. Commissioner NeSmith said they were all professional persons voted by the public to be here, and should not be removed. If they saw the meeting was moving in a certain direction, adjourn the meeting temporarily sounded good to keep the decorum. Mr. Knowles suggested a 5-minute recess in that situation.

*Commissioner Viegbesie entered at 4:49 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles said he could not find anything that would give the Board authority to remove its own member. Commissioner NeSmith said no one was discussing removal, that was off the table. He said all it would take was someone being recognized by the chair to make a motion and Mr. Knowles said yes.

Mr. Dixon said a recess is always in order. The idea is to use tools that are available to this body (current Board). If the goal is decorum, then decorum must always lead.

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Dixon should a commissioner be removed from the Board based on what he was saying? Mr. Dixon stated never. The point was, a recess is always a good tool to use.

Commissioner Viegbesie said you could not legislate morality. Removing a commissioner should not even be a discussion as they are elected officials elected to run local government. They were all adults. Unless the person was getting to the point of being belligerent and grabbing a commissioner, he did not think that was something they should do.

Chair Holt said civility should work and did not think it should ever come that far. She said they needed to come up with a way that when they speak, they are speaking to possible businesses coming to the community and in order for them to come, they have to have faith in the Commission. She said if they want to strike out anything in that paragraph, that was fine.

Commissioner Hinson said he has been Chairman twice and defended his passion and comments.

Chair Holt asked if they wanted to strike number 7?

Commissioner NeSmith said this was for the public not for the commissioner so it was fine. If the wording points back to the Board, he felt they should remove it. Mr. Knowles said they could say any person in the Chamber and specifically say if there was a member of the public. What he was trying to say was if there was any disruption by a member of the public or an imminent threat to the safety and well-being of the Chamber by a member of the public, then remove that person by an affirmative vote OR the Sheriff, who would do his or her job.

Commissioner Viegbesie said anyone could be passionate about an issue. What do you do if one person is targeted by the passion? He added there was nothing wrong with agreeing to disagree but disagree agreeably. He felt they should strike it completely.

Commissioner Green said being passionate did not require you to be disrespectful.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the language of disruption of a meeting part of the previous code? Mr. Knowles said it has been added since the previous 2 or 3 workshops. Chair Holt said they have always had wording for public disruption. Commissioner NeSmith said he was confused.

Chair Viegbesie asked for Mr. Dixon to share what he knows about the document as his hand was up in regards to Commissioner NeSmith's question. Mr. Dixon said he agreed with the removal of part of the language, however 99.999 % of those cases would come from the public in front of the podium. He said there was nothing worse than a commissioner having to sit through an abusive person at the podium or in the audience. He said the goal is not to take away someone's right to assemble but if the decorum is being threatened, then yes.

*Mr. Dixon stepped out at 5:16 pm*

Commissioner Hinson said he noticed they were now getting things the day of the meeting. He said for them to do a little research before the meeting.

*Mr. Dixon returned at 5:18 pm*

He said anything over \$25k should be seen prior to voting.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he heard the attorney say something, which when he was Chair he did not see as a practice and before then, had not experienced where the agenda preparation was something that was discussed between the County Administrator, the Chair, and Vice Chair. He said he was in strong opposition of an item to be added because the public did not have time to research and voice their opinion. He said they have to have transparency and accountability. If it is an item that is within the financial authority of the Administrator's discretion, within the realm of \$25k, then if that is something that is needed to be done as an emergency then yes. Otherwise, they need preparation. Procrastination of an individual does not constitute as an emergency. Items should be brought in the manner to allow the public as well as the Commissioner to have an opportunity to preview it and then speak on it if they chose to do so.

Mr. Knowles said he would consult with the Chair for emergency meetings, special meetings, etc. On page four of 14 under **Emergency Meetings**, it states "No items with fiscal impact above

\$10,000 shall be considered during an emergency meeting unless the appropriate State or Federal entity has declared a state of emergency affecting the County. In such instances, items of a fiscal impact above the threshold described herein above shall directly relate to said State of Emergency". He said on page 10 of 14 they tried to address that with number 11 **Placing Items on Agenda**. "With consent a VAB majority of the members present when such request is made matters may be placed on the agenda by any member of the commission, the administrator, or by the county attorney, provided the item's fiscal impact to the County for the item does not exceed \$10,000.

Chair Holt said she was scared if Commissioner Viegbesie was saying he did not want two people looking at the tentative agenda. It his a safety mechanism. Chair Viegbesie said that was not what he was saying. He added when he was Chair and Vice Chair, there was never a time where the Chair and the Administrator discussed the items going on the agenda with the sit-in vice-chair.

Commissioner Hinson said the most important thing, things should never go out without the attorney's blessings. The attorney should look at all documents. Chair Holt said that used to be part of the attorney's assignment. Mr. Knowles said they look at the ones they receive in advance, sometimes they do not get any in advance.

Mr. Dixon said they try to have things to the Board within 14 days so they can advertise. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the attorney received the agenda in advance. Mr. Knowles said yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie said to Commissioner NeSmith, there were times before he and Commissioner Green were there, he was the newest and youngest on the commission. For the time he's been there, there has been a time when the attorney did not have time to review the item and the item was pulled. They trust the law firm to be their protector so they always look at the items.

Commissioner Hinson felt they must put a time or date on this so the attorney would have time to review the item. He added that 24-48 hours was too late. When the Chair looks at it, the attorney looks at it and actually, the attorney should look at it prior.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Commissioner Hinson, if the recommendation that the attorney gets the agenda the night of the prior meeting? Commissioner Hinson said every decision has to be thought through. He said it should be 14-15 days prior to the meeting.

Mr. Dixon said the procedure is, we call it 14 days because they are moving toward 10 days. The 10 days is the Thursday or Friday they are sending things to the newspaper to appear in the next week's addition for the following Tuesday's meeting.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the 10 days included the weekend? Mr. Dixon said business days. Chair Holt said they have the weekend.

Commissioner Green asked if they were not sending the attorney a whole package at once? Were they sending individual items? Mr. Dixon said he received things in real time.

Mr. Knowles said to piggy-back on what Mr. Dixon said, he typically gets things from staff 3 weeks before the meetings to be able to review before going on the agenda. When do they want agenda items and supporting documents deadline to be given to the attorney separately or together? Mr. Dixon said they may know that a certain thing needs to be on the agenda and the attorney needs to work his magic before it is sent to commissioners.

Commissioner Hinson said they need to be consistent. Items should be given to the Commissioners 7-10 days prior to the meeting. Chair Holt said that was why they hired a firm, to have enough people to do the research. She said they have to determine one they want and how they pay for it? Commissioner Hinson said to do both. Chair Holt said she did not think it was needed.

Mr. Knowles asked if they wanted to keep that, strike it, change it...

Chair Holt asked the administrator how the process was working for him and if he wanted to change it. Mr. Dixon asked Ms. Bradley to come to the podium.

Commissioner NeSmith asked that the record reflect that he had done all he could in previous meetings to bring in all the income he possibly could into the county.

Mr. Dixon asked Ms. Bradley if she had to improve the process, how would she and she said the process was working. Items are due on Tuesday, two weeks before the next meeting, the Agenda is put together and the Attorney has already reviewed 90% of the items. They are usually 2-3 weeks ahead. 95-98% of items they are well in advance of.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 5:50PM.*

Mr. Dixon said they have tried to limit the add-ons but there are times there is no way around it because of the time they get them and when they are due. He said he was keenly aware of what the Commissioners were saying about adding things to the agenda.

Commissioner Hinson asked about item 11. Commissioner Viegbesie said the Discretionary maximum limit is \$25k unless it was an emergency. Mr. Knowles said Item 11 was not in regards to the discretionary limit. This was items that were brought to the Commissioners at the last minute. It was not changing the Administrator's limit.

*Commissioner Green returned at 5:55PM.*

Commissioner NeSmith said he was confused and asked if the Administrator had up to \$25k to spend without the board voting on it. Mr. Knowles said yes. Commissioner NeSmith asked why would it would be on the agenda if he has the authority to spend that. Chair Holt said it would not be.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if the Administrator had discretionary authority of \$25k and there was something that needed to be done, why wasn't the \$10k part of the \$25k, then why isn't the expenditure brought before the board. He did not think item 11 needed to be within the policy (page 10 of 14).

Commissioner Hinson explained the \$10k was for extra funds that need to be found and felt it should stay.

Commissioner Viegbesie said page 6 of 14, **Election and Removal of Chairperson**, based on what he was reading, election of the chair is every November, not only in election year. He suggested taking out “after an election year”. Commissioner Dixon mentioned the super majority and Commissioner Viegbesie said that should be removed.

Commissioner Hinson said what if the Chair was abusing their power? Why supermajority? He suggests the Board was contradicting itself.

Commissioner Viegbesie said supermajority was for removal because it was not what was used to elect the Chair. They then moved to the Vice Chair point. If the Chair is running late should the meeting be held up until the Chair came? By law, the meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. When the meeting is to be called to order, then the Vice Chair should call it to order and when the Chair arrives, the Vice Chair would then hand over the gavel to the Chair instead of waiting until the Chair arrives. Mr. Dixon said in the absence of the Chair or in the event of the Chair’s inability to serve, the Vice Chair should perform the duties and functions of the chair.

Commissioner Viegbesie said when the Vice Chair calls the meeting to order, that was when the meeting starts, not when the Chair walks in. Vice Chair Green said he was referring to “recording has started”.

Commissioner Hinson said normally they want to start at 6:00 p.m. as a show of respect to the citizens. The Chair should pass the gavel to the Vice Chair when needed. Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure they were clear on when the Vice Chair takes over when Chair was not available. He asked Mr. Knowles if he had the language for that and Mr. Knowles stated yes. Mr. Knowles asked if they wanted something affirmative that stated the meeting shall begin promptly at 6 pm period? Everyone said yes. Mr. Knowles asked what if the situation was the chair and Vice-Chair was not there. Chair Holt said the order should be Chair, Vice Chair, then the next Senior commissioner. Commissioner NeSmith said if they were abiding by the practice, then it needed to be written.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the “senior commissioner” portion was not written anywhere.

Mr. Dixon on page 9 of 14, **Agenda Format for Regular Meetings**, he thought this was brought to their attention before. They were trying to have special, emergency meetings and because the policy said 6:00 PM they were unable to have an earlier meeting. They wanted to make sure it was changed to “6pm or as set by the BOCC”. Mr. Knowles said he thought that was a public hearing they have to have after 6pm. Mr. Dixon said he wanted the Board to have the option to hold a meeting earlier. Chair Holt asked what the State statute called for and Mr. Knowles said it requires public hearings to be after 6:00 p.m.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 6:18 p.m.*

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 6:21 p.m.*

Commissioner Green asked if they could make leeway to make that happen? Mr. Dixon said yes. Chair Holt said they were scaring her; the public was used to the 6pm meetings and other commissioners changed one meeting to the morning.

Commissioner Hinson said it should be for the people, but now they have Zoom, Facebook Live, and they are recorded so there's access to the meetings.

Commissioner Green said this was not something they were going to do on a regular basis, but have the ability to do it if needed.

Mr. Dixon stated someone misused the rules because most counties meet during the day for their general business and all public hearings are in the evening. It was a better way to have access to staff as opposed to night meetings.

Chair Holt said this is to better the County Commission in delivering their duties. If they do not learn how to curb what they are saying, then the business community doesn't look good on them.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was the point he was making earlier. This document is not about any one commissioner in particular. This was about the County. It should be what everyone thinks will make the County will run smoothly.

Commissioner NeSmith said they need to always be reviewing and revising their procedures annually.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 6:27 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1 – appeared remotely**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Sara Green, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon stated he would like to pull items 5, 10, 13, and 14 from the Agenda.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**GCDC Update**

**Beth Cicchetti, GCDC**, appeared before the Board and Antonio Jefferson addressed the Board through her cell phone.

Mrs. Cicchetti then gave the Board an update.

(Commissioner Hinson arrived at 6:10 p.m.-had previously appeared by Zoom)

Mrs. Cicchetti introduced Ronnie Bryant and he appeared before the Board.

He shared he had been working with her for over a year.

1. Quality and quantity of established workforce in area.

Commissioner Green said he has had the pleasure working with her. He asked what investment the Board was making now and what do they need to invest.

Mrs. Cicchetti said the current investment was just under \$60,000/year.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the compliment given to her was an understatement. They have a jewel they could work with.



Chair Holt said the purpose of the trip to Mississippi was to see how successful they were and how they were working with the school system to see how they were getting people ready for jobs ahead of time with certification, etc.

She asked Mrs. Cicchetti if Leon County or the City of Tallahassee gave \$2.5 Million and she answered she did not know the details. She added they need to look at how they invest in economic development.

Commissioner Green said she touched on the Amazon deal, did she have a conversation with anyone that worked with Amazon on Amazon coming here. She said infrastructure and talent development was the way they would get warehousing distribution operators like Amazon to invest in Gadsden County. She said they had regional distributors, such as Safelite Auto Glass that do that.

Chair Holt said once the 1000 jobs in Leon was up and running, they may need to look at transportation to get people back and forth.

Commissioner Hinson said this was a pet peeve of his. He said they need to look at how they could generate more revenue.

Commissioner Green asked what they were, dollar-wise, they were giving to the Chamber and may need to revisit what they give to the Chamber and to GCDC.

Commissioner Viegbesie explained Leon County's Blueprint 2020.

Commissioner NeSmith said they need a workshop and need to address infrastructure.

Chair Holt said she agreed.

Antonio Jefferson readdressed the Board and thanked them.

Chair Holt mentioned Madison County has a model they use and bring in everyone from the School Board to all entities in the County. She added that Gadsden BOCC made up the GCDC and the Chamber was a member only organization

#### **Gadsden County Health Department Update**

Mr. Dixon stated the Director could not be here but sent information wanted it presented. The number of vaccinated residents age 12 and older was 24,601, the percentage of residents vaccinated was at 62% and had 7,915 COVID cases and the positivity rate was 23.9%. They anticipate booster shots will be rolling out around September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Green said his concern and question was, how proactive was the County being and asked for clarification.

Commissioner Hinson said there have been two games, FSU and FAMU and people were not wearing masks. He stated they needed to have an emergency meeting and have someone come here to explain what the monoclonal was all about. Mr. Dixon said he would run that down.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the Governor has been pushing that cocktail for the longest. He said it would help when you start feeling the symptoms of COVID.

Chair Holt asked about the death rate as it has stopped being posting on the DOH website. She said they need help in that area and need to know how many may have lost their lives.

Commissioner Hinson said 3-4 weeks ago, they received something where 300-400 people died. Older people were getting vaccinated and the younger ones were not.

### **Proclamation Honoring the Loss of Lives on September 11, 2001**

#### **CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

1. **Ratification Memo**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
  - **August 3, 2021 Budget Workshop**
3. **Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with Protect Me Farms for Harbin Road**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.*

Mr. Knowles read aloud the statement.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board and said his concern was the COVID virus.

**Libby Henderson, 195 Gardner Avenue, Greensboro, FL 32330** appeared before the Board and wanted to let them know and make them aware the Town of Greensboro has in the past and will continue to see that fire protection was provided to the western side of the County. She said they were still in the rebuilding phase of the fire department and wanted them to know they were very interested in working with the County to work out a solution.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**4. Approval to Submit a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), CDBG General Infrastructure Round 2 Grant Program Seeking Funds to Repair, Stabilize and Pave Portions of Juniper Creek Road and Providence Road**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval to submit a CDBG general infrastructure Round 2 application seeking \$2,075,782.50 for the stabilization, repair and paving of segments of Juniper Creek Road and Providence Road and approval of consultant fees.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**~~5. Approval for the Chairman to Sign Grant Forms, and Approval of a Work Authorization with The Integrity Group (Integrity) to Provide CDBG Grant Consulting Services~~**

Item Pulled

**6. Hutchinson Ferry Road Bridge Repairs-Change Order No. 1**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of Change Order 1 for additional work completed due to unforeseen conditions associated with the Hutchinson Ferry Road bridge repairs.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**7. Extension of 2021 Tax Roll pursuant to Sections 197.323 and 193.122 F.S.**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval for the tax roll to be extended prior to the completion of the Value Adjustment Board proceedings.

**Dale Summerford, Tax Collector**, appeared before Board and said this was provided for the Board to approve that the Tax Roll be extended prior to the completion of the VAB proceedings.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Approval of the Medical Director Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. Approval to Add Greenshade Volunteer Fire Department as a Participating Entity to the Fuel Services Inter-Local Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**~~10. Approval of Fire Department Inter-Local Fire and Rescue Service Agreements~~**

Item Pulled

**11. Approval and Execution of State Aid Grant Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was a funding source for the library.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**12. Approval of the Agreement for Geographical Information System (GIS) Services and Housing Technical Assistance Services with the Apalachicola Regional Planning Council (ARPC)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of an agreement with GIS services with Apalachicola Regional Planning Council.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND.**

Chair Holt asked if they could receive a new map.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. Leasing Agreement**

Item Pulled

**14. Approval of the Rudd Pest Control Agreement**

Item Pulled

**15. Board Direction/Action regarding the Partial Funding of New Fire Engine/Pumper Truck that the City of Chattahoochee purchased for the City of Chattahoochee Fire Department**

Mr. Dixon said this item was responding to the City of Chattahoochee's request for partial funding from the BOCC for a previously purchased fire engine. He said Mr. Robert Presnell and the Mayor attended the meeting a few weeks ago. He stated there was a budget line item tagging City of Chattahoochee fire department but they have been unable to find any documentation relating to this. The Fire Chief and EMS Chief have told him they were opposed to it. While it was in the budget, they purchased the item two fiscal years ago. This has not followed the usual procedure and was not an item he could recommend. He stated it was not a matter of if the money was there, it was a matter of if it followed the protocol of the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was the item they discussed before, the City Manager was before them. If the Fire Chief and EMS Chief disagrees with the expenditure, he did not think they should do it. He asked if he was understanding this happened two fiscal years ago and Mr. Dixon said yes, he believed so. He said the expenditure occurred last fiscal year and there were no minutes. He did not know where this was coming from.

Chair Holt asked when the fire engine was purchased and was told either 2019 or 2020. She said either way, there was no Minutes from the Board and they had no basis to spend \$150,000. If it was not approved, they could not vote for it. She said another thing, if it was put in the line item in the budget, someone had to put it there. She said they were good people but mistakes were made. The County does not purchase things for other people, fire trucks belong to the County, vehicles belong to the County.

Commissioner Hinson said he was perplexed by this. The Board voted for it. The Clerk sent information out.

Commissioner Green asked if they voted for it, what did they vote for? He said was torn in which direction he would head. The truck would serve a purpose, but protocol was not followed; now Commissioner Hinson said it was approved. If there was nothing in writing, he could not support the item.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the Clerk recalled the email he sent to the Board last week. The Clerk said it was not found in the Minutes, was not keyed in the Budget but was included in the Final Budget in a line item; which indicated someone had a discussion with Chattahoochee, someone clearly did not follow through with bringing it before the Board. There were no Minutes or agreement to support it.

Mr. Dixon said as the Clerk said, they were not saying wrong or right, when things are in the budget they don't understand, they will bring it to them. Such as they had to bring items earlier in the year where mistakes were found.

Commissioner Viegbesie said from what the Clerk said, it confirmed what he felt happened, was due to staff...if there was no records or Minutes, he was uncomfortable with it.

Chair Holt asked if the Administrator said it was put it in the Budget for this year. Mr. Dixon stated, as the Clerk had said, it was in the budget approval.

The Clerk said it was in the budget document but the line item was not keyed into the budget system for 2021. Chair Holt said that was where she was having a problem with staff. Mr. Dixon said they have brought a number of situations before them of budget issues.

Chair Holt asked if they could get someone in Budget to do the budget.

Commissioner Hinson said some people talk and the answer was right in their face. He asked they ponder on what he said, it was not the person they think, it was the person in their face they should be thinking about.

Commissioner NeSmith said he spoke with the City Administrator and with the County Administrator, if they County took ownership of truck for \$150,000, was that out of protocol?

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if he was understanding in the conversation that Chief Walker and Chief Maddox promised to give Chattahoochee a fire truck in lieu of and then did not accept the offer for the fire truck, so that he understood, it was not about the firetruck but about the money.

Mr. Dixon said the County had just purchased them a brush truck. The County has shown nothing but willingness to work with every city and every community. He said a truck was offered but was rejected.

Chair Holt said she did not think there was anyone on the Board that would not work with all the fire stations and all the cities. They have to have documentation on what they do and spend.

Commissioner Hinson asked if it was ok for the Board to think about it? They need to do an investigation, it could be something critical. Why couldn't they get someone to look into this? They need to find out who plugged that in.

Commissioner Green said he thought it was already investigated; however, the truck has been purchased, will be used for the purpose it was purchased for, this was a teachable moment for him and other leaders to make sure they were following the proper protocol. If investigated, they would still get the same results.

Commissioner Viegbesie said three of the commissioners on dais has been Chair before and they knew once an item was discussed and approved, before the Chair leaves this building, the Chair signs the documents. That meant it was never approved by Board. It got into the budget but was not a budgeted item that came before this Board for approval and he was very uncomfortable with the item.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE \$150,000 WITH A CAVEAT THE COUNTY TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE TRUCK AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 2-3 BY VOICE VOTE. CHAIR HOLT, COMMISSIONER GREEN AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED. MOTION FAILED.**

**CHAIR HOLT MADE A MOTION THEY DO NOT APPROVE THE \$150,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE TRUCK IN CHATTAHOOCHEE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER NESMITH OPPOSED.**

**16. Appointment to the Circuit 2 Alliance Community Action Team (Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty and Wakulla)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented to appoint/reappoint a member to the Circuit 2 Alliance Community Action Team.

**CHAIR HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT COMMISSIONER GREEN AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE HAD COMMENTS.**

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested they should include staff to be able to be able to take notes and bring information back to the Administrator and said the next item was in the same capacity.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Commissioner Viegbesie for advocating for an aide.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**17. Appointment to the Big Bend Continuum of Care (CoC) Board**

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT COMMISSIONER GREEN OR COMMISSIONER NESMITH TO THIS POSITION. CHAIR HOLT SAID THEY HAD TO ACCEPT IT.**

Commissioner NeSmith respectfully declined the appointment.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO KEEP COMMISSIONER HINSON AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

Commissioner Hinson stated he had a question before they voted. He stated he has served on the board for the past 5-6 years and wanted to give someone else the opportunity to serve.

Commissioner Green said if he was willing to give up the appointment, he would serve.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT COMMISSIONER GREEN AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT ASKED ABOUT THE MOTION ALREADY MADE AND APPROVED. COMMISSIONER GREEN RESCINDED HIS MOTION AND CHAIR HOLT RESCINDED HER SECOND.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPOINT COMMISSIONER GREEN AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **18. Updates**

The Clerk was present and said he will give a full accounting next week of the American Rescue spending.

He also wanted to go on record about churches and needed to be clear, the money given to them could not be used for religious purposes. They could receive the funds but could not use any of it for religious purposes and needed to be emphasized, it had to be used for non-religious purposes such as after-school program, tutoring, feeding kids, etc.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **19. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said they wanted to appreciate the Clerk's Office because they had been having a lot of stuff come through and as Commissioner Hinson asked, it was a dance because they have regular payroll, budget, and it was "sliding" in when they have an off week or a down week to get something out like the payments. That was a whole other situation and they wanted to show appreciation for their Office, Trudei and all of the others. As the Clerk mentioned, they were able to give every employee, theirs and the Constitutional Officers a \$1200.00 bonus for their services during this past year. They knew how much they had to be here and had to leave their families and while everyone else was quarantining, they had to carry the County on. All of their people were essential (employees) and thanked the Commissioners for showing the County family that kind of love. He said they were working on a response to the Delta Virus, it was something different. He said they will attempt to get them the budget for the next fiscal year. He apologized for the time it has taken, they keep bumping into holes in the road and was trying their very best.

He said Thursday will be the first public hearing at 6:00. They will try to have a workshop between now and the final budget hearing that was scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. He said it has been a torturous process to try to figure out what was happening.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked for an update on the Senior center funding for 2021. He said he understood the centers have not received their obligated disbursement for this fiscal year. Mr. Dixon said there was a staffer that was responsible for that; one or two have been submitted and rest have been found and sent to the Clerk's office. They have also received calls about the air conditioning. He said they were on the lease for \$1.00 and the leasee and leasor have not made any investments. They are redoing the roof and while the roof was off, they plan on redoing the units. Commissioner Viegbesie asked when they could they expect their allocated disbursements be sent to them and Mr. Dixon said real soon.

Commissioner Viegbesie then asked what was going on at the Quincy Senior Center. There were so many emails and so much confusion.

Mr. Dixon said he has tried to stay out of it. Mrs. Blackshear has attended some meetings, requested some documents that that request started a fire storm. She attended a meeting and there were threats of the County taking over the Center. He said they have not participated in that.

Commissioner Viegbesie said to the Commissioners, they may be young today, the young shall soon grow old. He added it was not about a particular democracy, but taking care of the Seniors of the County. Let us work in preserving the Seniors. Let us do what we must do and take the ego out of this and take care of them.

Chair Holt said she has received calls. She said if someone contracts and get money from the County, give the BOCC their plan and show what they were using the money for.

Commissioner Green said he was one that was also called. Now that he has heard it was in the process and hopes it would be sooner than later.

Commissioner Hinson said two things he was passionate about, kids and seniors. What gives him heartburn was that they are so calm about it as a Board. The money was approved last year in October, 2020. The fiscal year ends end of this month. He read aloud an email he received.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were all are in defense of the current Administrator. He came in December and the budget was in October. He asked the Clerk to work with them in getting the money out.

Chair Holt said this was not anything they had not already discussed. They all agreed they wanted to see what they were doing. She did not see hold anything or not giving the general information, if they are given money, they should get some type of documentation. She wanted to see the Seniors get the money.



Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they have conditions written into the contract with the Centers that they are accountable to this body? If not, they need to include that request. If it was in there, they need to have them adhere to the contract.

Chair Holt said they have to make reports to the Department of Elder Affairs.

Mr. Dixon said he wanted to clear the record. The conversation Commissioner Hinson referred to was with the Executive Director of the Senior Citizen Center. He has been meeting with the Chairman, Mrs. Cunningham in June and she requested a letter and the conversation was about funding then. He asked for documentation and was told they would not provide anything because the County was trying to take over and he said no, they were trying to add energy and money if they could figure out how to do it. She said she would not furnish anything. In June he directed all funds be paid to every Senior Center because they had not expected them to do anything up to now and will deal with it next year. To that point was when they found out someone was walking around with the budget in their pocket. He said when the Clerk said things were not keyed into the system, that was what he meant, it was in someone's pocket. To his chagrin, he thought they had been funded and they had not; they had to go into someone's office, get the information and present it to the Clerk's Office.

He called Mrs. Smith to the podium. He asked in her development of Seniors program, she communicated with the Senior Citizens Center and the Executive Director and asked what was requested from her. She stated she asked for Personnel Policies, Customer Service Policies and anything she had that would enhance their program. She said she asked for it because she was trying to put something together on the County's end and was in looking for grants, that information was needed. She said at first the response was "Ok, I'll get it to you" and the next email was she was not going to get it because her attorney said she did not have to provide that information.

Commissioner Hinson said there was a big difference, they were a non-profit organization. He said the BOCC could compete for the same grants so why should the information be given up and possibly compete against them.

Mr. Dixon said they were informed the County was applying for grants FOR them.

Ms. Smith said they never intended to compete but to compliment the program.

Chair Holt said they were told years ago there were hundreds of thousands of dollars not applied for.

Commissioner Green said based on what he has heard, there has been some miscommunication and understanding somewhere down the line. He said the ultimate goal was the seniors and that they were all concerned about them.

Chair Holt said to the Administrator it would be good to have them on the Agenda. They also needed to have the Department of Elder Affairs and the Director of the Center here.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**20. Updates**

Mr. Knowles said if they want to change their vote, it could be done before the next item was called. If the next item was called, that was where it comes in who was in the majority or who voted for it. He suggested if that happened in the future, after the vote was taken, he would expect a motion to reconsider the vote and then go back and do that.

He said in their master agreement with the Senior Centers, almost all of the contracts have a records inspection provision so if the County gives money, they have the right to go in with reasonable notice and inspect any documents requested. He said if it became a problem, let him know and the appropriate steps could be taken.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was glad he said that and they need to do a better job in educating recipients of their funding. They need to let them know up front, if they are accepting funds from the County, the County has a right to ask for records.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**21. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said seniors was first on his list. He said a few years back; the Board gave instructions for a card to be filled out. They had a staff member that wanted to resign because of stress they were under. He said they had to be careful, they could not bully people the wrong way because they had authority to do it. He said everything was not out in the open, there was more to it.

He asked about Figgers Communication and Mr. Dixon said it was not coming. They last communicated with them, they sent a letter of good intentions they would like to continue the contract, the County was now caught in the budget and did not have staff to work with them. He said they have tried to come up with new ideas to work with them and they intend to follow through. They were currently working on trying to get the budget out. Commissioner Hinson said hotspots will be a key issue again. He asked with issues like that, could an attorney negotiate that?

Commissioner Green said he had his hand up because the Administrator answered and they knew the Asst. Administrator has been bombarded with their Budget Manager being out. His issue was he received another email that there had been no communication since the last and he asked if he had responded to FCI at all as to where they were with the invoice. Mr. Dixon said he thought he had but will certainly do so in the morning.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:40 p.m.*

Chair Holt said in the contract it said the verification would be done by the Administrator or his designee. Commissioner Hinson said the issue was, you could not stop the government from running, they had to figure things out.

Mr. Dixon said they were trying a new avenue that would be a better way to pass out the hotspots.

Chair Holt said they were looking at the black and white of the contract and the Administrator was the key person.

Commissioner Viegbesie said broadband was the priority for the current national administration and FAC was very serious about broadband, especially in the rural areas. He thought they needed to look at broadband connectivity as the way to improve and connect internet service to the citizens.

Commissioner Hinson thanked GCDC for their update.

He added that vaccinations were a serious thing in the County. He said he would not feel great until they were at 100%. He said the School Board has funding to encourage kids about vaccines. He said maybe they should talk to the Superintendent about his plans and make sure he was serious about the situation.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the County Administrator and Mr. Lee and Public Works for addressing some issues with a public right-of-way as far as cutting and trimming.

He said the “Love Where You Live campaign” was discussed earlier and he would now channel Commissioner Green and if they could have signage in neighborhoods as a part of the campaign and need signage to identify the communities.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said he also spoke with the Administrator and he assured him they were working on that.

He said he sent pictures to Mr. Lee on Spooner Road of a pile of bulky items and wanted it picked up before something serious happened.

He also asked for limb trimming on Joe Adams Road.

He asked for a Resolution for Penny Peacock O’Connell’s family.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION FOR MRS. PENNY O’CONNELL AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

He said he received an email from Highway 27 BBQ and Grill and thought Commissioner Viegbesie received one as well since this was in his district. They are asking for a beer and wine license and was getting the run-around because there was a church close-by. They church has owned the property for over 20 years and there was nothing on the property. He said they have said they want growth and want businesses to come but could not grow if they were always

saying no. Mr. Dixon said he was aware of the situation and it has been Asked if way-Dixon said scheduled for the next meeting.

He asked for a workshop for COVID.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was going to start with comments from Commissioner Green regarding Highway 27. Yes, the email came to him and he forwarded it to the County Administrator. His response was the County did not give liquor licenses.

He suggested they create a Community Recovery Resilience Task Force to assist with disaster preparedness and response. He said it would be a community body that would work with EMS and the County and would bring the community members to assist with disasters.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was doing his best to cut back on what he requests and now was requesting that they strongly consider to look for a way to provide aides.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt asked for a Proclamation for Saturday FOR 9/11.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE MOTION AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

She asked for a Proclamation for Tallahassee Community College Workforce proclaiming October as Manufacturing Month.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE MOTION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. SHE STATED THAT WAS APPROVED.**

She said they needed to stop large Item pick-up and should have people take it to the dump.

She asked when the mobile unit was coming on line and he said it was being designed now. She said they could use it as part of COVID education.

She said to have economic development, they needed to look at the sites.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have rescheduled the trip to the Golden Triangle and Chair Holt said it was up to the Board.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not think need to go there to get their model, they could send the model. He said his position was, where they are today was not where they were when it started. So, if they go look at it today, they could not see where they were.

Chair Holt said if they stood next to a person eating, they were not going to get full. They must go and find out how the machine worked, get the knowledge and bring it back; how they got the school systems to buy into it. They needed to get the technology and information and bring it back.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:10 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3 – appeared remotely**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5 – appeared remotely**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he would like to pull from Item 16 the Chattahoochee and Greensboro contracts for further discussion and pull item 17 from the Agenda. He said he would also like to add a Presentation from the Board.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

Mr. Dixon said September was Hunger Action Month and have invited friends from Second Harvest and Farm Share. He said BCC was honored to present checks of \$25,000 to Second Harvest and to Farm Share. During the pandemic, they worked hard to ensure Gadsden Countians had food and drink.

Representatives from Integrity appeared at the podium and wanted to honor this month. These are funds from American Rescue Plan and the BCC agreed to give money off the top. Checks were then presented to Farm Share and Second Harvest.

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Commissioner Hinson stated he would like to rescind his vote for item 2 and recuse himself.

Mr. Knowles said since they have passed that item, they need to get unanimous consent for all those in favor to re-open and redo. The Deputy Clerk asked if that was for the entire Consent or only Item 2 and was told only Item 2.

Chair Holt said she needed to recuse herself as well.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO RECONSIDER ITEM 2 AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE ITEM 2 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON AND CHAIR HOLT ABSTAINED FROM VOTING.**

1. Ratification Memo
2. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts-SHIP, HHRP and Emergency Housing Repair Program
3. Approval of the E911 Rural County Grant Award Agreement for E911 System and MapSAG Annual Support and Maintenance
4. Approval to Accept the Emergency Management Program Grants; Emergency Management Preparedness and Assistance Agreement AO198; Emergency Management Performance Grant Agreement GO230; and Emergency Management Performance Grant ARPA Agreement GO250
5. Approval and Signature on the E911 Rural Grant Application fir E911 NICE Recorders Annual Maintenance

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.*

Mr. Dixon read the above statement aloud.

Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce-support Wild Azalea solar facility

David Gardner, Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce

Stephen Gibbs

Seminole Electric Cooperative

Marion Lasley

Avant Garde Investments

James Graven

Jim Roberts, Fire Department item

Larry Ganus, 2174 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL

Steve Gibbs, 2627 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL

Integrity, Check presentation

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell, Quincy, FL 32351** appeared before Board. He said he was embarrassed with the failure to post the budget on-line so it could be viewed two days in advance of the meeting and then how the budget meeting transpired. He applauded the Chair, Administrator and the other commissioners for handling the issue diplomatically and was hopeful that would be the one little mistake that will happen for a long time to come.

He said he had shared this with the Chairlady, there will be a Countywide prayer initiative and asked people to attend when it was in their neighborhood.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**6. Public Hearing-Approval of Resolution 2021-031 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2021**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said stated it was a public hearing and was a grant budget amendment to complete and execute all budget amendments necessary to maintain a balanced budget for fiscal year 2021.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and said was due mainly to donations and explained the grants.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**7. Public Hearing-Approval of Ordinance 2021-010 Adopting Procedures to Acquire Property Interest in and Accept into the County Maintenance System Under Certain Conditions Certain Private Roadways Located within the Unincorporated Area of the County**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said stated it sought approval to proposed changes to the County's Road Adoption Ordinance. He said he hoped the amendment to the ordinance will give an opportunity to bring 5 miles into the public system every year at one mile per district.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and had one request to be heard.

**Larry Ganus, 2174 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He stated hot excited when he first read this Ordinance. He said there was still a hang-up on being able to use this Ordinance in his community because it requires all property owners that abut the road right-of-way have to agree to be a part of this. There has been a problem in the past getting 100% of the owners to agree to it. The other thing is the limitation of number of roads and miles per district that could be admitted to the program during the year. His community has 2.6 miles of road on four different roads; the main road was approximately 1 ½ miles, which meant even if they got anything else together, it would still take 2 years to get through the program. In a situation such as that, it would be good if they could get the whole road into the program at one time. He asked they consider his suggestions.



**Steve Gibbs, 2627 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He voiced his support and appreciation for the changes made but felt there were some additional changes that could be made.

Commissioner NeSmith had questions when appropriate. His connection was then lost.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the residents of Frank Smith Road questions was what he had questions about. Would all property owners be required to agree and the other question was the one mile per district. If they go with one mile per district per year that would mean the road would be done half in the district and imagined there were other roads in other districts that had private roads that were over a mile on just one road. The third item was the sunset provision, if the road was not fully done, what would happen to the road?

Commissioner NeSmith was back. He asked the attorney if he had had the opportunity to read over this Ordinance and Mr. Knowles said he wrote it. He said regarding the recommendation made by Administrator that there be 100% participation, was there any statutory guidelines as to maximum or minimum number of homeowners that needed to be signed onto in order to transfer. Mr. Knowles said the maximum required for participation was property law as they could not take any parcel of property from owners. He said they were required under statute where they do have responsibility for maintenance. The one mile per year per district was Board direction.

Commissioner Hinson said he would like to extend the number of sunset years and miles. He added some districts have long roads. Commissioner Hinson said Mr. Ganus served on Planning Commission for many years and was very knowledgeable.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was glad they were having discussion for this item. He asked if possible, to table this item, take out the sunset provision and change to as long as there were funds to maintain the roads. He suggested with having heard the discussions and concerns, look at Section II of the Ordinance.

Chair Holt then read Marion Lasley's email aloud.

Chair Holt also said the mileage of roads among the districts must be equal in order to be fair.

Commissioner Hinson said this was near and dear to his heart because he looked at it as a public health concern. There was a road that was so "jacked up", EMS and the Sheriff's Department had to stop halfway and could not get down the road. Now we have COVID to deal with. He said he hoped the Board would consider moving this item forward.

Commissioner Green asked how they could find a determinable cost that it would take to maintain the roads? Mr. Dixon said as they pave the roads, they decided to bring more roads into the County system. That has not been done so in quite a while. They have capability, just have not done so.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in response to Commissioner Green's question, when Curtis Young was the Director of Public Works, costs will not be what they were then because of materials, etc. There is a document that identifies roads and costs and he realized it would be higher now.

That document should be tweaked and brought back and if it did not have to go back to Planning and Zoning, it would expedite.

Chair Holt said it was up to this Board.

Commissioner Hinson said property value goes up, have aging communities, have COVID going on, they need to move forward and not table this item.

Mr. Knowles said the changes he showed were changing 1 mile per district per year but did not have a specific number they were going to use and would be helpful; remove the sunset provision in Section 9; reiterate this was a maintenance and not a paving ordinance. He said as long as they were not changing the complete substance of the Ordinance, they could bring it back. Chair Holt asked if they could say up to 3 miles. Mr. Dixon asked for leeway to address more than a mile with some language. Also, they must say subject to funding.

Commissioner Green said the amendment was made for funding and that was why he had his hand up.

Commissioner Viegbesie said now not very sure of the distance for adoption, his personal recommendation was look at private roads and use the one with the longest distance. He also asked if this would be adopted with the first reading.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT WITH REVISIONS SUGGESTED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**8. Public Hearing-Legislative-Consideration of Adoption of Ordinance 2021-006 (CPA 2021-02) to Adopt Chapter 11, Property Rights Element to the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for consideration of adding Chapter 11, Property Rights Element to Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak and no-one wanted.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were any new rights enumerated in this Ordinance that did not exist? Mr. Dixon said they did not have a choice, if they do not approve this language, nothing else they did would matter. Commissioner NeSmith said these were rights that the homeowner has anyway and this was enumerating them and Mr. Dixon said yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked how this would conflict with neighborhood Restrictive Ordinances that say they could not have certain things.

Mr. Knowles said that was dealing more with restrictions dealing with HOA's once someone purchased the land. These were requirements for small scale comp amendments.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. Public Hearing-Quasi-Judicial-Wide Azalea Solar Energy Facility (Florida Power & Light) Conceptual and Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2021-04)**

Mr. Dixon stated Diane Quigley would be presenting this quasi-judicial item to the Board.

Mr. Knowles mentioned when the Commissioners are making quasi-judicial decisions, they were debating over policy and explained the things they had to make sure of. He also said if anyone has had conversations, it was not required but suggested they acknowledge the substance of that conversation to avoid the appearance of improprieties.

**Diane Quigley, AICP, Growth Management Director**, was sworn in by Deputy Clerk. She then introduced the above item. She stated it was presented for consideration of a conceptual/preliminary site plan to construct a solar power generation facility on 1,102.36 ± acres. It is for development of eight parcels totaling 1,102.36 acres with solar power generation facility to generate electricity.

She said Open House was held on April 12 and 13<sup>th</sup> and addressed some concerns at the meeting. It was recommended by Planning to be approved and was approved 7-1.

Chair Holt stated she has met with people from Gulf Power.

Commissioner Green acknowledged the same and Commissioner NeSmith did and said he was not aware it was a quasi-judicial hearing.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did meet with 3 of the applicants, asked questions and had conversations with a couple of the residents of the area.

**Allara Mills Gutcher, The Planning Collaborative**, appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. She stated that Wild Azalea has met all the requirements. She also said they have met all requirements of the Comprehensive plan, the land development regulations, and have gone above and beyond with the additional set-backs and buffers to help make this project something the community would be proud of.

She introduced letters of support.

**Amy Goodwin, 700 Universe Blvd., Juno Beach, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in. She stated their mission was to deliver clean, reliable energy to clients. At the height of employment, they will employ 200 workers.

Commissioner Hinson said he had read through the information and wanted to make a motion to approve Option 1. Chair Holt said they had to have public input first and asked for a 5-minute recess.

*They recessed at 7:43 p.m.*

*Chair Holt reconvened the meeting at 7:53 p.m.*

**Richard Williams**, appeared before the board and was sworn. He stated he had been impressed that they were willing to go above and beyond what was required in order to do what needed to

be done to be a good neighbor and a good citizen to the community. He added from Opportunity Florida and economic development standpoint, they were glad to see renewable energy come to this area, especially in rural counties.

Commissioner Viegbesie said had been very impressed with the presentation.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

**10. Public Hearing-Quasi-Judicial-Gadsden County Solar (Florida Renewable Partners) Conceptual and Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2021-03)**

Diane Quigley appeared before the Board and was still under oath. She said this was approximately 787.55 acres with a solar power generation facility to generate electricity. She stated it was approved with a vote of 8-1 by the Planning Commission.

She then read the options.

Commissioner Green made it known he did meet with the applicants as well as Commissioner NeSmith to gain additional insight to the project. Commissioner Viegbesie did also as did Chair Holt.

**Allara Mills Gutcher** re-appeared before the Board and stated she was previously sworn in. She said there was some confusion with the recommendation made by the Planning Commission.

**Michael Linehart** appeared before the Board and was sworn in. He read aloud a letter of support by Seminole Electric and had a short presentation for the Board. He added that the project will sit mostly behind existing vegetation.

Commissioner Green asked he give enlightenment of the possibility of students to learn how to do this and to travel.

Chair Holt asked if any sites would give reduction of rates to the citizens? Mr. Linehart explained they contract with Seminole Electric and had nothing to do with the rates.

Chair Holt asked if there was any public comment and there was no-one.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. MS. GUTCHER WANTED TO CONFIRM THE MOTION TO APPROVE INCLUDED THE DECOMMISSIONING CLAUSE RATHER THAN THE EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT THAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE STAFF REPORT.**

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AMENDED HIS MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 WITH THE REQUESTED CHANGES AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked what decommission meant. It was explained it meant they were required to return the land to its previous use as it was or better.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**11. Approval of a Task Order with Joel D. Sampson Architect for Professional Architectural Services for the Interior Upgrades to the Historical Courtroom of the Gadsden County Courthouse**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of a task order with Joel Sampson Architect for professional architectural services for the interior upgrade to the historic courtroom of the Gadsden County Courthouse.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**12. Approval of the State of Florida, Division of Emergency Management HO626 Agreement to install a generator at the Edward J. Butler Building**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said was for a grant from the State of Florida, Division of Emergency Management to install a generator at the Edward J. Butler Building.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. Approval of Area of Operation Resolution 2021-028 concerning financing of an affordable multi-family residential rental apartment by the Escambia County Housing Authority**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented to the Board for approval of Resolution 2021-028 granting the area of the operation authority to the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority to issue Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds to finance an affordable residential rental apartment project located in Gadsden County, FL.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**14. Iron Bridge Road Safety Improvements-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item for approval to award the bid of the Iron Bridge Road Safety Improvements project to C. W. Roberts Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$415,765.08.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**15. CR 161 (Point Milligan Road) SCOP Construction Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to award the construction of CR 161 Pt. Milligan Road SCOP project to CW Roberts Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$2,940,936.00.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**16. Approval of Fire Department’s Inter-Local Fire and Rescue Service Agreements**

Mr. Dixon said this item was to approve Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreements minus Greensboro and Chattahoochee contracts.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Holt said she had a request from Jim Roberts to speak.

Mr. Roberts appeared before the Board and stated he represents Mt. Pleasant Fire Department. They are the lowest paid or lowest funded department in the County to the tune of almost \$4,000. Their agency has responded to over 160 calls to date and would like to have the opportunity to be part of the process. He said information was provided to the Board in February based on the request of the County Fire Coordinator to look at the funding. He said they were not sure how the formula was created and feels their department being funded much less than other departments were unfair to them. He asked the Board to look at future funding, the process and formulas that determine and be inclusive of the process. He also mentioned that their fire department meets on a regular basis and welcomed everyone to come and help them understand the process and asked to be a part of that process to make it a fair and equitable deal for all the fire departments across the County.

Mr. Dixon said that was not why made only for one year. He said they would all sit down and talk about the future of fire protection and how they are funded.

Commissioner Green asked if they were about to approve money that would be allocated to each fire department and they have another group that asked to be included to receive funding from the County and they have yet to entertain the possibilities for them. How will that be handled?

Mr. Dixon said they have a contract with the City of Greensboro, who was the recognized entity and were unable to direct Greensboro who would or would not do their own fire service. The City of Greensboro decides who provides fire service to the City of Greensboro, not the County. Their agreement was with the City of Greensboro until and unless the Board said otherwise. Commissioner Green said understanding that, how would they give an opportunity when someone has presented them with other alternatives. It was still up to the Board to give funding or not. Mr. Dixon explained they have pulled the contracts for Greensboro and Chattahoochee for further discussions and they would not be approved at this meeting.

Commissioner Hinson said he “got what you’re saying”. He added that they could not dilly-dab into cities or school Board issues, if so, they may open a can of worms. The City of Quincy has multiple fire stations as did Havana. They need to have a discussion on this.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he knew they were pulling the Greensboro and Chattahoochee agreements and did not see why they should not consider the fire services. He added that he thought he made a motion and would like to withdraw it at this time.

Mr. Dixon said they amended the Agenda to exclude Greensboro and Chattahoochee. Commissioner Viegbesie understood the entire item was pulled.

Commissioner Hinson said felt needed to make decisions first, he said they did not want to damage relationships and did not want to step on toes.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked her and the County Administrator and asked for the name of the fire fighter that represented Mt. Pleasant Fire Department and they informed him it was Jim Roberts.

Chair Holt said they just did the budget and only had a certain amount of money that was approved. She said if they wanted to get together and look at a study and look at things they need and what they could afford.

Mr. Dixon said in the next year will look at the whole system and asked now for a few more weeks to look at what happening in Greensboro and Chattahoochee.

Commissioner Green said he wanted to be assured the two that were excluded that they were pulling out.

Mr. Knowles wanted to reiterate if they do not do this before October 1<sup>st</sup>, they may not have a fire protection contract that was active with Greensboro and Chattahoochee. Mr. Dixon said he did not think that would be a problem, there were some hiccups in the system and they were not operating as legally as they have in the past and wanted to make sure the hiccups do not become additional problems in those two cities. That was the reason for the additional time.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked what happens to the City of Chattahoochee and Greensboro and their funding? Mr. Dixon said they were not talking about withdrawing funding. They need to talk to the City of Chattahoochee as they were presenting a different picture than what they were used to. They were used to providing a truck and paying for that truck to operate and they were not presenting that picture anymore. We need to talk about how they plan to fit into picture.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENTS THAT EXCLUDE GREENSBORO AND CHATTAHOOCHEE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE ITEM.**

~~17. Approval of Policy 21-001 – COVID-19 Vaccination Policy~~  
Item Pulled

**CLERK OF COURT**

**18. Updates**  
No comments

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**19. Updates**  
No comments

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**20. Updates**

No comments

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**21. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he first wanted to talk about EMS in Havana. He asked the status and said they approved this item on September 18, 2020. Mr. Dixon asked if the Chief left. Commissioner Hinson said he could drive back and he also had some other questions as well. Mr. Dixon asked Chief Walker to text him and ask him to return. Mr. Hinson said the meeting was on September 18, 2020 and they passed the purchase of a modular home and asked the status. He said while waiting, his next was the Small Business with the American Rescue plan. He said he has received a lot of phone calls, as he was sure every Commissioner had, about the process. He said a lot was turning in information the first day and never received a phone call they were denied or did not know at all they were denied. Some said they walked in the information, others said they emailed it in and from what they got, they were approved for the funding but they did not receive the funding. He said he knew the funding had been distributed and felt they needed to look at something. He wanted to figure out a way with one suggestion they had and was not sure wanted to get into that right now. He said some got approved that later was told they were denied. He said he was not sure of the process of the day-to-day operations. He said the money was already distributed and he was thinking since the Churches have a large amount of money...

Mr. Dixon interjected and said he was correct. The Small Business goes through a tiered approval, there was the initial approval and then a subsequent review that considers the PPP money and all those things. What they were experiencing and what most folks were experiencing, they were approved and then ran out of money. He said they will be coming in October with a new plan that he hopes the Board will support because there were other parcels that other Commissioners had also brought up. He said they were looking at the programs that people were not accessing the money and will bring back a plan. He said the businesses that were being funded had been sent to the Clerk's Office for checks. He added that they will come back to the Board for a bigger part of the money so they could continue to approve people in the Small Business and where they will be asking to put a bunch of the money.

Commissioner Hinson said with Small Business, they need to be more lenient with them. They still had lease still ongoing and have bills still to pay.

Chair Holt asked to workshop this matter and Commissioner Hinson agreed.

Mr. Dixon stated Chief Hood was on the line. Commissioner Hinson said he was trying to find a way, the date was September 18, 2020 when they had the meeting where the location of Havana EMS was approved. He asked the hold-up and why they were not in there in the new facility. He said Havana was about to start building, the current EMS trailer was about to be torn down and they have a small window.



Chief Hood said this was approved before his tenure, but Commissioner Hinson was correct. In speaking with (former Chief) Keith Maddox on this issue, it was brought to his attention that Planning and Zoning wanted a holding pond, a driveway, a handicapped parking spot, etc, and would be in the realm of \$75,000. He sent emails regarding this issue that was presented to him when he took over and Commissioner Hinson was correct, the trailer will be moved and was told they needed a budget of \$75,000 for the completion of the site. Chair Holt asked what site and Chief Hood said the relocation of their new site.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was during Dr. Grant's interim; they purchased acreage to relocate the Havana EMS, purchased a mobile home and funding was all approved, about \$200,000, for both septic tank and (inaudible) as well as the fencing of the property and did not know why it was now \$75,000. It should be up and running. Actually, he brought this up to the Administrator because of the broken-down mobile home. From his understanding, the money was there.

Mr. Dixon said they will have a better look at this tomorrow, he did not know where it was in the chain. He said he did not know the status of this project exactly but will report tomorrow.

Commissioner Hinson said like Commissioner Viegbesie said, the goal was to spend \$30,000 for the modular home, \$50,000 for the land and they still have \$120,000 to play with. He said the goal was to build a building, to have a nice facility. They could move in tomorrow as the modular home was there. They just need to be moved in. Mr. Dixon said if it can be done, it will.

Commissioner Hinson pointed out it did not take holding pond for a modular home. He said he would like to know who said that. He also would like to see exercise machines, etc., put there. He thanked them for looking into it. Commissioner Hinson said if they move EMS tomorrow, it would be a travesty to Havana. Commissioner Hinson also asked him to find out who said that and put it in writing because he wanted to know. Chair Holt stated he will have that in his report tomorrow. Commissioner Hinson stated he wanted to know because someone put it on hold.

He asked about FCI, what was the response to the letter and the outcome. Mr. Dixon said they had been unable to meet with them yet, there had been no time. Commissioner Hinson asked if anyone responded back to them. Mr. Dixon said they responded last week. Commissioner Hinson asked he send them a response as well.

He said he felt they had a great meeting today and thanked the Board for presenting the items to Farm Share and Second Harvest.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Board for completing the budget and getting it in on time and thanked the community to allow him to travel. He recommended they meet with the Legislative Delegation to give them plans going into 2022.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said Greensboro had already addressed, along with the Small Business.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR MS. CATHERINE SIMMONS AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

He thanked Commissioner Hinson for his assistance for Highway 27 Grill. He wanted to ask if they could go ahead and make a workshop for the evaluations for the County Attorney and the Administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his comment was on point-they were yet to develop a performance evaluation form.

Commissioner Green asked if it was proper to take a vote on the Proclamation.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE FOR THE EARLIER MOTION. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had two to three things:

**Census**

They should maybe look at redistricting, when he looked at district by district voting list, it was so skewed to one particular district. There were 30,607 voters; 8,308 voters in District 1; 6,703 in District 2; 4,688 in District 3; 5,053 in District 4. He said District 1 has almost twice the number of a particular district and did not think that was a fair demographic distribution of voters.

He suggested they consider partnering with the elderly program for some type of learning services at the library, maybe bringing the youth and elderly together.

He said he will send to the Administrator and Public Works, a list of trimming limbs on specific roads. There are some that almost hit a school bus.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Mr. Knowles said he could resend the information from the gentleman he spoke with at the University of Florida. They informed him they do not necessarily have the capacity to do that. He added it might behoove them to workshop it. Chair Holt said they needed to make sure they have the funding for that.

Commissioner Hinson said he forgot to mention, he noticed he had a family member that was part of the of the SHIP program they approved earlier and wanted to rescind his vote for that item.

**\*\*Questions were asked-Please see comments in the Consent Agenda section.\*\***

He said talked to the Robert F. Munroe principal and they were having issues when leaving the school. He asked if they could come to some type of resolution to help resolve the traffic issue. He stated he understood it was a State issue because of being a State Road. He thought they could talk about a traffic light or another entry.

Chair Holt said she was one of those citizens and the problem was they need other entrance. They need to have a conversation with the school.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was very familiar with the surroundings where it was located. He said he will raise the issue with CRTPA at the next meeting. Mr. Dixon said he will reach out as well. Commissioner Hinson said a back entry might be the way to go.

Commissioner Green felt that was part of the overall plan of the school, they are doing it in phases.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:25 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 5, 2021 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                  **Sara Green, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt asked for moment of silence at 6:01 p.m. and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to pull Item 1.

Commissioner Green asked to pull item 10 and felt they should have a workshop on the matter.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR ITEM 10 TO BE PULLED FROM THE AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE ASKED A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said if an item is pulled, it generally was not discussed.

Mr. Knowles asked for clarity. Item 10 was a General Business item and the Consent Agenda was typically where they would pull items for further discussion. He felt what Commissioner Green was asking was for that item to be workshopped or removed and heard at a later date. Chair Holt said they would be removing item 1 and Item 10 and Item 10 would be scheduled for a workshop.

Commissioner NeSmith asked for clarity; Item 1 was pulled and was told yes. He asked if they had voted on the Consent Agenda and was told no. He asked if Item 10 was pulled for discussion and was told no; Commissioner Green asked for it to be removed from the agenda and scheduled for a workshop for better understanding. He asked if the timing was the proper and Chair Holt said approving the Agenda always comes before the Consent Agenda. Mr. Knowles explained when they pull a Consent item, they were asking for it to not just be heard, but heard and explained outside of Consent. Commissioner Green was saying it required a policy decision and he would like more information and wanted it workshopped at a later date. So, they were approving the Agenda on one hand and if they wanted to pull an item, it needed to be added in this motion. Commissioner NeSmith asked if it was proper to be done now and was told yes. Chair Holt said the other way was if they wanted to approve or amend the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Hinson said why he said rescinded his second, there were other things on the agenda and they had at least a week to look at and was about to vote. They had enough time to look at the

item, look at the numbers and what they were voting on. He said people came to discuss this item tonight and felt they should it vote up or down.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Green if he wanted it removed from Agenda in order to workshop it and he stated absolutely. Commissioner Green said it was a substantial amount of money being requested and his motion still stood. Chair Holt said Commissioner Hinson made the second. Commissioner Hinson said when a Commissioner has heartburn with anything, he would like to postpone and wait until they felt comfortable and asked for a date and time certain. Mr. Dixon asked Mrs. Bradley the earliest time for a workshop and she responded they would have to advertise. Mr. Dixon asked if anything was scheduled before the next meeting and she said they had two workshops before the next scheduled meeting.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would support Commissioner Green's motion but there was also a speaker here and thought he could speak. He was told they were pulling the item and there should not be any discussion.

Commissioner Viegbesie said if Commissioner Green wanted to pull the item, and he felt that was a good direction, the speaker could speak as a non-agenda item.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE.**

#### **AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

- 1- ~~Hurricane Irma Supplemental Claims Update~~**  
Item pulled

#### **CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

- 2. Ratification Memo**
- 3. Approval of Minutes**
  - **August 17, 2021 Regular Meeting**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.*

Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the above statement.

**Wilbert Butler, 901 Riggins Road, appeared before the Board.**

Commissioner Hinson interrupted and asked that he wait until the next meeting (October 19<sup>th</sup>).

Mr. Butler said he felt the Board may make decisions regarding money before the next meeting and that was his concern.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not think delaying this would affect the money decision.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **4. Approval of State of Florida Purchasing Card Program Contract**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the State of Florida Purchasing Card Program Contract allowing state agencies and local government entities in the State of Florida to utilize the purchasing card program of the State of Florida.

**Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator**, appeared before the Board. She explained this P-card program that they were currently utilizing was with Bank of America and this was renewing the contract.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

#### **5. Approval to Confirm the Public Works Director**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said in their search for a new Public Works Director, he would like to have to the Board confirm the appointment of Mr. Jeremiah Lee as the new Director.

**UPON MOTION OF COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT.**

#### **6. Approval of the Annual Contract between the Gadsden County BOCC and the Florida Department of Health for the Operations of the Gadsden County Health Department**

Mr. Dixon said this item was the annual contract between the Gadsden County Board of Commissioners and the Florida Department of Health for the operation of the Gadsden County Health Department for the contract year 2021-2022.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

#### **7. Approval of the Mutual Aid Agreement between the Gadsden County Fire Service and Decatur County Fire and Rescue**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of the Mutual Aid Agreement between the Gadsden County Fire Service and Decatur County Fire and Rescue.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Confirmation of a Planning Commissioner Jerry Wynn for Commission District Three**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented to the Board for consideration of confirmation of Mr. Jerry Wynn as a District Three representative for the Gadsden County Planning Commission.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. Request for Board Direction on Contracts**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and asked for Board direction on some of the contracts that were either up for renewal or had expired.

Chair Holt asked for contracts to come back so they could review all of the contracts. She added they should give some deliverables and not just a description of what they want to do.

Commissioner NeSmith said they were grouped together and he was not familiar with some of them. Mr. Dixon said this was not for approval, Staff just wanted to get information to them. Commissioner NeSmith then said he was affiliated with the business that does business with the Chamber of Commerce and asked if he needed to disclose that. Mr. Knowles said he would need to disclose that but not today.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was glad she mentioned about deliverable data and some of the contracts were already expired. He also felt they needed to consider Lawson & Associates as the Session starts in January. He thought it appropriate to pull that contract and decide because of time sensitivity.

Chair Holt said what she wanted to know from vendors is what they did from the beginning of the contract to the end and they needed documentation.

Commissioner Hinson added with the Senior Services and thought they needed to fund them as soon as possible. They needed to approve that so they could receive their money no later than November.

Commissioner Green said with Lawson, the contract ends in December and asked what direction they were going to take. Mr. Dixon said now was the time if they wanted to take a direction, it would probably take 1 ½ months. Legislative session starts in January and Boards start in October and November. They were not as far behind the 8-ball as they were last year. Commissioner Hinson said it was great to have more than one, especially on the federal level. He added that Lawson & Associates helped get the fire truck, Lamb park, and named others.

Mr. Dixon said whatever direction given, they could renegotiate the contract.

Commissioner NeSmith said that was an extensive list Commissioner Hinson gave. He asked if the County provides the lobbying firm a list to go after?

Chair Holt said the members that were here yesterday have to provide the list to the House and Senate and the lobbyists push the list through.

Commissioner Viegbesie said since they were discussing the services of Lawson & Associates, he also had a list since he talked with him yesterday. When he sent the list, he was impressed. With the Congressman being at a national level, it gives them an advantage to provide more deliverables. He added if the motion was appropriate with time sensitivity, he would like to do so.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO EXTEND OR RENEW THE SERVICES OF LAWSON & ASSOCIATES TO CONTINUE THE SERVICES THEY WERE PROVIDING AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND WITH A COMMENT.**

Commissioner Green said he would like to agenda this item for Spring the following year.

Commissioner Hinson said they did not have to have one, they could have two or three. This was just for State level and they need federal level.

Chair Holt called for the vote.

Mr. Dixon asked before carrying the motion, if they could end the contract in the Summer so they could begin a new contract before Session began. Commissioner Hinson said he did not want to end it less than a year, he wanted to end it at the end of 2023. Mr. Dixon said he was asking for a little lead time before the next fiscal year and was asking that the contract not end until December.

Chair Holt said they needed to carry the vote.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said the “call to question” was not designed to end the debate and the “call to question” needed to be voted on.

Chair Holt said they voted and it was 5-0.

Mr. Knowles wanted to add some clarity and explained the “call to question” and said it should be voted on separate and apart from the actual motion.

There was then confusion around the dais as to what was voted on.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Viegbesie to rescind his motion for approval of the item and they could start over.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN WITHDREW HIS SECOND.**

Chair Holt said they would now vote on withdrawing the motion.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO RESCIND THE MOTION AND SECOND.**



**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO EXTEND THE SERVICES FOR LAWSON & ASSOCIATES AND THE COUNTY SHOULD START THE PROCESS OF SEEKING AN RFP OR RFQ IN JULY 2022 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Viegbesie said his intent is for the contract to be renewed and continued until December 2022 and the RFP/RFQ process would start in July 2022.

**CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

- 10. Funding Request from the Havana Community Development Corporation, Inc.**  
Item pulled to workshop

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

- 11. Updates**  
The Deputy Clerk said there was nothing to report.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

- 12. Updates**  
Mr. Dixon said they will meet again on Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 for the Administrator and Attorney's Evaluation workshop; Saturday is Midway Day in the community of Midway; He said they plan to meet with FCI the next week on the 12<sup>th</sup>; and they reached out to RFM and Dr. Gaffey responded and asked for any help the County could give, however they do not plan or envision on doing the second driveway for up to two years. He said the Parents that show up early were the ones causing problems and blocking the highway for the residents.

Chair Holt said she thought they needed to look at that before two years. Otherwise, traffic was backing up on Highway 90 and was lasting a while and there could be several wrecks.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

- 13. Updates**  
Mr. Knowles said in response from the Board, he reached out to Richard Doughty at the University of Florida regarding the census. He said the CQR (Count Question Resolution) and special census data would not be available until the next year. He did mention to him that they were trying to allocate funds. He said with doing a little research, it did appear that a special census could be hundreds of thousands of dollars and would be a decision that would need to be made by the Board.

He said in response to Commissioner NeSmith's question earlier, all motions require a second.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

- 14. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he noticed there was a lot of development in the County, especially in Chattahoochee. He said off Highway 27, he heard they were building a Family Dollar Store. He called Planning and Zoning and was told off 27 and 270 there was development going on and heard a Family Dollar was going in. He asked to be informed on what was going on in his district.

**Food Cards**

He said he had a phone call today and a Church was denied. Mr. Dixon said they must have used the same address.

He asked for a workshop on the American Rescue Plan.

He said he was thankful and grateful that FSU had a chance to win and hopes everyone roots for FSU because of the economic impact on Gadsden County.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith said they need to stay vigilant about the “Love where You Live” campaign.

He said he looked for favorite sign coming west on Highway 90 and the sign was gone and was replaced with a Trulieve sign. Mr. Dixon said he could check on that.

Mr. Dixon said Public Works was dedicating 2 weekends a month to the “Love Where You Live” campaign. Mr. Lee said they were working on the schedule.

He thanked Chair Holt, Mr. Dixon and Public Works for the clean-up campaign in the Friendship community and stated they picked up a lot of trash.

He thanked Commissioner Viegbesie for supporting the Sawdust community outreach first clean-up.

He asked to partner with Midway to add lighting in the area coming into Quincy.

Commissioner Hinson asked if that was a State road and Chair Holt said yes, but it was a long story, they do not have utilities in that area. Mr. Dixon said they were hoping to work with solar.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were talking about lighting and if the Administrator could take note and make it a policy issue from BOCC to FAC to push for a state policy to provide lighting in rural areas. Mr. Dixon said the thought that would become doable with solar.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green congratulated Mr. Lee and asked them to check out Jim Lee Road, they did construction a few months ago.

He requested a copy of the Ordinances as he knew there were a lot of outdated ones.

He asked for names on the Veteran monument. Commissioner Viegbesie said there was no provision for memorializing names. Michael Jackson, Veterans Services Director, was working on brick pavers where families could get a brick to honor vets on the grounds.

He thanked Administration and Staff for getting the Agenda package way before time and added he believed Midway Day is next Saturday.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a Proclamation or Resolution for Jarvis Rittman.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said something would be coming from CRTPA. FDOT wants to do a signage change from the stop sign to a yield at the junction of MLK and Highway 90 in front of the City Hall in Midway. He said he would email the Administrator the name of the contact person and their phone number.

He said he now was making a personal request, he has an interest to run again for the FAC Second VP in 2022 and was requesting a Letter of Approval and Support for his candidacy.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said the Planning Commission was revitalizing the downtown area and said they had items coming up in their book they were looking at doing with some of the infrastructure money they were to receive. She mentioned some restructuring they were planning in the Campbellton area.

She said they need to look at work programs, she wants to help inmates get career training.

She mentioned people have been asking about funding assistance for minority farmers.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
October 5, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:24 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 7,  
2021 AT 4:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING  
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3-zoom  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5-zoom  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Dixon called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. and has a moment of silence. He then led in the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

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Mr. Dixon read the above statement.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discuss County Administrator Evaluation Form (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He stated that the commissioners have been given information regarding what the county has voted on and passed in prior years. Additionally, they created a document about the county's strategic plan and the priorities before that document has been provided.

**Ms. Butler- HR Director-** will be available to speak on the items and answer any questions that there may be.

Ms. Butler came before the Board. She reiterated what Mr. Dixon stated. She stated that the evaluation form was workshopped in November 2015, for the County Administrator and the County Attorney. It was then approved at a regular meeting on February 9, 2017. She stated that the County Attorney evaluation form has not been done in the past, which is the purpose of the workshop, to include the evaluation for the County Attorney.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he decided to add in the evaluation for the attorney because their contracts can be cancelled before they expire if they're not satisfied. The administrator determines how well they (attorney) does for us (the Board).

Ms. Butler asked if there were any questions regarding the forms. She stated that they have been approved. She stated that moving forward, the Commissioners can set appointments for meetings with the administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Commissioner Hinson if he had any questions. Commissioner Hinson stated he was just listening. Commissioner Viegbesie asked Commissioner Green if he had any questions, he stated he had no questions regarding the forms.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated since there are no questions, then they can continue with the agenda.

*Chair Holt entered the workshop at 4:40 pm.*

Ms. Butler stated since there were no questions, she suggested it's best all commissioners schedule a time with the administrator to go over the evaluation. Once it is concluded, then they can bring back the cumulative scores for the administrator and present that at a regular meeting as they have done in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the commissioners would need to meet with the administrator. His understanding was that the commissioners will individually do this on their own time based on what they observe and not talk to the administrator. It will be given to HR to compile the ranking to determine whether the work of the administrator is being met.

Ms. Butler said it is at their leisure. They can do it individually and meet with the administrator or complete the evaluation and return it back to her by the deadline that is given.

Commissioner Hinson asked where's the document that says they need to meet with the Administrator or the Attorney to discuss the evaluation?

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he doesn't think meeting with the administrator was part of the process originally. Commissioner Viegbesie gave control of the meeting to Chair Holt.

Commissioner Hinson asked again where does it say that they need to meet with the Administrator. Ms. Butler stated it does not state it. She was explaining the procedure that had taken place in the past. It's not a requirement to meet with the administrator.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated in order to make an effective performance evaluation, the evaluation should be independently completed by the evaluator.

Chair Holt addressed the Board at 4:46 p.m. She asked where Commissioner Green was because he was the one who asked for this workshop. She stated she saw him on Zoom and Commissioner Green said it was ok and he wasn't the only one who asked for this workshop.

Chair Holt asked if anything needed to be added or changed on the form? Commissioner Green asked if they are able to dialogue the form as a Board once they complete the evaluation? Chair Holt said it was up to the Board on how to do the process. She said normally after completing the evaluation, you do give the person some feedback. She said if they want to meet after as a Board, it has to be in a workshop or a regular meeting. They could also meet individually without doing so. Commissioner Green asked because he wants an opportunity to discuss the evaluation post-evaluation.

Commissioner Viegbesie recalls that during evaluations with the Tallahassee City Manager, etc., individuals met with them individually and then the questions about the evaluation are what's brought to the meeting post-evaluation.

Chair Holt asked what was the timeline of the evaluations? Ms. Butler stated the County Administrator was hired on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, so it's coming up on a year so it needs to be done within the next month or couple of months. Chair Holt asked if it would need to be finished in a few weeks? Ms. Butler stated yes, if you want it done prior to December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Hinson stated that they should be able to do the evaluation right now and not have two weeks to persuade with someone about their evaluation. He believes it should take about three minutes to complete it. It doesn't take 2-4 weeks to fill out evaluation, if so, somebody is talking to somebody to affect their decisions.

Chair Holt interrupted Commissioner Hinson because she said it could give a negative intent from what he said regarding others persuading someone on their decisions on the evaluation.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that he sees where Hinson is coming from. He stated there are two things that would cause him to go to that approach. The first reason is because the administrator has not been here for a year yet, so it would be hard to evaluate someone. If it's going to be an annual evaluation then it needs to be a year in order to evaluate him. The second reason is because they are workshoping this. Since they are workshoping this, he doesn't know if these documents are upon additions, revisions or deletions. If there are no changes then it should come before the board for formal approval, then we can evaluate. There are two new commissioners that may want to make changes on the form.

Commissioner Green stated he is fine with the document. He just wants to make sure that there is a set timeframe for the evaluation. He thinks it should be done after his full year as it's an annual evaluation.

Commissioner NeSmith is inaudible due to technical issues.

Commissioner Hinson stated that his comments weren't towards a specific person. He states it should be done before one year. It is almost impossible to do it after the year because after the second year, the contract may roll over. They would have to do it a month or so before the contract expires. They need to let them know in advance if the contract is cancelled. They have to check the specifics on letting them know in advance. He says he judge's a person based on what he sees. He says if you're not for the kids or senior citizens, he is not for you.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have a schedule for evaluating the administrator or attorney? Chair Holt said they have done annual evaluations. Ms. Butler stated yes, they have done annual evaluations for County administrator, but not for the County Attorney. Chair Holt asked for how long is the County Attorney's contract. Ms. Butler stated the County Attorney's contract is for two years. Chair Holt said they could do evaluations in the middle of the year but usually it's done at the end of the year.

Chair Holt asked if there is a time that they would like the evaluations to be done? Mr. Dixon stated that the attorney may have a notice clause. Chair Holt asked for copies of the contracts from Ms. Butler. Attorney Clayton says he has both of the contracts.

Commissioner Green asked what goals are they basing their performance off of? Chair Holt stated the evaluation is based on things in the packet. The goals for accomplishments will need to be added or set.

Mr. Dixon said that not only are the goals based off of what you see and how you feel, the goals are also the strategic plan goals that are there and any other standards that you'd want to use, depending on whether it is for the administrator or the attorney.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that all of the goals have to do with how well we're moving along with our strategic plan and moving along with the County. He thinks the document covers everything that needs to be discussed and used.

Commissioner Hinson hopes that the packet will be read objectively. He wants to make sure that things are going well and evaluate based on that. He hopes to find strategies that work with the attorney and administrator to make sure they move Gadsden County forward.

Chair Holt stated everything they can do for people has to be funded. She said they have to look at the economic development side. She says they can look at page 2 of the packet and see if those are what they want to evaluate on. She said the funding for "Pay Plan for Sheriff's Office" is very important when the federal money dries up. The funding for "Construct or Open a hospital", set for 2025, means they have to have a lot of planning right now. She references page 3 and things that weren't done, like meeting with economic developer. She said that the Board sets these dates and they may need to move them or change them and check them off as they go.

Commissioner Hinson referenced on page 3, that if you aren't for Broadband, that's a pet peeve of his. He says it's been on the "agenda to do" for years. He stated four kids in Midway were getting killed because of unsafe roadways, it's not about who it is in charge but rather if things get done. He wants to tackle issues that deal with people. He said "as long as you help the people, I'm with you."

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have a schedule that is in place to evaluate the County Administrator and to evaluate the County Attorney? He wanted to be very specific because he does not want to bring subjectivity in this process. His question is, once they hire a County Administrator, do they have a schedule to evaluate that person every quarter, 6 months, 9 months, or every year. He states that the Administrator and the Attorney needs feedback on a



consistent basis. Chair Holt said they normally evaluate the person in those two positions at the end of their contract. She said it is up to the Board to decide if they want an annual evaluation. Chair Holt asked Ms. Butler if she has any suggestions. Ms. Butler says in the March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting, they agreed/voted on an annual performance review for the County Administrator as well as the County Attorney. Chair Holt agreed that's what they previously voted on. She stated that they have two new commissioners, so it is an open board, and they can make any suggestions they would like. Commissioner NeSmith's other question was that he supports an annual evaluation but they need to create a schedule so that if the person is hired January 1<sup>st</sup>, then they need to start the evaluation process in September or October. In other words, they need to have a schedule where they are informed of when it's time to evaluate. Then, they need a timeframe to have it done and provided to whoever they need to submit the information to.

Commissioner NeSmith says they did not provide the County Administrator and County Attorney specific goals and objectives to meet. We gave the County Administrator a catalog but did not provide the specific goals to reach. He states that they need to provide them with a syllabus of goals to achieve because otherwise it's too subjective. Chair Holt stated some of these goals in the packet are being done. Some goals didn't have specifics on how to be done. Commissioner NeSmith said they have to be clear about their expectations. He wants it clearly outlined in a document.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated we were supposed to continue developing the process and document. He stated that this document wasn't finished, it was where they stopped. He stated that they need to have more workshops on this. He stated that the evaluation process will become objective and not subjective by doing that.

Commissioner Hinson stated this is the reason why he was suggesting to have many workshops. He said in reality, every Board member could have requested for this to be on the agenda. He said they can't talk big talk when they had the opportunity to put this on the agenda. He says there's nothing subjective about this evaluation. He says they were able to get people from the Florida Association of Counties help develop the document because they have experience in it and not making it subjective. He says the current evaluation encompasses everything. He asked Mrs. Steele to go through the slides to make his point that the evaluation isn't subjective.

Chair Holt stated they chose this as an instrument. She says that they need to come together for when they can evaluate. This workshop is to decide how they want to evaluate and when they want to evaluate.

Commissioner NeSmith deferred to Commissioner Green and Commissioner Viegbesie.

Commissioner Green asked how can they evaluate them without the tools for what's expected as a current Board. He suggests that don't have a fifteen-minute meeting before a meeting. He wants a whole discussion on it that they don't have a time limit on.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated that they have accepted the document as the appropriate document. He says now is the timeline, which is the procedure. He asked when are they going to start and end the evaluation. He said If they could vote today then timeline develops today which is why he suggests another workshop.

Chair Holt stated that they have to have this done by December. She said they have a meeting in two weeks so that they can vote on what they decide. She asked if they want to have anything to be voted on in the next meeting to be added on.

Mr. Dixon asked if the annual date is the anniversary date of the hire or a calendar date? Chair Holt says it can't be a calendar date because they would be unsure when they hire an administrator. It would have to be 30 days or 60 days before the evaluation.

Commissioner NeSmith asked when did they approve the evaluation instrument? Commissioner Viegbesie stated it was approved in 2016 by the prior Board. Commissioner NeSmith asked if this instrument the same for the County Attorney? Ms. Butler stated they were approved in March, 2017. They were two different instruments for both the administrator and the attorney. Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the workshop was in 2016. Ms. Butler states yes, it began November, 2016 and was approved March 7, 2017. Commissioner NeSmith asked if both instruments require them to evaluate annually? Chair Holt stated yes. Commissioner Nesmith suggests at 9 months all the Commissioners receive the instrument, that gives them 30 days to fill it out. By the 10<sup>th</sup> month, it goes to Mrs. Butler, then the next 30 days gives each administrator the opportunity to meet with the staff persons to discuss their evaluations. Then, in 11<sup>th</sup> month that information goes to the chair and dispersed. Then, they have 30 days after that so that the administrator or attorney has time to decide how to move forward. He asked if they need to evaluate by December. Chair Holt said they need to evaluate before December 1, for the administrator and Mr. Knowles said the end of February 2022 for the attorney. He stated March was the hire date.

Commissioner NeSmith stated that they can evaluate the administrator recognizing the Board didn't do due diligence or give specifics. He says they don't have enough information to evaluate accordingly. Chair Holt says they have all been with each one about a year now. She said they are able to evaluate them based on what they have seen so far. The points will have to roll over to next evaluation because they need to be evaluated no later than the first of November.

Commissioner Viegbesie says that what he's about to say is in regards to both of the positions, but is more to the situation that the contract for the law firm that they have ends March first of next year. He said they need to do that expeditiously so that they know ahead of time if they won't be the attorney. He said timeliness is very important.

Commissioner Hinson says they have three employees. They have the County Administrator, the County Attorney and the Engineering Firm. They have other contractors as well. He says they need to give them 30 days in advance.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 6:14PM.*

Commissioner Hinson thinks that since Commissioner Green and Commissioner NeSmith want this and they are not ready, he says they should wait it out and not rush. He suggests waiting until next year. Chair Holt stated that they have to do the annual evaluation. Commissioner Hinson stated that they're not ready for it. He says what Ms. Butler stated makes since, they could talk individually to the Administrator and see if they can come up with a resolution.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 6:17PM.*

Commissioner NeSmith stated he appreciates the comments from Commissioner Viegbesie and Commissioner Hinson. He asked when did the contract with the law firm begin? Mr. Knowles stated in March of 2020. Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was an evaluation done in February, 2021. Chair Holt stated no, she doesn't think there was one done, but they are overdue. Commissioner NeSmith said he doesn't have a problem doing evaluation and they need to get used to doing them again. He says they need to come up with dates to have the evaluations done. He said they need to decide when they can evaluate and get them back to HR and when they can sit down with each party then get it to the public.

Commissioner Green agrees that they do need to move forward with the evaluations as well. He says that they can only evaluate with what they have experience with. He doesn't see the purpose of prolonging it or not doing it.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Dixon when the forms could be sent to them. Mr. Dixon says the forms can get out to them by October 21<sup>st</sup>. He says they need to be completed and returned to HR by the first meeting of November. Chair Holt says they can give the forms to HR whenever they are done then put it on agenda for a meeting whenever they want. Chair Holt says to have them by two months before the contract ends.

Mr. Knowles asked if the Administrator's evaluation would be two weeks from today and the Attorney's would be first meeting in January. Chair Holt stated yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated they should let the HR director give her opinion on the timeline for effectiveness.

Ms. Butler says that she is able to get the evaluation forms to the Commissioners electronically so that it is a littler easier. She suggests October 21<sup>st</sup>, two weeks from today, to get the evaluation forms back to her. It gives her time for the information to be compiled and be presented at the first meeting in November. That meets the 6-week timeline Chair Holt suggested. For the attorney, it would be the same process. She asked if that timeline works. Chair Holt stated yes.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the Commissioners received their administrative aids? Holt stated no.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Ms. Butler that when she sends out the evaluation packets, if she could include the dates the form needs to be turned in by as a gentle reminder. Ms. Butler said OKAY.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Ms. Butler if she can make the forms writable? Ms. Butler stated yes, she can make it a form field document. Commissioner NeSmith thanked everyone.

**2. Discuss County Attorney Evaluation Form (Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator)**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
October 07, 2021, Evaluation Form Workshop

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**WITH THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS  
DECLARED ADJOURNED AT 6:33 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA HOLT, Chair  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 19, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                  **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                  **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                  **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                  **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                  **Opal McKinney-Williams, Assistant County Attorney**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt welcomed everyone to meeting and called it to order, asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he wished to pull items 13 and 14 because of legal issues.

Chair Holt asked to add an invoice for FCI as Item 18a.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA WITH CHANGES AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

- 1. Check Presentation to Capital Medical Society Foundation-The We Care Network**  
Mr. Dixon asked The We Care Network to come forward for the presentation.
  
- 2. Check Presentation to Gadsden Community Health Council**  
A presentation was made to the Gadsden Community Health Council.
  
- 3. Gadsden County Extension Update**  
**Mr. Robbie Jones, County Extension Director**, appeared before the Board for an update.

He said the Ag Adventures program was currently on hold and there were changes happening in the Research Center.

Florida Light and Power was sponsoring the Public Speaking Competition.

They were continuing with the 4-H Program and mentioned the different clubs.

He mentioned another program they had going on, the peanut butter challenge. It is an annual event that the UF/IFAS Extension hosts. It is sponsored by the Florida Peanut Producers Association and the Florida Peanut Federation. They have challenged IFAS with raising peanut

butter to help those individuals of need in their community. He explained they were raising jars of peanut butter and those two entities will provide a proportional match. He has tasked his office staff to raising 10% of the population in jars raised. He said the more jars raised would be more jars that would be matched that would be given to the food banks. His goal is to be number 1. He said money would not be matched, it had to be jars of peanut butter. He also wanted to make sure the community was aware that the North Florida Research and Extension Center was 100 years old.

Commissioner Hinson said there were a lot of students that have a strong interest in agriculture and science. Could he forward the information to him? Yes.

#### **CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

4. **Ratification Memo**
5. **Approval of Minutes**
  - **August 13, 2021 BOCC Emergency Meeting**
  - **August 17, 2021 Contracts/Committees Workshop**
  - **August 19, 2021 Budget Workshop**
  - **September 7, 2021 BOCC Meeting**
6. **Approval of the 2022 Holiday Schedule**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

##### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

***Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.***

Commissioner Viegbesie read the above statement aloud.

Danny Miller

**Cametra Gibson-Bryant, 7123 Havana Hwy., Havana, FL** appeared before the Board and wanted to share her experience regarding the American Rescue Plan. She passed out a timeline to share with the Commissioners regarding her experience with the Plan. She explained everything that happened in the process and she was ultimately denied.

Wilbert Butler

Shane Wellenderf, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL

Rolland Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road

Ruth Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road

Marion Lasley

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mr. Dixon said before getting started with the Public Hearings, he wanted to introduce Mr. Justin Stiell, Interim Planning Director. Mr. Steel spoke and told A little about himself.

#### **7. Public Hearing (Legislative) Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment (CPA 2021-03) Ordinance 2021-08, Policy 1.1.1.k Commercial-Consideration to approve transmittal of the text amendments to Policy 1.1.1.k of the Future Land Use Element to the Department of Economic Development**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. He said the Board was asked to consider transmittal of text amendments to the Future Land Use Element Policy to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. The text amendment would allow RV's to drive on non-arterial roads.

This item has been to Planning twice and both times Planning and Zoning rejected it. The Neighbors have indicated they were not happy with this program.

**Danny Miller, 1600 Reynolds Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He stated the Idea is to bring eco-tourism to Gadsden County by bringing in an RV resort. He explained he was not doing a trailer park or RV campsite. It will be a tourism opportunity. He also would like to bring a 5-star restaurant to the lake. The current Ordinance does not allow RV parks on non-arterial roads and this property will present an excellent opportunity. The text amendment will allow to move forward to have an RV park.

Commissioner Green thanked him for the presentation. He asked for the estimation of jobs this opportunity would provide and Mr. Miller stated the park would require approximately 10 full-time employees, it will also spin off jobs in maintenance. They intend to put in a package sewer plant, which was a requirement of a development of this type. They have to put in a modular package sewer plant, it will take the nitrogen out of the effluent, will treat the water to the first (inaudible) level, one level below potable water and that will water the landscape. He said there will be spin-off jobs from the RV park. The restaurant will employ approximately 15 full and part-time employees.

Commissioner Green said he had the opportunity to look and thinks the opportunity could be great. He said he had the opportunity to speak with people this would impact and in speaking with some, could the restaurant sustain without the RV park or would it be package deal? He said the biggest issue is the size of the RV's taking up the road.

Mr. Miller said he did not think the restaurant would be feasible without having the RV element. He said the road at its narrowest point was 21 feet wide and at the widest was almost 23 feet wide. He said when the pavement was put on the road, it was paved on clay. While there was nothing wrong with paving on clay, but he people that did it was in a hurry to get in and get out. He added from the beginning to Reynolds Road to the RV site was only approximately 1 ½ miles and the County had funds for improving roads and may be able to get

a grant to improve/widen the road. He said the ditches on the road also needed improvement. He added that he owned some of the property along the road and would gladly dedicate some to the County if necessary.

Commissioner Hinson disclosed that he had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Miller. He believed in economic development and how would this impact environmentally? Mr. Miller stated the water retention would be in the form of holding ponds. He has done a discharge study. Tonight, he was just asking for the ability to bring this plan forward. He said he had to meet requirements of DEP, Northwest Florida Water Management and Gadsden County in order to build this. Commissioner Hinson asked if the County partnered with a company to hold an annual event. Chair Holt said that was the Crappie tournament but had not had that in a couple of years.

Mr. Miller said the crappie event was a national event but haven't had one since COVID. He said they felt like they could bring the crappie tournament back. Fishermen all travel in RV's, will have a place to park them, and have a restaurant to feed them. He added they will be bringing in people as tourists for economic development. Commissioner Hinson asked in his opinion, how would this benefit County? Mr. Miller said first, the impact and value for Gadsden County was tourism. Second, would be creating jobs for local people, people would be buying groceries, fuel, etc. They felt there may be cottage industries that may be created such as car washes for RV's. A lot of people that come are northerners, what is called "snowbirds". The park would not have permanent residents. They want to bring people in that would spend money. He said he has been a responsible developer, been doing it for 40 years. This opportunity is for Gadsden County. Commissioner Hinson said former Commissioner Lamb also called him up and spoke highly of Mr. Miller.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he also had met with Mr. Miller and understand this is not an approval for development. The question he had was would this be a trailer park and was told no. As a professor of economics, he got excited. With college homecomings, he saw this as a way for economic development for the County. He asked how it would generate noise and then said people would come and would leave. He also saw it as a way to grow the crappie fish tournament. Until COVID, he attended the fish tournament and sees it as a way to grow. He thought it would be a wonderful thing instead of shutting it down. The County has been crying for jobs and economic development and here they were with some idea that might be a chance to bring development in. Commissioner Viegbesie said, if they want economic development, open their minds to it.

Mr. Miller asked to show his presentation to everyone.

Chair Holt said she had looked at the property and asked for comments from the audience.

**Shane Wellendorf, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL**, appeared before the Board. He stated he was a Conservation Coordinator with Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy. They hold a conservation easement on Reynolds Road across the road from the property being considered. He said Tall Timbers respectfully requested they deny this proposed amendment. This will be a change to commercial and once done, that commercial designation stays on this property and would open doors to other types of commercial projects. He thought the bigger concern was not the RV park or restaurant but opening up



commercial to other projects. He said they would like to see this property kept as rural. He asked they deny the land amendment change.

Mr. Miller said Tall Timbers was a good organization but owns conservation easements. They do not contribute to the economic development of the County. He said he was trying to offer an RV development, was not asking for commercial zoning to put in a Walmart.

**Ruth Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the Board. She stated she was a homeowner in a gated community adjacent to Mr. Miller's property. She added that Reynolds Road was not wide enough to accommodate RV's. RV's were usually hauling their toys, jet skis, etc. She also stated that the septic system he wants to use is a drain field with a spray feature.

**Rolland Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road, Quincy, FL**, appeared before the Board. He gave credit to Mr. Miller for more than four years of extra-ordinary effort of trying to build this park. He felt it was a little fool-hardy for the proposed area. He said Tyndell Road becomes an easement dirt road and is used by property owners living at the end of Tyndell Road. He asked they not approve this project without serious thought. He asked they consider the all the wisdom of the Planning Commission that determined this RV park was not good for the area, for the property owners in the surrounding area and the viability of such a project. He also asked they consider the questionable pay-backs.

**John Brown (was on Zoom but could not hear him speak)**, Chair Holt said he was opposed to this project.

**Marion Lasley**, Chair Holt said she was opposed to this item.

Mr. Miller re-appeared before the Board. He stated the package sewer plant would not have a spray field and would not be spraying anything, it was a modular package sewer plant. When he brings this back for final approval, he will have a sanitary person to appear before the Board. The system he was talking about using is used in rest areas. He will have a road put in that would not affect Tyndell Road. He wanted to be a responsible developer.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Mr. Miller if he had maps available during the Planning community meetings? If he had, he may have been able to more effectively communicate his position to them. He suggested if he could do it in a more cordial way, as opposed to both parties being antagonistic. Mr. Miller said he understood and was a point well taken. Commissioner Green asked how many community meetings were offered. Mr. Miller said three years ago, they had CBOR meeting. He stated he had never been sworn at as much before in his life.

Commissioner Hinson said he saw a few things that left him perplexed. He asked what staff recommended. Mr. Dixon said they did not see it any differently than Pat Thomas Park. It is an opportunity. He said they were talking about the road because they were listening to the citizens. They had to improve the road for Robert F. Munroe and Four Star Freightliner. He said the current law did not allow RV's to travel down the road. He added they just received \$50,000 to improve roads. Commissioner Hinson read **Policy 1.1.1 K-3 Density**. He felt Staff

was given a different direction than what he saw. The way he read it, they were in violation with Pat Thomas Park.

Mr. Dixon said he thought what Commissioner Hinson was highlighting was the same reason the Commissioners did away with CBOR because it did not encourage growth of any type. That was where they saw a way to improve where people could operate within the law.

Commissioner NeSmith said since he arrived on this Board, they have been talking about two issues and number one was economic development. He also met with Mr. Miller and always focuses on the best interest of Gadsden County and the residents. He had an opportunity to travel and many of these cities are thriving in the mist of this pandemic except for Gadsden County. Not only does the County have a lack of economic development, they also have an issue with keeping residents in the County because they will move to a community that was growing and thriving. They will always be able to find issues to not approve economic development because it would be that someone lives a mile down the road, an extended family member that has an issue, etc., but they have to change that. He said they just received the Census Report and saw a reduction in population. They were not approving a plan that was not before them. There is time to have additional dialogue but they need to grow. They need to move toward economic develop so they can work out the issues and grow in the County.

Commissioner Hinson said first, he was not against this. At Twin Creek in Havana, it was built in an area where the whole community was under water. When looking at things, have to ask questions. He thought this was a great idea and was inspired by it.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 7:26 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson continued and said he had to ask questions. It appeared staff lambasted this thing. If they vote for something that will be a problem, staff could say they gave every reason why they should not vote for it. Now the County Administrator was saying they were trying to build at Pat Thomas Park and was the same thing. He wanted to make sure people were reading this. He said staff lambasted the opportunity.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 7:29 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said they did not have that staff anymore.

Chair Holt said this was something they had for two weeks and had the opportunity to read through it. They need roads other than arterial roads. She said that was why it was very important to make decisions based on facts. There are people that have tracts of land they cannot sell because of (?) like they are and there are descendants of the people that used to own that land between McCall Bridge Road and Reynolds Road and the land was taken from them and they want that land back if they had the opportunity. But that does not seem to be happening.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE.**

Commissioner Green said to the citizens, this was not an approval of the project holistically, it was to move forward. He hoped in the process, they could have better dialogue and did not want to be hypocritical. If they shut down everything every time, they will never move forward. He just wanted to open the door for other areas.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE COMP PLAN AMENDMENT AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR SAID IT WAS FOR OPTION ONE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Public Hearing (Legislative) Reynolds Road Small Scale Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment (SSPA 2021-02)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of the transmittal and adoption of Ordinance 2021-009 for a small-scale amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

Chair Holt reminded them it was a public hearing and asked for comments from the audience.

Mr. Miller said the comprehensive amendment would change the property to commercial zoning and need that in order to build an RV resort. He said they were asking they approve the Comp Plan amendment for transmittal to Economic Development so they could have the opportunity to bring a plan to them to build an RV park. He reiterated it was not approving the park, only the changes zoning the property to commercial to allow them to bring the plan for the park.

Chair Holt asked that page 4 of 116 be placed on-screen. (Before that came up, she asked her to bring up page 13 of 116.)

Chair Holt said while they were waiting for it to load, she would bring up the speakers.

**Shane Wellendorf, 13093 Henry Beadel Drive, Tallahassee, FL** appeared before the Board and stated he had basically said everything when he presented the first time.

**Ruth Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road, Quincy, Florida,** appeared before Board and said she was speaking for the community and they would not like it to be changed to commercial. She added it would be hard to tell what would go up and their property value would go down.

**Rolland Maser, 25 Talquin Hideaway Road, Quincy, FL,** appeared before the Board and stated he really respected everything they were doing. He said to Commissioner NeSmith that he articulated very well and was all for whatever could be done in the County. He had lived here a number of years and asked him what would bring these people into that area? Yes, they need to build up the area but an RV park has to have attractions and Mr. Miller has optimistic ideas on paper. He said he felt sorry for folks that live on Reynolds Road and would like to help them out. He said to get it all down pat before approving.

Mr. Miller said at the point where they will bring the project forward, they will do a national marketing campaign to bring people to Gadsden County. They will bring people in on a continuous basis.

Chair Holt asked for discussion or comments.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to reiterate the statement from Commissioner Green and Commissioner Hinson that the County was not approving the plan, it was just another step in the process.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR HOLT READ ALOUD THE OPTIONS AND THEN CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **9. Medigreen Medical Waste Management**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for a contract between the Gadsden County BOCC and Medigreen Medical Waste Management.

Commissioner Hinson asked why bring this to the Board? Mr. Dixon said it was a contract.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:49 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson stated it was under the \$25,000 threshold.

Mr. Dixon said he trying to clarify what the Board wanted to see and want they did not want to see. The Board made it clear they wanted to see contracts. Mr. Dixon asked the Deputy Clerk and her response was the Board has to approve all contracts and the Chairman signs them. Chair Holt said this was a very important one because needles, etc. has to be disposed of properly.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

#### **10. Approval of Point Milligan Road SCOP CEI Selection**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated the selection committee chose AE Engineering and recommended they be given the contract.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND.**

Chair Holt asked that the Administrator, Road and Bridge Director and Engineer to please come up with a chart showing the roads in the districts and what services were provided.

Commissioner Viegbesie also said if they could provide approved construction amounts so they will know how much to be spent on each road.

**CHAIR CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Approval of Potter Woodberry SCOP CEI Selection**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**12. Neighborhood Medical Center Mediacom Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of a construction agreement that authorizes Mediacom to install, maintain and operate the Company's wiring, cables, conduits, equipment on the premises necessary for Mediacom to provide its communication services to tenants located at the premises.

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:53 p.m.*

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. ALS 360 Stryker Agreement**

Item Pulled

**14. ~~Contract with I.F.W. Security, LLC to Provide Security Services at the Butler Building and Gadsden County Public Library in Quincy, FL~~**

Item Pulled

**15. Funding Request from the Havana Community Development Corporation, Inc.**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was a funding request of Havana Community Development Corporation (Havana CDC) from the County to facilitate repairs, renovations and repurposing of the old Northside High School buildings and facilities.

Commissioner Viegbesie said from the earlier workshop, they all understand the importance of this project. It will impact healthy food from the farmers market. He stated he was in support of this project but funding was what was giving him heartburn. If they could find a way to creatively fund this project and work with the Havana CDC to see what could be worked in the annual budget to ensure they will get something they could work with the County on. The \$600,000 in one lump sum, he was not very comfortable with. If the money was there or they could find a way to creatively fund, he was ok with it.

Commissioner Green said he did not want to be redundant and felt it was a great project, however, as they were addressed earlier in reference to funding a business, they need to make sure they move some money so they could not only accommodate that individual but others that have already been approved. He agreed with Commissioner Viegbesie.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Commissioner Hinson for bringing forth an awesome program. He said he had an opportunity to tour it.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make a recommendation to the Board. He did not think that \$600,000 was enough, even if they knew where it was coming from, because in previous Board meetings, they obligated that money to other areas. He said the County Administrator alluded to this earlier and he supported it 100%. This is a major project that could turn and made a significant difference in the east side of the County. He would like Dr. Butler and the team to partner with the County so they could find some major dollars to fund all the resources it needed to be a beacon of light for that community. He told Dr. Butler it was an excellent presentation and they needed to see if they could work on some major projects for that facility. He said again the amount requested was not enough for the school.

Chair Holt said the presentation was great. She then said whatever they do for Havana, they must do for Gretna Elementary. She said as long as everyone got the same thing, she was good, but everyone has to present a plan like Mr. Butler did. She added there was also other schools out there and they need to see how they could rotate some of the things out. They need to figure out a way to do it.

Commissioner Hinson said she did great job for coaching up the team. He said they were talking economic development, mental health, and kids. He said he did not believe in tit for tat and what they have to do for one, do for all. He stated they took money from small businesses and gave it to other projects. They now have \$1.3 Million that is not restricted now and had the American Rescue Plan. He asked Mr. Dixon how much money was in the General Fund. Mr. Dixon said he could not tell him right now. He said before they decide, they have to know that first.

Mr. Butler appeared before the Board and said he appreciated their efforts. He said when they came to the last meeting, it was about vendors and they showed how they support and help them out. He said while he understood supporting vendors, there was nothing in the till about Gretna or any other project such as this. He said they have been before the Board several times and had been put off several times. They had a workshop several years ago and the only thing that came out of it was aquaponics in terms of putting people to work. They started an aquaponics system and spent money to keep that going. He said they were doing things in the community that would put people to work. They are selling products online and just got the Department of Agriculture to come out to approve them for growing hemp. He explained their buildings and services to the Commissioners. He said they were doing great things but needed the Commission to step up, support their efforts and if they could not give the \$600,000, give them \$200-300,000 and plan the next time they had money and to not deny them.

Commissioner Viegbesie said like earlier, residents in Havana vote for him as well as other sections. One that was there, their business was not funded in the American Rescue Plan. There are religious organizations in Havana that needed money. Who among the voters do they ignore? Do they please one group to the detriment of others or abandon ones already promised to do for others. He said he would do what his conscience told him to. He added they may not be able to give all \$600,000 but the Board could instruct staff to look at the books and see how they could work the organization into their annual operation. He added that \$600,000 was not near enough they needed to ask for. He added that Voters come in all shapes and sizes.

Commissioner Hinson said personally, the \$1.3 Million plan was put before them and they were told to vote for it. That money was not restricted because it went back into the General Fund. He said they took that money and used it for whatever the County Administrator wanted. He asked the Board for workshops first so the community could have input before they voted on it. He said it was brought to them and they voted for it the same night without looking at it. The next agenda had \$4.4 Million for the American Rescue Plan and they voted for everything that same night without looking into it. He further stated they were going to spend \$200,000 to refurbish their meeting room. He said they put more money into Churches than they did small businesses. He added that the barbers and beauticians could not work and they still voted on it; they refused to have meetings. He said they laughed about it but it was not funny to him. Now they act like they were so concerned about the people. He said for them to look at the budget first and then could make a rational decision. He then said he did not want to vote for something in the blind because he did not know how much was in the General Fund. He wanted to table this item for two weeks until he could find out how much was in the General Fund, bring that information back and they could make the right decision.

Chair Holt said they could not be threatened into doing anything or accuse them of not reading the Agenda items or bully them into anything. She said they said to look at the budget and what they had to do. To try to degrade Commissioners because one had a concern was not the way to get them on your side. No-one has said they did not want to fund the program, they said they needed to look at what they were doing so far and what was promised. She said they need to look at this. She said she was getting tired of him insulting Commissioners. The young lady that commented was not the only one that complained about the distribution process. The Sheriff also commented about the distribution. She felt everyone would be happy if this item came back.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THIS ITEM UNTIL THEY HAD ALL THE INFORMATION BEFORE THEM AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE ALSO ASKED THE ADMINISTRATOR TO HAVE AN OPEN-DOOR ACCESS TO MR. BUTLER AND THE HAVANA CDC TO SEE HOW THEY COULD HELP AND WORK WITH THEM FOR THE GOOD OF THE CITIZENS. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TABLING THIS ITEM.**

**16. Approval of Resolution 2021-034 in Support of Protecting Seniors Through Immunization Act of 2021 to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for vaccines under Medicare Part D**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was in support of protecting the Seniors through the Immunization Act of 2021 to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for vaccines under the Medicare Part D.

Commissioner Viegbesie said this would support H.R. 1978 and the United States House of Representatives in the effort to ensure deductible, coinsurance, initial coverage limit, and cost-sharing requirements that apply under the Medicare prescription drug benefit that did not apply with respect to vaccines that are recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for Disease Control and Prevention.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**17. Board Approval to Submit a Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Small Cities Application Seeking \$1.6 Million in CDBG-CV Funds to Rehabilitate, Improve and Furnish the County Owned Facility, that once served as the Cafeteria to the William S. Stevens Historic High School for the Resolution Approving the Submittal of the Application**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval to submit a Florida DEO CDBG-CV application for \$1.7 million in CDBG-CV funds to rehabilitate, improve and furnish the County-owned facility that once served at the cafeteria to the William S. Stevens historic high school for the purpose of providing a dedicated COVID shelter for Gadsden County citizens.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**18. Board Approval of the Gadsden County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Duplication of Benefits Policy (DOB) and the Four-Factor Analysis Language Assistance Plan (LAP)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval of the Gadsden County Community Development Block Grant Duplication of Benefits Policy and the Four-Factor Analysis Language Assistance Plan.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**18a. FCI Invoice**

Mr. Dixon said Chair Holt submitted this item.

Chair Holt said this item was added because there was an invoice, they had already approved the contract items that were distributed and Mr. Figgers sent information showing he had already sent the items and she wanted to get a vote to approve and move on.

Commissioner Hinson said he spoke with Mr. Dixon a few months ago and if not mistaken, they talked about this. He said they gave away food cards and asked the process for purchasing them. Mr. Dixon said they went to the vendor and as the vendor submitted them, they signed off on them, brought them into their shop. The Clerk's office created a number to go with the name and that required them to change the process where they would mail but the vendor wanted the people be present to get a signature so they would know exactly who received what card. Commissioner Hinson said normally they would purchase the food card and then give them out. He said he was ready for this to be done with. He asked why not allow them to give the 25,000 hotspots, pay for it first, they have a surety bond that covers \$2 Million anyway, so if they order just like they did the food cards, purchase them, they send it to the County and then they distribute and move on. Then FCI would not be responsible for delivering anything. He felt that was fair since they have a surety bond. They won't have to worry; the County will distribute them.

Chair Holt said she did not bring this before the Board for that. She was looking at what they delivered for their amount of money. Once there was the cease and desist, especially at that park, they have no idea how many were given out but a lot of people were there and at the IGA. She knew there was a certain amount that was given out. They have a contract but in looking at it, either they need to do what they needed to do to settle this part; or they will end



up in Court, and said she believed that was where they will be, and did not have problem with that. She said she knew x number of devices were received but were never turned on because they stopped. She said she was only talking about the number of instruments given out, if they could halfway settle that part, she would be happy.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he has said this before, there was nothing personal, it was strictly business. He stated again he has never met Mr. Figgers. If he recalled correctly, the Board voted for 100% attestation of the devices before payment was made. He asked the Administrator for the invoice being presented now (\$40,383.20), could delivery be attested and if not, why was it being presented for payment. The amount that was attested was approved for payment and if could be provided documentation that this invoice was invoice for fully attested delivery of the instruments and they were fully provided, would have no problem, otherwise he was not in favor. He said it was about principals and he stood on principals.

Mr. Dixon said, like him, he just received the invoice from the Chair, it was not from staff. He said he met with Mr. Figgers/FCI and once again tried to move beyond the situation. He said he had good ideas he wanted to present to them, he did what the Board asked to verify the number of devices, submitted that for payment as the Board instructed on what they could verify. The amount was for \$1700.00 roughly that they could verify. He stated he was not here saying they did not give them to the people, he saw some of the activity, there were people all around. However, like the food cards that were just brought up, there were a lot of people around but there was only one person that said they did not receive their food card out of 1700. He said the process worked, whether it was the food card or wi-fi device, they have tried to move beyond this knowing that they thought it was settled activity, that they proved what they could prove. It was said to them if the devices were later proven to have been handed out and put on line, they would be glad to submit them for payment as they moved through program, they declined. They said pay this or bust. In the very last meeting, they have scheduled them for the next meeting, they said they wanted to come before the BOCC, and then he had no choice but to end the discussion and it was placed on the agenda for the Board to decide on. He said he could not move if they were not willing to move. He has sat with Commissioner Hinson and thought they had good ideas about how to make it go but they refuse to entertain anything beyond this invoice being paid in full. He told them he did not have the authority and nothing verifiable that could be verified to be submitted to the Board to justify payment. He said that was where he and staff were and have not seen anything to differ.

Commissioner Green asked if the invoice came directly from Mr. Figgers or where did the numbers come from. Chair Holt said the invoice came from Mr. Figgers' company and she also received one from there. Commissioner Green said based on their previous approval, there was a substantial amount of money that was possibly invested into the devices. Would the \$40,000 clear out what was owed? Chair Holt said he has stated that was what they had given out. She said what was brought to IGA, they gave out everything. She called Mr. Bebe about what was being said negatively about the County about the distribution. There were people lined up out of the parking lot and they did that even though they were supposed to have someone from the County for the distribution. She called Mr. Bebe and told him she did not appreciate the young lady making negative comments about the County and asked it be taken down because they thought the County was the ones giving them out. He was to bring them

here and the Administrator was to verify and then be given out. She asked if they had started giving them out at Tanyard Creek Park.

Bishop Green appeared before the Board, said he did not know this was on the Agenda and requested permission to speak. Bishop Green said he shared in a meeting with Mr. Dixon, one of his biggest concerns to both parties, there is a contract and the County has contractual obligation and each party was responsible to do certain things. This issue is one he knew that has dragged on too long. The County hired the company to create, advertise and distribute the devices, be responsible for the device and all its components. He sat with them through several meetings where they went through the contract, redid the contract and renegotiated it. He said Contract law one of the most difficult challenges but was black and white. He said to just abide by the agreement and avoid litigation. He said he could not say how many actually worked and could not say how many was actually given out, but saw them being given out. He stated that asking for payment of devices already given out was part of their contractual discussion. He stated If they were trying to canvass, there was no way if the devices were given out in February, they would be active in May, three months had expired. If they do not handle this correctly, there will be no winners and the real losers will be the citizens. He said they could not get what was gotten in a contractual obligation from FCI from any other vendor and will not get it going forward from any other vendor under this kind of treatment. He said normally they would make the purchase, they would contract for the purchase and then take responsibility for the distribution of the items. He said he was told data usage was attached and sent with the invoice. He further stated the cure for it was in the surety bond, they had a guarantee. He did not see how the County could lose but could see how all could lose. He thought tonight they were at a crossroads, they need to decide to either honor the contract, pay the invoice or prepare for litigation and the citizens will lose. If they find out he did not produce and distribute the number being paid for, they have a remedy covered in the contract. He has to make the devices good. Bishop Green said he read the contract and why have contract and have to go by. He further stated the fact was they asked the Administrator to verify each device and it was hard to verify something that was working in July that was distributed months earlier. There was a limited 3-month contract and he was charging for the device and data usage. If he is committing fraud, submitting documents that is fraudulent, he assumes not only civil liability but criminal liability. He said he felt it would be in the best interest of the citizens of the County to honor the invoice, pay it because they have recourse. He said his last point was for them to stop beating this horse, either bury it or ride it. He has a good product at a good price. He thought it would do the Board, community and FCI a great service if they could find a way to resolve this in a peaceful manner and pay the invoice.

Chair Holt said she brought this item because she was looking for settlement on this and was trying to get one tonight.

Commissioner Green said he wanted to be clear. Chair Holt stated they could not settle the contract, it had a lot more “stuff” in it.

Chair Holt asked the Administrator if would be scheduled and Mr. Dixon stated it would be scheduled for the next meeting.

Commissioner NeSmith said to the Administrator he did not know they could bring something like this to the Commission, if it was appropriate. Mr. Dixon said it was an item they voted on

to add at the beginning of the meeting. He then asked the Administrator what would be on Agenda and Mr. Dixon said the Board's direction on how to handle this matter. He clarified what he was asking for, if they want to do the contract, it was not the County that was holding this up. He said they could choose to talk about the \$40,000 or talk about the \$1.7 Million. He said they could talk about the \$40,000 that he could not prove and if they wanted to put the food card out there, it was the same thing, the cards were bought and signed for and they could prove what went to who. He said there was one card out of 1700 that the person stated they did not receive. Turned out the store made a mistake and based on the information they had, they were able to fix it. He said he did not know how to fix this, based on the Board's direction based on what he was told to do. In the best interest from his conversations with each of them on how to move forward, he said to talk about the \$1.7 Million and how they could get the other 20,000 distributed. They (Figgers) did not want to have any conversation about that and he did not know what to do without Board direction.

Commissioner Hinson said he recently purchased 400 items from Amazon and got them 2 weeks later after paying for them. With the food cards, they paid for them first before being given out. He wanted this to come to a resolution, they have a surety bond for almost \$2 Million. He said they would get the money anyway because that was insurance. They did not get a surety bond for the food cards.

Chair Holt asked the attorney about the surety bond, would the County be paid in case Figgers did not satisfy the contract? She said in this instance, yes, the surety bond would cover failure to perform under the terms of the contract. She said for example, party A pays on the contract and party b does not perform for payment, the surety bond would come in to ensure that party a would get paid.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought the decision was already made that this item would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. He said they need to get the appropriate documentation and bring it back on the next agenda. He also heard what the Attorney said if there was no delivery, but that was not what the issue was. The claim that delivery was made. So, the surety bond was not really applicable in this case because the Recipient was saying they did not get all of the services delivered. The surety bond was not a guarantee because the service provider was saying he delivered. He added he was not sure why the surety bond was being brought into play. He said for them to place this on the Agenda and come back to it as the Administrator has suggested.

The Attorney said if party A would be paying, party B providing the product. Fundamentally there is a dispute whether certain provisions in the contract were performed or required to be performed. Mr. Dixon stated he was having a hard time being able to document that product that matched that invoice that actually went out. Fundamentally, the issue was where did it go, is there documentation to support that. In general, the surety bond can cover failure to deliver a product and can also cover performance issues on contracts. She did not want to say that there was no affirmation to the surety bond issue in this instance. She also did not know if it was a slam-dunk, fundamentally, the issue was about the contract provisions and whether certain provisions of the contract were performed and from their vantage point, not to say she thought it was right, whether they had to perform certain provisions of the contract in a certain way.

Commissioner Green asked if there was a way FCI could verify data usage on the devices? Could they show proof of what was delivered along with usage on each device? Mr. Dixon said they can prove delivery, they gave away 572 devices and had data usage information. The point he was making, the County never knew the person had the food card. How did they know it was the County's food card the person was cashing? The Board said to prove every one of the devices before paying and have done what they were told to do to the best of their ability. In a perfect world, it would have been done just like the food cards; they would have sold the County stack of food cards, the County would initial them, paid for them, and redistributed. In this instance, they would have redistributed them but would have been written a \$900,000 check because they would have been verified up front. If they sent them out, ok, if not, the surety bond could kick in. He said that was why he kept trying to move to the second piece of the contract because they could go from talking about \$1.7 Million and how they could make sure it was done right and not get stuck on the \$40,000. But that was not what they want to do.

Commissioner Green asked for clarity, they don't want to agree to pay this invoice. Mr. Dixon said they want them to pay the invoice of \$1.7 Million or \$40,000 or they don't do business with us.

Commissioner Holt said that was almost a good move, it would save the rest of \$1.7 Million if they pay \$40,000. If that would cancel out the \$1.7 Million contract, they would save money. Chair Holt said everything has to be documented. She said how they want it done was very important. They could not say the company wants to do that, they have to give (the County something. If not the services, it becomes null and void anyway. The attorney said it would be a question about default.

Commissioner Green said (inaudible) but want invoice paid and Administrator said it would be on the next agenda.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO PAY THE INVOICE OF \$40,383.20 AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE OPPOSED.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **19. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **20. Updates**

Commissioner Viegbesie asked the Administrator for an update on the Havana EMS site and to get an update on St. Hebron Walk and Bike Trail. He asked for a timeline. Mr. Dixon said he will respond in writing.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

##### **21. Updates**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**22. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson echoed what Commissioner Viegbesie said earlier. He had also contacted the Administrator about Havana EMS.

**Jerry Lee, Public Works Director** appeared before the Board and said Public Works paved the driveway and it should be completed tomorrow with lime rock. Commissioner Hinson asked for the location and was told on Highway 27 across from L&J Lounge. Commissioner Hinson wanted to look into purchasing property next to it so they could move forward because they planned on building a building, not have a portable there.

Chair Holt said to make sure they have a line item, how it would be budgeted.

Commissioner Hinson said based on information, he thought they had already voted on FCI, made the motion and voted on it. They do not need to bring it back and look at anything, just give the County Administrator direction. He did not see the reason for meeting again on something they already moved. They have a surety bond. Reason bringing up, was in Havana and saw a lady and she asked when they would finish the situation with FCI. She moved here from Miami in 1992 and could not get service. He said people and kids need service. He further stated they had all the answers with the \$2 Million surety bond. He said they need to look at if they purchase anything, Public Works, Facilities, when they order something, they purchase and pay first and then get the product. He hoped they can do the same practice with FCI.

Chair Holt said there was no way she would agree to that, they have to have everything in place. She was in favor of a meeting, taking care of this the same way she was when they get complaints. Get them in the room, get everything out, if there was anything in the contract they have questions about, it could be taken care of at the same time.

Commissioner Hinson said the Board voted for it. This was not the first time seeing it. Chair Holt said she wanted to see it. She was not interested in staff giving out anything as they have jobs to do.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith said with the broadband issue, he supported the statement she made, he was looking at the big amount of \$1.7 Million and would like for them and Figgers to do whatever was needed to work out this arrangement. Citizens need broadband, they have a contract and want to meet with them as often as have to, to work this out.

He thanked the County Administrator for the new badges and to be able to get rid of the key fob.

He thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity to travel, it has been phenomenal. He said he will be bringing ideas and they have to focus on economic development.

He also said for them to do whatever needed to be done to work things out with Figgers.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said he also attended the symposium and one workshop that stuck out, there was one particular place had too many jobs and not enough people. He said to bring that to Gadsden County.

He wanted to encourage the citizens for them to be patient with Department of Transportation on Bainbridge Road and High Bridge Road.

Mr. Dixon said he understood from Mr. Lee and his staff that they just got approval to go ahead with Cane Creek. They had to wait until they knew they would be reimbursed.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had several:

- 1) One that Commissioner Green and Commissioner NeSmith alluded to-December 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> will be a Florida Rural Economic Development Summit and will be some items on that summit that were pertinent to what the County needs.

He said he would like to schedule a workshop regarding placing brick pavers around the Veterans’ memorial on the Courthouse grounds.

He said the issue going on around the County regarding no alcohol sales within a certain distance of a Church. He thought they needed to visit that Ordinance and resolve that. He said the Church could come to where the alcohol was.

The last comment was, they were working on evaluations for the Attorney and County Administrator. The one for the Administrator was due on November 21<sup>st</sup>. His concern was when they sign with the attorney, they do not sign with the individual but with the firm. In his opinion, the question should be the question that determines whether the law firm, in order to maintain their contract, depends on legal moves and compromises the integrity of some of the legal advices to suit the desire of the Commissioner or Commissioners. He suggested they change from evaluating the attorney to evaluating the law firm.

Commissioner Viegbesie had a clip shown that was a testimony to the SHIP program.

He said he did not know if they had any program in the County for cyber security. TCC requires that of every employee and it was mandatory. They need to train the employees along with Commissioners on cyber security.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said they need a follow-up meeting with the Legislative committee.

**Transportation**

She knew that was coming up. They need to go after some of the Amazon jobs and need transportation there and back.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there was a CRTPA retreat this morning and was one of the conversations he brought up. He told the Administrator he would be getting a call from Tal-Tran and said he would suggest they bring in Big Bend Transit and Star Metro.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they have rescheduled the trip to the “Golden Triangle” and was told it was being worked on now. Chair Holt said she definitely wanted to do that. Mr. Dixon said on that idea, they were working virtual through the internet, all he could think about was Havana Northside and business incubators that sets up. If a business incubator was created where people could work digitally, that would create ideas for that to happen.

Chair Holt said they need to look at having free truck driving classes. At one time they were able to work with a company in Gretna about cyber security.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked her for mentioning that, NACo was now providing cyber-security class. He said he would forward the NACo training information to the Administrator.

She asked for an update on the Dollar General in St. John and stated two other communities was trying to get one. Mr. Dixon said they were moving quite deliberately throughout the County.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure for the second year of the Administrator’s contract, they have the evaluation form done.

Chair Holt said she would agree later to do the law firm. If the firm could send anyone, then they would not evaluate one person but the whole firm.

Chair Holt asked if they were still doing Resolutions for all funerals and was told yes. Commissioner Viegbesie said in the past staff went through the newspaper unless a special request was made.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:02 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair**  
**Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON NOVEMBER 2, 2021 AT 4:30  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Sara Green, Deputy, Deputy Clerk  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Brenda Holt called the workshop to order at 4:32 PM.

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the workshop and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, Public comment for Commission workshops can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. Comments submitted after the deadline but prior to the workshop 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 workshop.*

County Attorney Clayton Knowles read the above.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners**

Assistant County Administrator, Mrs. Daniels, came before the board. She introduced the two items on the agenda, first being the discussion for the Rules and Procedures of the Board of County Commissioners and the second being answering any questions regarding any agenda items for the meeting following the workshop.

*Commissioner Green entered the workshop at 4:34PM.*

Mr. Knowles asks for guidance on whether the changes to the Rules and Procedures are what the Board of County Commissioners is asking for. He begins at item 6, whether the Vice Chair can start the meeting if the Chair is not able to. The Commissioners say yes. Chair Holt says she thinks the wording of "most senior commissioner" should stay in the paragraph. She says she would hope the Chair and Vice Chair are not out at the same time but if they are, then someone else



would need to be listed to begin the meetings. She says if the senior three commissioners are out then there's not a quorum and a meeting cannot be held anyway.

Vice Chair Viegbesie says he believes the wording regarding a senior commissioner starting a meeting should be left in to avoid any confusion.

Commissioner Green says he thinks both wordings are good but thinks keeping "seniority" in the paragraph would be best so commissioners would know how to proceed if one of the two, the Chair and Vice Chair, aren't here to start meetings. He says he likes the terminology as it gives direction to the Board if one of the two Chairpersons are out.

Commissioner NeSmith asks Mr. Knowles how the section would read if "seniority" wasn't included. Mr. Knowles responds that it would just have a simple definition of who would go next based on being sworn in. Commissioner Green says the Board should keep the wording in for future reference.

Vice Chair Viegbesie suggests the Board keep it as it is for future and to make sure there are no obstructions to the process. He says this document isn't a document for this Board but for in case anyone comes. He says these Rules and Procedures are something in place that is in operation for the future as well.

Mr. Knowles asks for clarity on "emergency meetings" on page three of their document. He says this does not impair discretionary limit. He asks what items can and cannot be brought to emergency meetings. He also asks if items worth more than \$10,000 should or should not be brought to emergency meetings unless there is a disaster. Mr. Dixon says the idea is to be clear about what an emergency is. He says "things that can wait, should wait."

Chair Brenda said if an item requires fiscal impact, she can see putting a dollar amount there. She clarifies that the administrator is not bringing budget items to any emergency meetings. Mr. Dixon responded no.

Vice Chair Viegbesie wants to add wording to clarify that only the items on the agenda will be discussed and nothing else. He says since the County Administrator has a discretionary limit, he doesn't see why the specific amount should be in if it can't impede an emergency situation.

Commissioner Green agrees with Vice Chair Viegbesie. He also asks what is the additional amount to charge attorney for special meetings. He also says he wants to make sure to stick to the agenda for costs.

Mr. Knowles responds to Commissioner Green's question regarding attorney fees, he says the charges are dependent on whatever the hours his office spends putting things together, whether that's ten minutes or five hours. He explains the section in question is designed to keep items to emergencies. He says the Board may need to define an emergency.

*Commissioner Hinson entered the workshop at 4:54pm.*

Mr. Knowles moves on to page six of the Rules and Procedures, whether commissioners shall have a limit to a maximum of 6 minutes per item- three minutes for discussion, two for rebuttal, and one minute for closing.

Vice Chair Viegbesie says the time limit isn't new and he doesn't think breaking down the minutes is necessary. He suggests giving six minutes, when those are up, it's up. Commissioners should be conscious of time as well.

Commissioner Green references time keeping. He is in agreement that there needs to be some structure or guidance but maybe not break it down too much.

Chair Holt says six minutes is fine but it's easier to look at intervals for the timekeeper. She says there needs to be a process in place.

Commissioner NeSmith clarifies if the Board means six minutes per agenda item. Mr. Knowles says yes, they just need to decide who is the timekeeper. Commissioner NeSmith says Brenda shouldn't as she's part of meeting as well.

Commissioner Green says the next Chair may not want that obligation of timekeeping so the Board needs to find a structure system.

Mr. Knowles said to try the process they have and see what works. He said to leave the language and amend it later.

Vice Chair Viegbesie said Commissioners should be conscious of time and be disciplined enough to respect other's time.

Mr. Knowles says the Board will want to remove item 11 on page 9. The item was in regards to the \$10,000 that the Commissioners agreed earlier was not needed within the Rules and Procedures document itself.

Mr. Dixon wants to mandate that all meetings are to start at 6 o'clock. He also mentions the need for the wording "unless otherwise stated by the Board". He wants this to also include special meetings. Commissioner NeSmith asks if meetings are required by statute to start at 6pm. Mr. Knowles says no just public hearings and regular meetings are at 6 per the Board's procedures.

Commissioner Green's issue with trying to change the meeting start time is starting before 6 pm, commissioners who have other jobs may not be able to make the meetings. Vice Chair Viegbesie agrees with Commissioner Green.

Mr. Knowles says the one thing that is not in the Rules and Procedures document but is in the code is "meetings end at 11PM". He asks the Board if they want to keep this wording in. Chair Holt says yes. She says if the meeting doesn't end at 11PM then the Board can vote to extend the meeting and conclude all business.

Commissioner NeSmith asks that language is where? Mr. Knowles explains it is in the adjournment in the County Code not in the Procedures document. He explains both documents need to align.

Vice Chair Viegbesie says these are rules for administration of the Board and meetings. Mr. Knowles says correct, this is for the administration of the Board not the County Administrator.

Commissioner NeSmith asks what then next step is. Mr. Knowles says the Board will need to advertise the to change the Rules and Procedures, will need to host public hearings, then host a first reading, then advertise it again, have a second reading, and finally adopt the ordinance.

**2. Answer Questions on Selected Agenda Items Regarding the November 2, 2021 BOCC Agenda**

*Commissioner NeSmith stepped out at 5:26pm.*

*Vice Chair Viegbesie stepped out at 5:27pm.*

*Commissioner NeSmith returned at 5:28pm.*

Mr. Dixon discusses the Greensboro fire department. He says the town is actively recruiting members for a new group of volunteer firefighters and they wish to continue the relationship with the town of Greensboro. Mr. Dixon says he met with the mayor and the city manager as well as those in opposition. He says he has explained to both sides that Greensboro is a city and even if the County gave the volunteer firefighters an agreement, it does not give them authority to provide fire protection in Greensboro. Only an agreement with Greensboro would grant that.

Mr. Dixon discusses the Chattahoochee fire department. He says the city plans to run their own truck and the county will not be providing them with one, however, his office is recommending an increase of funds for the fire department for running their own truck. He says the department responds to fires on the county's behalf.

Chair Holt asks what would be done with the fire truck that the county usually provides. Mr. Dixon says that truck has already been given to a volunteer fire department. Chair Holt clarifies that it has been taken care of. Mr. Dixon says yes.

*Vice Chair Viegbesie returned at 5:37pm.*

Mr. Dixon wants to table item 16, day FCI Broadband Service Agreement, to discuss with FCI and others more.

Mr. Dixon asked for a second ambulance to offset those that are being worked on or used within the county.

Commissioner Green moves to item 18. He suggests the Board look at all formats of how to use the funds and do a workshop on it rather than voting on it tonight. He asks to pull the item and workshop it instead. Commissioner NeSmith agrees.

Mr. Knowles added an item regarding opioid lawsuit. He says the county was asked by the Attorney General to join this lawsuit with other Florida counties. He asks for the ability to have the Chair "sign on" in agreement. It is not binding. Vice Chair Viegbesie appreciates Mr. Knowles for bringing the request from the Attorney General to their attention. He says the county has nothing to lose.

Chair Holt says she spoke with the Sheriff and Mr. Barkley, and says those in jail have problems and concerns. She says inmates are in need of some help. She suggests having a drug work program and re-entry program as well. Mr. Dixon agrees with Chair Holt.

Chair Holt brings up the rampant drug addiction among inmates as well as the housing issue.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:45 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON NOVEMBER 2, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., asked for a moment of silence and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to table Item 16 and Item 18.

Mr. Knowles added Item 18a - Gadsden County Participation in National Opioid Litigation.

**(No Motion, Second or Vote was taken on Amendments and Approval of the Agenda. Chair Holt moved onto the Consent Agenda.)**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

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

- 1. Ratification Memo**
- 2. Approval of Minutes**
  - September 7, 2021 Workshop
  - September 21 2021 BCC Meeting
- 3. Records Management for Florida Public Law Enforcement Agencies Training Request**
- 4. Approval of Funding from the Law Enforcement Education Training Fund for Staff to Attend the 2021 Florida Sheriff's Association Executive Leadership Conference and Fleet Exhibition**
- 5. 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Instructor Training Seminar**
- 6. Approval of Temporary Construction Easement I-10 & US 90**

**7. Approval of The Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) Inter-Local Agreement**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until Noon November 2, 2021. 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.*

Commissioner Green read aloud the above statement.

Angie Pitts

Larry Ganus

Libby Henderson

Joe Parramore

Dan Hunter

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**8. Public Hearing- First Reading of the Ordinance Relating to Immigration Services; Creating Article XX, Section XX-XXX of the Code of Ordinances of Gadsden County, Florida; Prohibiting the Unlicensed Practice of Law for the Provision of Immigration Services**

Mr. Dixon explained this was the first reading of this Ordinance relating to Immigration Services.

Mr. Knowles said they have created this Ordinance and recommended Option 1. He explained in the translation of "notario público", it could mean an attorney or individual licensed to practice law and the Ordinance sought to prohibit this unscrupulous behavior by providing for fines and penalties to be codified into Gadsden County's Code of Ordinances.

Chair Holt announced this was a public hearing and asked if there were any comments from audience and there was none.

Commissioner Viegbesie said as of the most recent census, the Hispanic population stands at 10.9%. This Ordinance is being passed by all Counties across the state.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the attorney if this would infringe on Hispanics rights and he explained *notaries* or *notaries públicos* when translated into other languages, especially Spanish, could be misleading as it translates to mean attorney or individual licensed to practice law.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9 Public Hearing-Second Reading of Road Adoption Ordinance 2021-010; Adopting Procedures to Acquire Property Interest in and Accept into the County Maintenance System Under Certain Conditions Certain Private Roadways Located Within the Unincorporated Area of the County**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and Mr. Knowles further explained the Ordinance.

**Larry Ganus, 2174 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL** appeared before the Board. He suggested an adjustment to the Ordinance because the mileage in the ordinance would not sufficiently serve his neighborhood. He would like to add a modification to the proposed ordinance to read something to the effect that “the county shall not acquire property interest in or accept maintenance responsibility more than one totaled mile of private roads per district per fiscal year or one private road per district per fiscal year if such route exceeds 1 mile with the exception that if a subdivision or development has less than 3 miles of road the county would consider accepting all of the roadways and the subdivision or development at one time.”

Commissioner Green asked the Administrator if he had done due diligence based upon letters received and he said no, he had not had a chance to. Commissioner Green suggested they not vote on this item until due diligence was done on the item.

Mr. Dixon said the way Mr. Ganus had laid this out could be 3 miles in one district at one time and they do not wish to have because they could be taking 8 miles into the system for that year. He said that was something they were attempting to stay away from because of managing the assets the county has and not being stretched too thin.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he spoke with Mr. Ganus and brought to his attention his email was actually sent to the old Board and the two new Commissioners did not receive it. Since the Administrator had not had the opportunity to look into it, he asked if it could be tabled a week and the attorney said yes, but if they make substantial changes they would have to start over.

Chair Holt asked Ms. Steele to show a video of a flooded road in a neighborhood.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there were also other roads that looked like that in other districts. He said he understood the request and wished he could make a motion to adopt the ordinance with that change but was unsure it would pass.

Commissioner Green thanked her for the video and said he would support it because they could add in the future.

Mr. Dixon said he and Mr. Knowles had struggled about the roll-out of the program. He added they might be coming back in the future to say it was too cumbersome and how it was laid out.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if he was understanding that even if this one mile per year was adopted, it could come back. Mr. Dixon explained.

Chair Holt said in some instances, farms closed down and had water pipes from wells and septic lines running under the road. She said they need to know where infrastructure is because if there were pipes under the road and a pipe burst, for people to not think the county would fix it. There were certain things they could not do.

Commissioner Hinson said he spent many years with Mr. Ganus on the Planning Commission and the only reason he would be considering tabling, he needed to know first how much they have in gas tax and how much they were forecasting to get in tax before deciding. If they do not do it right the first time, it may take a lifetime. They need to take time and have one big workshop. It was his opinion to table until they have all the information.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked him for the insight they did not consider before. In light of the letter received, he did think they needed to move forward with adoption of the language in front of them because they could amend. He added he did not want to sacrifice progress for language just received. He was in support with moving forward with the current item.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in addition to the request from Commissioner Hinson, he would like to workshop the process and look at costs of maintaining a 1-mile road, how much it would cost per year.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**10. Approval of the Town of Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department's Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the inter-local fire and rescue service agreement between the County and the Town of Greensboro's volunteer fire department. They are currently in a situation with the former volunteer fire department and have met with the parties several times. It comes down to the Town of Greensboro and their ability to take care of herself with the county's help.

He implored to Mr. Parramore to go back and hold a conversation with Greensboro.

**Dan Hunter, 202 East Lake Road, Quincy Florida**, appeared before Board. Over the past 7 months, men and women who were part of the volunteer fire department have created a new 501(c) and they no longer had confidence in the Town protecting firefighters due to the Town not maintaining and replacing aging equipment. As a non-profit, they exist solely to provide fire services. Each person stands to profit zero. They intend to be a community's fire department. They have partners willing to stand ready and able to provide service. The new Board does welcome the opportunity to partner with the Town. Their decision to award this to Greensboro, Inc. will be neighbors helping neighbors.

**Angie Pitts, 3849 Bristol Hwy, Quincy Florida** appeared before the Board. She stated she was embarrassed to be standing before them in regard to this matter. They should stand together



as a community. She explained to the Board that currently without the fire protection, the ISO rating would put them in protection class 10 and for the citizens that would be detrimental. She asked they allow the fire protection to remain under the Town for the protection of the citizens and Town of Greensboro.

**Dr. Joe Parramore** appeared before the Board. Public safety refers to the welfare and safety of the general public. The primary goal is prevention and safety to the general public. Men and women sacrifice lives simply because they have a service heart. It is imperative they be provided with any and all necessary equipment. If the servant is not protected, neither is the public. Volunteers have tried repeatedly to work with Greensboro. They have attempted to enlist help from the County Administrator and Fire Chief.

**Libby Henderson, 195 Gardner Avenue, Greensboro, FL** appeared before the Board. She has spoken to them before to assure the Town of Greensboro wants to continue to work with the County to provide fire protection for the citizens of the town of Greensboro. The town believes in strong dedication to the County. Former members demanded the Town take action by surrendering money to spend as they saw fit and that would violate the contract with the County. When the Council voted they would not do that, they quit and walked out. She joined Mrs. Pitts in apologizing to them. When they quit and walked out, they took their bunker gear and radios with them. What was taken and not returned has put them in a bad situation. They cannot serve within the Town limits without an when agreement with Greensboro. They are not in a position to be awarded the contract. She asked they ratify the contract with Greensboro.

Commissioner Green said this was very disheartening. He asked the attorney for some legal advice.

Mr. Knowles said an incorporated area was different from unincorporated areas. He further elaborated on the issues.

Commissioner Green said where he was with it, he has followed it for several months. He added he did not live in that district but has concerns for the entire County. If there were no firefighters now, what has happened in the last 6 months? Who has volunteered over the last few months? At end of the day, it was about providing service for ones that live there.

Commissioner Viegbesie reaffirmed his feeling of disappointment. While not a resident of that area, he was a Gadsden County citizen. One question was what was the operating status of the town of Greensboro, he heard it was non-existent. According to a recent newspaper report, he understood there are vacancies that impede the town government to make policies. Would the volunteer fire department be willing to sit with the town of Greensboro government to come to a meeting of the minds? His focus was about the safety of the citizens.

Libby Henderson reappeared before the Board. She thanked Commissioner Viegbesie for his concern and explained there were two working moms on the town council that resigned but they still have enough members to have a quorum. Chair Holt asked how many members were on the town council and Mrs. Henderson explained there were five members and the mayor. The mayor was a nonvoting member.

Commissioner Green asked how many committed volunteers they have. Mrs. Henderson explained there was one present in the room and there were 3 to 4 more ready to go. Chief Walker has made sure they were covered with fire coverage. She also asked for the commissioners to keep in mind that the previous volunteers walked out.

Dr. Parramore reappeared before the board to clarify that the volunteers did not just walk out. On April 12<sup>th</sup> there is a video and in conversations Mrs. Henderson could be heard saying if the volunteers did not like the way funds were being spent, they could find somewhere else to go. He added they have repeatedly attempted to talk and work things out with the town. The town has not shown any willingness to do so. He believed it was because they were called into question as to how they were spending taxpayer dollars. He further clarified that the funds were not be used to pay for certain services.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his question was on point as to what he heard as to why the volunteers left and why they were at an impasse. He asked Dr. Parramore why was there a question on the issue with the concern on spending taxpayer funds.

Dr. Parramore said he was contacted by Mr. Hunter about spending and what they deemed was misappropriation of funds. He did a public records request and found they were paying a large portion of the town clerks' salary, Florida retirement system benefits, health insurance benefits, the town's liability insurance was called into question in which they never responded and there was a number of questionable expenses when the lack of equipment existed in that department and took 10 months to order the chief's bunker gear. He explained other ongoing concerns as to their ability to maintain. Those concerns are what has brought this to an impasse. February 8<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Willis asked the fire department if they wanted to separate and they said yes. Mrs. Henderson made a formal motion that the firefighters bring back a plan for the town to consider. They came back and made no demands because they never had an opportunity to present a plan. Mrs. Henderson made remarks if they were unhappy with the way the town was spending the dollars, they could find somewhere else to go.

Chair Holt said in looking at a couple of things, it was public equipment and public dollars. Unless something is given away or auctioned off it has to be on public property. If there are allegations of misappropriations of funds, that becomes an issue. She asked Mr. Knowles to look into it and asked the firemen to return the equipment to its proper place. She asked him to look into the legal issues first. She added Greensboro needs to show they have taken care of their financial obligations.

James Shellman from Chattahoochee appeared to discuss a mobile home he was trying to get moved in. Mr. Dixon asked him to give his number to staff and they could discuss later.

Commissioner NeSmith said he has been quiet because he has been involved with the discussions since the beginning. He has had a chance to work with the volunteers and considered them to be very passionate. He also has worked with Dennis Henderson and this has been an ongoing issue. He was in support of them moving on this action tonight. He said he does recognize the authority of the town of Greensboro and regardless whatever fire department comes into their town, they have the ultimate authority.

Chair Holt asked to speak with Chief Walker.

Chief Walker appeared before the Board. Chair Holt asked him to get an inventory of equipment and she wanted financial records from the town of Greensboro.

Commissioner Green wanted to make sure he understood the request. Chair Holt said they need an inventory of the equipment and the town of Greensboro needed to get their documents.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought that was a good direction that they have a proper inventory and would be interested in getting an itemized spending because that seems to be an issue between the parties. They need to get to the bottom of this.

Commissioner Green said that was why he asked about the money being audited or accounted for because that would depend on how he voted tonight.

Commissioner NeSmith said he supported any acquisition of documentation for funds. He spoke with the Administrator earlier and asked if he was aware of any issues prior and he did not bring any concerns to his attention.

Mr. Dixon said what was he referring to was not how every dollar goes to the fire truck.

Commissioner NeSmith said felt comfortable based on allocation at that time and was comfortable in moving forward.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 OF THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT CONTINGENT TO PROVISIONS OF EXPLANATION ON HOW THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT.**

Mr. Knowles asked if that was prior monies and equipment from previous years. Commissioner Viegbesie explained the town of Greensboro wants acquisition of County property that is outside their possession currently. Volunteers want an account of how monies were spent in regard to fire services.

Commissioner Green said his motion would be different.

Chair Holt asked for a second. Commissioner NeSmith said he would second the motion with a friendly amendment. The equipment currently was not in possession of the Town, but a volunteer group. This was not an issue between the County and Town. He asked if Commissioner Viegbesie would remove the aspect that the town would take possession of the equipment for inventory purposes.

Chair Holt said that was the purpose of asking Chief Walker to take an inventory along with getting the financial information.

Mr. Dixon said the former firemen or the new non-profit has no relationship with the County. The County has entrusted the town of Greensboro with the equipment. If the town says they do not have the equipment, there was no reason for the volunteers to have anything (equipment) that has not been assigned by the town.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would withdraw his second pending further clarification.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO TABLE UNTIL THEY RECEIVE THE PROPER DOCUMENTATION AND INVENTORY OF EQUIPMENT AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked what position this puts the town in as far as rebuilding. Mr. Dixon said coverage would continue.

Chair Holt asked for time certain. Commissioner Viegbesie said the first meeting in December.

Commissioner Hinson said he was trying to appease everyone. During the winter months they have an influx of house fires and did not want to delay the progress. He added they could not micro-manage departments. They did not need to postpone this matter for two weeks. There was no way to placate or appease everyone. They should either fund the volunteers or the town of Greensboro and they needed to make that decision tonight.

Chair Holt called for the vote and stated they did not decide on a time certain.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN AMENDED HIS MOTION AND SAID TWO WEEKS AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AMENDED HIS SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED BY VOICE VOTE 3-2. COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED**

**11. Approval of the Chattahoochee Fire Department's Interlocal Fire and Rescue Service Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of the inter-local fire and rescue service agreement between Gadsden County and the Chattahoochee fire department for one year. He added the city of Chattahoochee decided to operate their own single engine and chose not to use an engine funded and supplied by the county. Staff is recommending to pay \$16,468.75 to compensate the city for using their own fire engine and services. The additional funding is for the next five years or until a longer-term agreement is reached.

Commissioner Hinson asked how long and Chair Holt said the agreement was for 1 year and the additional funding was for the next five years because they were not using a County truck, they were using their own truck.

Mr. Dixon said he met with the Mayor and Chief and the county was diligent about their position. He added they hoped to move the system to a fire rescue where there is a certified fireman and paramedic housed around the County to get the truck to the fire faster.

Commissioner Hinson asked how much it cost to lease to own the truck, was that option available?

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:53 p.m.*

Chair Holt said if fire stations decide to do this again, they buy it, they keep as theirs. Commissioner Hinson asked what the \$150,000 was for and Chair Holt said that was what she was talking about.

Mr. Dixon said a lot of that thinking came from this body otherwise it would have been dead in be water.

Chair Holt said when she sees things like this and so many things like this go on, if you have any doubt, you solve that problem. If you want to buy the truck, it's yours, do not come to the County. This is a solution to this.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the city of Chattahoochee agreed to this and was told yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson addressed one of his questions. The other is how will this have any service impact to the citizens of the County.

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:56 p.m.*

Mr. Dixon said there should be no drop of service. Commissioner Viegbesie said if so, will there be a fiscal impact.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOTION.**

**12. Emergency Repairs Bid Package #2 Cane Creek Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval to award the bid of the emergency repairs bid package #2 Cane Creek Road project to Pyramid Excavation in the amount of \$136,800.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there were any fiscal impact to the County. Mr. Dixon responded it was a reimbursement package so the County pays and would get reimbursed by FEMA. Commissioner NeSmith asked if would be reimbursed every dime and Mr. Dixon assured him every dime would be reimbursed.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. CR 268 (Hardaway Highway) SCOP Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of the FDOT SCOP agreement for the design of CR 268 (Hardaway highway) resurfacing project.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14. CR 65 (Attapulugus Highway) SCOP Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for board approval of the FDOT SCOP agreement for the design of CR 65 (Attapulgus Highway) resurfacing project.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HINSON, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**15. Contract with I.F.W. Security, LLC to Provide Security Services at the Butler Building and Gadsden County Public Library in Quincy, FL**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for board approval to extend the contract with I. F. W. Security LLC for Security Services at the Butler building and the Bill McGill Library.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16. FCI Broadband Service Agreement**

Tabled

**17. Presentation and Approval of the County Administrator's Performance Evaluation**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and asked Lonyell Butler, HR manager, to step forward.

*Commissioner V stepped out at 8:00 pm*

Lonyell Butler appeared before the Board. She explained this item was for board approval of the County Administrator's annual evaluation.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY CHAIR HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**18. Re-Allocation of Funds for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Programming**

Tabled

**18a. Gadsden County Participation**

Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and stated it was for approval and authorization for Gadsden County to participate in the Attorney General's class action opioid litigation.

*Commissioner V returned at 8:03 PM*

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**19. Updates**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**20. Updates**

The Administrator said they were quickly coming to an end of some of the construction projects and repairs to the buildings. He added they would need to be looking at space issues.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there was a conversation dealing with the Conflict with Innovative and Policy conference in Okaloosa County, which is to start on the 19th. He wanted to verify that the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> would not conflict with the conference. Chair Holt said they have issues to take care of on the legislative side because if they were fortunate enough to get that infrastructure money, they need to work them hard.

Commissioner Green said the documents state the 16th. Chair Holt says the commissioners may be able to call in to the meeting should they need to.

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

### **21. Updates**

Mr. Knowles said they received an email from the Sheriff's Department requesting to be heard on the next agenda regarding budget/funds they did not receive. He said they need to send documents to him regarding funding.

They will need to pass a charter referendum if they want to take over annexing within the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he emailed to the attorney dates with regards to a deposition. Mr. Knowles said they want a specific order and on the same date in person. It may be difficult for commissioners to be in person on the same day for depositions but his office is communicating with opposing counsel regarding scheduling. Chair Holt said she let his office know dates that she was open.

Chair Holt said regarding annexation, if a town annexes out from their area, there are certain things they should look at and compactness was one. They should be asked to accept the roads and there were concerns with that. The fight becomes who was going to be responsible for the roads. When citizens here they are being annexed in, they think the roads are going also. When the area is annexed out, there is a lot of traffic for that area and the traffic on that road becomes a County problem with turning lanes, etc.

Chair Holt then mentioned the Munroe (school) traffic issue. She said for th the Administrator to talk to the Sheriff regarding flashing signs/lights. She said the problem was not just the traffic; they did not put school signs out there either. Now the signs need to be put up. She said those at FDOT are going to hurry and do the study. Traffic was still traveling 70 mph due and can do so due to no signs.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the State required a traffic study. Chair Holt said yes.

Mr. Dixon said FDOT did not want to slow traffic down.

Commissioner Viegbesie mentioned CRPTA. He said if it did not come through CRPTA, then FDOT would not hear much. He added that a representative was needed.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION FOR COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE TO RELAY TO THE CRTPA THE NEED AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**22. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said with regards to the bulky items pickup, he received notification regarding it on October 22 and District one pickup was from October 18th through the 21st. He asked to have District 1 on the tail end so citizens could know.

**Public Works**

He noticed in the past they were on a 4-day work week, that on the 5<sup>th</sup> day they were able to get more done. In the past they worked four 10-hour days instead of 8 hours. But we need them on Fridays. He asked Mr. Dixon to look into that. He then thanked everyone for celebrating breast cancer awareness month.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure Commissioner Hinson did not forget to honor Drum major Rittman. Commissioner Hinson stated he was waiting until after Homecoming and the Classic. Mr. Dixon said they were in communication with him.

Regarding Trunk-or-treat, he gave a big thank you and added it was outstanding.

**County Administrator Performance Review**

He encouraged the Commissioners to meet with the County Administrator so they could go through the evaluation.

He asked to schedule a workshop for goals and objectives and wanted the list of expectations as soon as possible.

Chair Holt added they should meet with the Administrator before meetings and that would be a good time to go over the goals and objectives.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green asked if the County Administrator has been able to send someone to Jim Williams Road as requested earlier. Mr. Dixon said yes and they were working on it.

On Old Federal Road, cars that have been towed and placed on property. Mr. Dixon said all of a sudden there was a car cemetery. He added they have dispatched Code Enforcement and put proper notices out and started a timetable. He added they had to move within that timetable.

He then said it had been mentioned before about a workshop with Sonya Burns regarding (SHIP) housing and available funds. He wanted citizens to hear how they could qualify for assistance and help.



**Gadsden County ARRP funds**

He said he did not want to prolong it when there was a need but wanted to make sure funds were distributed appropriately, including the nonprofits.

He said November 15-18<sup>th</sup> would be the bulky litter and pickup dates up for District 5.

He then wished a happy birthday to all that was celebrating birthdays in November.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said all of the concerns have been expressed. He thanked the board for their letter of support for his FAC position. He requested to leverage the board’s assistance in the endeavor and asked they approve to use the assets of the County, such as emails/constant contact for his campaign of VP and he was asking to use assets, not monetary. Commissioner Hinson said he was favored to be the second vice president for the group. He did not feel he had the Board’s support and decided to not run as Commissioner Viegbesie was.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION FOR THE BOARD TO SUPPORT AND GIVE ASSISTANCE AND NONMONETARY ASSETS FOR HIS BID FOR A SECOND VP POSITION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS MOTION.**

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt stated they need to complete the Stevens school project.

She asked Mr. Knowles to define how his pay worked with invoices, retainer, charges. She said she was questioned about ETA times of fire trucks arriving at fires.

She has had a request for speed bumps. There has also been a request for lighting. Mr. Dixon says Commissioner Green brought it up last year and has taken them to now to have meaningful discussions. He said that solar changes things and will be bringing a plan soon regarding lighting.

Commissioner Viegbesie said St. Hebron security lights were solar. That could be the direction the County goes in the darker areas of the County.

She said with the information Integrity was collecting, she would like to see a checkoff sheet for the County, citizen, and a date and they will then all have the same information.

She then asked for Proclamation for Arrie Battles.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
November 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:54 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, CLERK**

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON NOVEMBER 16, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Eric Hinson, District 1- via Zoom  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Holt called the meeting to order at 6:02, asked for a moment of silence and asked everyone to please keep the injured deputy that was shot earlier in the day in their prayers. She then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Daniels, Assistant County Administrator, sat in as Mr. Dixon was out and asked to pull Item 9.

Chair Holt stated she had supporting documents for item 10 to be included in the record and was support for the cell tower.

**(No Motion, Second or Vote was taken on Amendments and Approval of the Agenda. Chair Holt moved onto the Reorganization of the Board.)**

**REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD**

**1. Election of the Chairman and Vice-Chair**

Chair holt asked if there are any nominations for chairman of the Board.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN NOMINATED COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND THERE WERE NO OTHER NOMINATIONS. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WAS ELECTED AS THE NEW CHAIR.**

*Mr. Dixon arrived at 6:05 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie opened nominations for Vice-Chair.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE NOMINATED COMMISSIONER GREEN AS VICE CHAIR AND THERE WERE NO OTHER NOMINATIONS. COMMISSIONER GREEN BECAME VICE-CHAIR.**

He nominated Commissioner Green.

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

2. Ratification Memo
3. Approval of Minutes
  - October 19, 2021 Regular Meeting
4. Approval of Library Annual Plan of Service 2021-2022
5. Approval to Accept the 2021-2026 Mutual Aid Operations Plan between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County Fire Service, and the 2020-2021 Annual Forestry Report and Operating Plan
6. Approval of the 2022 Board of County Commissioners Meeting Calendar
7. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts-State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP); Hurricane Housing Repair Program (HHRP); and Emergency Repair Program (ER)
8. Approval of the E911 Rural County Grant Award Agreement for E911 NICE Recorders Maintenance

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

***Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.***

Commissioner NeSmith read the above statement.

Commissioner Holt stated there was a speaker request form for on Non-Agenda item.

**Shirley Parker, 3851 FL-GA Highway, Havana, FL** appeared before the Board. She stated water was running off Highway 27 and damaging their homes. The holding pond was not effective.

Commissioner Hinson said he has spoken to Ms. Parker and Mr. Richardson about the problem.

Mr. Dixon asked Mr. Lee, Public Works Director, to get their information and someone would follow up with him in the morning.

Commissioner Hinson stated this was in Chair Viegbesie’s district, another party put a fence up and was unsure if it was legal. They put a holding pond at the front as well. (Commissioner Hinson was on Zoom and the connection started breaking up)

Chair Viegbesie said there could be a code violation going on as well and to speak with Mr. Lee and the County Admin regarding the problem.

**Lillie Richardson- 450 Long Pine Dr. Tallahassee, Fl.-** Property damage, drive way, water run-off, holding pond.

**Shirley Parker, Marilyn Williams, and Eugene Richardson- 3851 Fl. Ga Highway, Havana Fl-** Driveway Easement, property damage, etc.

**John Revell-** 307 Live Oak Lane- Cell tower

**Neal Blount-** 125 Harrison Road- Cell tower

**Cyndi Tarapani-** 22 N. Spring Blvd. Tarpon Springs, Fl.-Item 10

**Townsend Tarapani-** 172 Harrison Rd, Greensboro- Item 10

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

~~**9. Public Hearing Approval of Resolution 2021-039 Grant Budget Amendment for FY 2021**~~  
Item Pulled

**10. Public Hearing-(Quasi-Judicial)-Greensboro FL 1776 Telecommunication Tower Conceptual/Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2021-05)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for consideration of a request for approval of a 250’ tall, self-supporting communication tower with a request for two deviations from setback requirements as outlined in this report.

Chair Viegbesie brought up Robert Volpe’s letter in support of the item.

**Neal Blount, 125 Harrison Road, Greensboro, FL** appeared before the Board in opposition of the location of the cell tower. He stated he was unsure how far from the road the tower was, was told 300 feet. He said his residence is 400 feet from the tower. He was before the Board to ask that the tower be denied with consideration to the deviations from 1500’ setbacks from residents. He also asked that they deny a deviation from the south and said if the tower falls it’ll fall onto someone’s land. He added that he did not want to see a cell tower when he walks out his front door. He also was unsure of the guide wires. He said there was a better place up the road half a mile and would still on this owner’s land.

**Cyndi Tarapani, 22 N. Spring Blvd., Tarpon Springs, FL** appeared before the board representing Townsend Tarapani, her son and landowner that is adjacent to the tower property. In speaking to the Planning issues regarding the tower, the land has a home that was built in 1935 in close proximity to the tower. She said the tower should meet all requirements and is not meeting the setbacks. She asked that the tower be required to meet all requirements or be moved further to the north. She also asked if the tower is to be 250 feet, could it be camouflaged.

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at the meeting at 6:26 p.m.*

**Townsend Tarapani, 172 Harrison Road, Greensboro, FL** appeared before the board and objected to the request for the variance.

**John Revell, 307 Live Oak Lane, Havana, Florida** appeared before the Board and spoke in opposition. He stated he was not against cell towers, he was against changing the setbacks in rules. Companies should follow the same rules as citizens of Gadsden County. He asked that the BOCC be consistent with the rules.

Commissioner Holt said they have not heard from the presenter yet.

**Robert Volpe, Esquire**, appeared before the board and represented Tarpon Towers. He thanked the BOCC for considering the application and brought Allara Gutcher as well. He said the shape and size of the property dictated the deviation of the setbacks. Verizon will be the initial/primary carrier, there will be three additional carriers on the tower. EMT and public antennas can be on the tower free of charge. He said the tower would be 5g capable. The Applicant is agreeable to all the conditions of approval.

**Allara Mills Gutcher, The Planning Collaborative**, appeared before the Board and spoke in approval of the tower. She said the County required a deviation be granted for the following two regulations of Subsection 5810.B:

1. A setback from the property line is required at least 1.5 times the height of the tower and the tower it is 250 feet tall. In this case, the setback measurement is 375 feet from the property line and they were unable to meet that footage in all compass directions and a deviation is requested for the south.
2. The 1500' setback from a parcel designated as rural residential or from a residential area is not applicable here.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what page Ms. Gutcher was reading from and she stated page 2 of the report that was submitted.

Ms. Gutcher continued and stated the second deviation was not required as there was not a predominantly residential area within 1500 feet within the project lines. She said the camouflage option, a 250-foot tall "tree" tower would be less attractive than the actual tower. The camouflage only goes to 150 feet towers per Gadsden Code. She said also the historic house did not apply as it's not a historic land use category. The tower would help improve the quality of life within Gadsden County.

Commissioner Green if she felt this was the best area/property that could be found and Ms. Gutcher stated she could not testify on the science location behind why the tower/property was appropriate. Mr. Volpe said all parcels are sent to the radio frequency engineers to analyze and choose from. Out of all the circumstances, this was the best property.

Commissioner NeSmith said Commissioners are bound to the needs of the constituents. He said there was a need for better cell phone service in that community and asked if they had had an

opportunity to meet with Mr. Blount and other opposing citizens. Ms. Gutcher said she did not but Mr. Volpe has reached out. Mr. Volpe said after the hearing he spoke to several who were in opposition. Has also reached out to Mr. Tarapani, sent letters to those who wrote/spoke at the planning meeting. He said he spoke to the Tarapanis' recently. A deviation would be needed no matter which direction the tower is moved. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the tower were to fall, could it land on his or her home? Mr. Volpe stated there was a fall zone letter from an engineer. There is a fall zone of 110 feet and the tower would fall into itself. The closest residence was 750 feet.

**Cyndi Tarapani** said Mr. Volpe did not reach out to them, she set up a meeting with him. The distance from the tower to Townsend's property is 223 feet. They can move the tower to the north, they would need a deviation but the property to the north is vacant. It would not impact the existing home.

Commissioner Green asked why not move the tower to the north? Mr. Volpe stated the initial location was further north but they had three deviations there. They wanted to meet as many setbacks as possible. If they were to move north they'd be closer to the multiple homes and not within the 1500 feet setback.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if it must be 250 feet? Mr. Volpe said to meet the radio frequency and connectivity requirements. Commissioner Viegbesie asked why it couldn't be moved to the north for compromise with the neighbors. He said he liked the project but not to the disrespect of the citizens. Mr. Volpe said the letter was sent to all neighbors in the packet. He attempted to call numbers of those they were able to get. He proposed a spot to the north but staff suggested to move it to the south. They could entertain it but that would require a third deviation. They will have to re-submit an application with three deviations instead.

Mr. Blount reappeared and stated he was not contacted by Mr. Volpe's group. He found out when surveyors showed up in his yard. He was told after the Planning meeting he would receive something and never did.

Commissioner Green asked if it was possible to ask Mr. Stiell to come up. He stated he was concerned about the chain of communication. Did Mr. Stiell know of any letters that should have gone out to residents? Mr. Stiell stated he received a copy of the letter after he started, the letter was dated October 12<sup>th</sup>. Planning made a recommendation to reach out to citizens. It appears the applicant has been acting in good faith regarding reaching out to the community.

Commissioner Holt asked if they sent out letters? Mr. Volpe stated yes. Commissioner Holt asked if they had any returned? Mr. Volpe stated no.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there was a sense of urgency with the project? He said he was not hearing any resistance to the tower but rather their concerns with the deviations. The tower is needed but there are safety concerns. Mr. Volpe said if BOCC would approve with three deviations then they could reassess. He said they could not agree to an unknown. This is for an approval on their code requirements.

Chair Viegbesie said he wanted to hear what the Administrator has to say.

Mr. Dixon wanted to ask Mrs. Gutcher, there is talk of movement to the north, did she encounter a different set of people to the North? Ms. Gutcher said there is a greater density of people to the north than the south.

Chair Viegbesie said Mr. Volpe just made a legal comment. They do not have to legally approve this project. He said haste makes waste and there was no sense of urgency. He said to see what they could do.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if they needed to provide Mr. Volpe with direction? He wanted to make sure they were legally sound. Mr. Knowles said this was a quasi-judicial piece and their decision needed to be based on the evidence presented.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:20 p.m.*

Mr. Knowles stated they needed to decide based upon what they already have in the land development code. The decision needed to be based off evidence presented today.

Chair Viegbesie asked for a motion.

Chair Viegbesie send it back to planning and zoning? Mr. Knowles stated he did not believe so because Planning and Zoning were just recommending to the Board. He said they needed to make a recommendation to approve or deny.

Commissioner Holt asked if there was in there that they could not abide by or did not apply to them? (page 13 of 160). Mr. Volpe said everything there had been met. Commissioner Holt asked if everything in Section C had been met? Mr. Volpe said yes. Commissioner Holt went through the rest of the sections and Mr. Volpe said they had all been met and were not detrimental to the public.

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:24 p.m.*

Commissioner Holt said when things are sent out the Board receives copies of the letter and envelope to take care some of the concerns. She asked Mr. Knowles that they could not find a reason to not move forward what would the ramifications be. Mr. Knowles said for Section B, there were no deviations for the tower height. He said Section C was supplemental information the applicant was required to provide. With Section D was what the BOCC needed to look at when approving. He added approval or denial was based off what BOCC viewed to be the best evidence presented.

Commissioner Holt said her only concern was the availability of contact that was for the notification part. She said if they move the project, there will be three deviations.

Chair Viegbesie said they had heard from everyone and should be able to decide based off what they have heard to. Chair Viegbesie asked if he could reapply for the same site and Mr. Stiell said yes. Mr. Volpe if there's direction from BOCC for moving the site, it'd be helpful.

Commissioner Hinson said this was in Commissioner NeSmith's district so he should be the first to make the decision.



Commissioner NeSmith said they need these services. He asked how could they give direction moving forward given they could not have it part of their motion? Mr. Knowles said they could, in theory, table the issue.

Mr. Tarapani said his experience was if there are issues the item can be deferred back to Planning or they can deny the tower and the applicant can reapply.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if there was a motion to defer, could it come back with adjustments? Mr. Knowles said if you say move to the north, that's an approval. He suggested tabling the matter if that's the Board's will. He said it would be beneficial to give some manner of closure tonight.

Chair Viegbesie asked Mr. Dixon what his suggestion would be to get the project done and compromise with the citizens? Mr. Dixon if this matter was tabled or deferred, they would try to find a situation that's more appealing to citizens. It may not be to the north, they would try to find an answer for how to find a smaller impact to those present. Reality is, the goal is always to affect as few people as possible. If that is possible or not it will be brought back before the Board.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THE ITEM AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said one of the heartburns for him was the 250 feet. Could they prove that it was 238 feet from the house instead of more? He said they have to have a balance between the people and the corporation.

Commissioner Holt said Items 1 and 5 needed to be addressed further.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO TABLE THIS ITEM. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**11. Public of Adoption of Ordinance 2021-006 (CPA 2021-02) to adopt Chapter 11, Property Rights Element to the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the board for consideration of adding Chapter 11, Property Rights Element to the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Stiell came before the Board and read the Analysis.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Stiell the pros and cons with this item. Mr. Stiell stated if this was not adopted, any amendments to the Comprehensive Plan cannot be adopted unless this is approved. Commissioner Hinson asked why the Property Rights Element was important? Mr. Stiell said these rights were already understood, federally and state recognized, now they have to be recognized by the local government. Commissioner Hinson asked how does this circumvent a builder from taking property from another citizen? Mr. Stiell said he was not aware of any situation

where someone could take the property from you but this would give you a basis for being able to file a lawsuit if so. This is to protect the property owner.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**12. ALS 360 Stryker Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the ALS 360 Stryker Management Program with Gadsden County Emergency Services.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13. Approval OF Addendum to the Audit Engagement Letter**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Addendum to the Audit Engagement letter. He said the estimated cost for the additional work would be \$5000 for each of the projects.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked the length of the initial contract. Mr. Knowles said the original contract started in 2019.

Commissioner Hinson asked where the \$5000 was from? Mr. Dixon replied any monies over \$750,000 are subject to audit.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**14. Approval of the Security Force Southeast, LLC Contract**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the Security Force Southeast, LLC contract.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**15. Emergency Operations Center UPS Maintenance Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval and renewal of a sole-source contract for the county-owned Liebert UPS located at the EOC at the W. A. Woodham building.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked the annual cost and if that was a long-term contract. Mr. Dixon said it was annual, we have machinery and they are the only people that can fix it.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16 Approval of the Non-Profit/Human Services Funding Agreements and Inter-Local Agreements for Human Services for FY2021/2022**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of Non-Profit/Human Services Funding Agreements and inter-local agreements for Human Senior Services for FY 2021/2022.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

Chair Viegbesie asked if the Senior Center was now working with the County? Mr. Dixon replied, yes for the first time.

**17 Approval to Implement the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) Broadband Toolkit, Approval of the County Administrator as the County's Designee/Team Leader for Implementing the DEO Broadband Toolkit and Approval of the Local Technology Planning Team Membership**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the board for approval to implement the DEO Broadband Toolkit, approval of the county administrator as the County's Designee/Team Leader for implementing the DEO Broadband Toolkit and approval of the local Technology Planning Team membership.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**18. Commission Appointment/Re-Appointment to the Inmate Commissary and Welfare Funds Committee**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to appoint/reappoint one Commissioner to serve on the Committee to oversee the Inmate Commissary and Welfare Funds for the Gadsden County Jail for the provision of inmate programs and services.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT NOMINATED COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**19. Appointments/Re-appointments to the Small County Coalition Board of Directors**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to appoint/reappoint two representatives from the Gadsden County BOCC to the Small County Coalition Board of Directors and identify a County staff person to serve as the County Liaison. He said in the past Commissioner Holt and Commissioner Hinson has served as the County's representative and the County Administrator served as the County's liaison.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION FOR CHAIR VIEGBESIE, COMMISSIONER HOLT AND MR. DIXON AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CLERK OF COURT**

**20. Updates**

There was nothing to report.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**21. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said on November 29<sup>th</sup> that there would be an American Rescue Plan workshop and at 6:00 PM there would be a special meeting about the American Rescue Plan and Budget Amendment.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**22. Updates**

Mr. Knowles had no updates.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**23. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson District 1**

Commissioner Hinson congratulated Chair Viegbesie and Commissioner Green on their appointment as Chair and Vice-Chair.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith said he would hold his comments due to time.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green District 5**

Commissioner Green thanked the BOCC for electing him Vice-chair. He had an opportunity to visit a constituent whose home needed repair and they are unable to be assisted due to a deed issue. He said he would like to discuss this with the SHIP director. He congratulated Brandon Heel as the new Executive Director for Senior Services. He added that the Senior Citizen building needed a piano and one was being donated.

**Commissioner Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie. District 2**

Chair Viegbesie asked for a Proclamation honoring Pastor Allen Jones of Neals Temple Holiness Church.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR THE PROCLAMATION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

Chair Viegbesie passed out the tentative work program for FDOT projects for Gadsden County for fiscal year 2023 to fiscal year 2027.

Commissioner Holt asked if he had a chance to check on the transit system with the City of Tallahassee buses? Chair Viegbesie said yes but Mr. Mitchell said there was already an agreement with Star Metro.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt District 4**

Commissioner Holt felt the board will work out well and was happy Commissioner Viegbesie became chair. She also stated annexations of roads were a big problem and could be expensive for the County if "we don't get some teeth in this". She said there was no documentation on some of these things and the County has some sections that they will be responsible for.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
November 16, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:15 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON NOVEMBER 29, 2021 AT 4:30  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

Present: Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2  
Ronterious "Ron" Green, Vice Chair, District 5  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Brenda Holt, District 4  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Viegbesie welcomed everyone to the special workshop at 4:36 p.m.

Bishop Green gave the Invocation then Commissioner Viegbesie led in the Pledge of Allegiance of the U.S. Flag.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTGED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until 11:00 a.m. August 17, 2021. 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.*

Commissioner Green read aloud the above statement.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Discussion regarding Re-Allocation of funds for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Program**

Ms. Daniels, Assistant County Administrator, introduced the above item. She said this was for discussion of reallocation of funds for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Program.

The first program that was allocated was the Small Business Assistance Program and there was \$480,000 allocated to the program. She said a total of \$476,000 has already been paid out with the remaining balance of **\$4000**.

The second program was the Resident Assistance Food Card Program. There was a total of \$250,000 allocated for the program and to date a total of 249,900 has been paid out from that program with the remaining balance of **\$100**.

The third program is the Churches/Religious Organizations Assistance Funding Award Program with a total of \$700,000 being allocated and to date a total of \$180,000 has been paid out. The balance remaining in that program is **\$520,000**.

The fourth program is the Non-Profit Organization Assistance Funding Award and \$190,000 was allocated for that program. The remaining balance and that program as **\$110,000**.

The fifth program is the Healthcare Organization Assistance Funding Program and was a total of \$165,000 allocated for that program and the remaining balance is **\$137,000**.

The direct funding awards were as follows:

Gadsden County Sheriff's Office total award:	\$500,000
Second Harvest of the Big Bend total award:	25,000
Farm Share total award:	25,000
We Care Network total award:	20,000
Gadsden County Administration & County Work Force, total award:	320,000
Gadsden Community Health Council total award:	75,000

The total I was \$965,400 and all has been paid out with the exception of \$75,000 that has been allocated for the Gadsden County Courtroom Improvements. She said the project was underway.

Chair Viegbesie interrupted to let the Deputy Clerk know that Commissioner Hinson was joining them via Zoom.

Ms. Daniels said there was a total of \$771,100 balance remaining in ALL of the programs.

The recommendations staff to put forth are:

- 1) Shift \$280,000 to GCARP Small Business Assistance Program;
- 2) \$243,550 to purchase 2 ALS ambulances; she said that amount would be re-allocated twice so they could purchase the two;
- 3) \$9,000 to the Gadsden County Sheriff's Office for providing security detail during the food card assistance program distribution.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about going back to the purchase of the ambulances and questioned the amount that was listed. Ms. Daniels said the amount changed from the listed amount because they added \$20,000 to the Small Business Program and where the packet showed \$260,000 would not be \$280,000. She said that would now make items 2 and 3 an amount of \$243,550.00 and item 4 would remain at \$9,000.

Commissioner Green asked to go back to the Churches/Religious Organizations Assistance program and asked if all have been compensated for the ones that applied and she said yes.

**Samuel Stephens, 45 Imani Circle, Midway, FL** appeared before the Board. He said he guessed it was too late for things to change, he thought a lot of small businesses did not qualify because they did not know. In the future, the Board needs to have a workshop to guide small businesses.

Chair Viegbesie said this was a situation they had never had before and were learning.

Chair Viegbesie asked Ms. Daniels if she could respond.

Commissioner Holt said she was waiting to hear from Ms. Hamilton.

Ms. Daniels said there was a correction and the numbers that she gave them, under Churches/Religious Organizations, there was one that declined their award for \$5,000 so the remaining balance is \$525,000 and the total remaining balance would be \$776,100.

Chair Viegbesie asked what were the limitations and allowed programs that were allowed to the religious programs. He asked if they go through this in the future, they could list what they could and could not do based on the criteria.

Ms. Daniels said there were strict limitations put in place by Department of Treasury.

Commissioner Holt said she spoke with the Administrator, the last two allocations of funding, she asked Fredericka Hamilton with the Integrity Group to go over the criteria for Small Business.

Ms. Hamilton said regarding the American Rescue Plan Program with the Small Business program, it was designed based on guidance from U.S. Treasury Department to assist small businesses who had losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and showing the loss from the 2019 income going into 202 because that was when the pandemic was most aggressive for everyone. She said they had to be a Gadsden County resident; have to provide certain documentation to support they were a business such as a W-9, State-issued ID or passport or drivers' license and payroll register to show who employees were and what they made the prior month to show they were an operational business when they made their application. She said they allowed businesses to provide hand-written payroll registers

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at 5:06 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie said this was a learning process and if they could develop paperwork, it would be a greater upholding of integrity of The Integrity Group.

Commissioner Green said his concern was as related to a small business owner, the application was turned in on a timely manner, and based on what they know, is there anything that could be done? She said with the particular business they were speaking of, no, based on what was presented, there was no tax log presented from 2019 going into 2020.

Commissioner Holt said at the 6:00 meeting they will go into what needs to be addressed but this needs to be cleared up today.



Commissioner Hinson said remaining funds for CARES was still approximately \$3 Million. Ms. Daniels said she knew they had approximately \$1.7 Million that was allocated for the broadband. They have already allocated the \$1.3. Commissioner Hinson said they had not spent those funds and Ms. Daniels said a great many of them have been spent.

Chair Viegbesie said if he understood correctly, the CARES funding and ARPP were separate fundings. Right now, they were dealing with money appropriated on ARPP. He asked they stay focused on the good of the workshop.

Commissioner Hinson said he was trying to give information in case folks did not understand. The money left went into the General Fund.

Commissioner Holt said she thought they needed to settle this. There was still questions about this and would like to speak with Ms. Hamilton.

Ms. Hamilton re-appeared at the podium before the Board.

Commissioner Holt asked her how many small businesses applied and were not approved and she responded 144.

Commissioner Holt asked for data and said she wanted a copy. Ms. Hamilton said she could give figures.

Ms. Hamilton said of the 144 that did not qualify, there was one or two of the criteria that the small businesses did not meet.

Ms. Hamilton said 218 applied and 144 did not qualify, 46 have been paid and 28 were under consideration.

Commissioner Green said they need to see if there was a way they could change within the law to make it a better fitting for those that did not qualify.

Commissioner NeSmith asked how they established the criteria for the small business program? Ms. Hamilton said there were federal guidelines that had to be met. Chair Viegbesie clarified who set the guidelines.

Commissioner Hinson asked to see the criteria from the Federal program. He said one problem they had, one person that has a car wash business did not know how to present a and plan.

Commissioner Green said his question was how could they identify, out of the 144 that did not qualify but applied, how could an exception be made without violating the criteria?

Ms. Hamilton responded they might have one person that had two different businesses in two different years and that made it hard to do a comparison.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if she found a copy of the qualifications for the criteria.

Ms. Daniels said one thing of urgency was Item 4-money to Sheriff. He has paid deputies for overtime and needs reimbursement.

Commissioner Holt said to go ahead and schedule another workshop to give them time to prepare.

Chair Viegbesie said while talking about rescheduling, suggested on that day to split it into two workshops, one on CARES and get to the bottom of it because he understood that was drawn down and those that applied some have been compensated for their spending. Ms. Daniels said that money was not part of the General Fund, it was still located in the CARES Act fund. She said the board can reallocate that funding as there was no restriction on that funding.

Chair Viegbesie suggested to have a workshop on CARES and then one on American Rescue plan.

Commissioner NeSmith said he and Ms. Daniels had a brief conversation about ambulances. She said currently they have six that were operational. They had nine, one was involved in an accident and was totaled by insurance. They were in the process of replacing it but that could take anywhere from 6-9 months to purchase; add the pandemic and that adds more time. They have two others, one was at the dealership with a locked-up engine and will take a while to fix; the other has fuel issues. Of the six operational, they were old and getting miles on them and could be taken out of commission. Commissioner NeSmith said under normal circumstances, they operate six throughout the day.

Commissioner Hinson said if something happened in Chattahoochee, they have Liberty and Jackson Counties that helps out. If something happens in Havana, Leon County helps out. He wanted the public to know they were covered.

He said in the General Fund, check to see if there was any double-dipping. He asked about gas tax-talked last year

Chair Viegbesie said they will adjourn the workshop but first, they just agreed for two workshops on CARES and ARPP. He suggested if there were questions before the workshop, they schedule a meeting with the County Administrator to discuss.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:55 P.M.**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 7, 2021, THE  
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**           **Brenda Holt, Chair, District 4**  
                          **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Vice Chair, District 2**  
                          **Eric Hinson, District 1**  
                          **Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**  
                          **Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Sara Green, Deputy Clerk**

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., welcomed everyone, asked Rev. Willie Fagg to give the Invocation via Zoom (could not be heard), and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to table item 20 Request for Outside Employment and add Item 20b-Approval of Legislative Recommendations.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

- 1.     Ratification Memo**
- 2.     Approval of Minutes**
  - October 5, 2021 Regular Meeting**
- 3.     Approval and Signature for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien SHIP Housing Rehabilitation Program or Emergency (ER) Program**
- 4.     Approval of the E911 Text-to-911 Public Safety Installation and Maintenance Scope of Work and Master Service Agreement with Century Link Communication, LLC**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on December 7, 2021. 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.*

Dr. Joe Parramore, Greensboro Volunteer Fire Department

Fran Jones, 4984 Alvin Dr., Pensacola, FL - Flint Garden Apartments

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**5. Public Hearing-Second Reading of Ordinance 2021-014 Relating to Immigration Services; Creating Article XX, Section XX-XXX of the Code of Ordinances of Gadsden County, Florida; Prohibiting the Unlicensed Practice of Law for the Provision of Immigration Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of proposed Ordinance 2021-014 which would add to the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances certain prohibitions against the unlicensed practice of law for the provision of immigration services; requiring notaries public who are not attorneys to include certain language in advertisements, and prohibiting advertisements for notarial services that include the translation of "notary public" into a language other than English.

Mr. Knowles said this was brought for the first reading at the last meeting and explained the ordinance. He said it was approved at the first reading and no changes have been made.

Chair Viegbesie announced this was a public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak and there was no-one.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith asked questions regarding the language and Mr. Knowles responded.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any other questions and there was none. He called for the vote.

**THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**6. Public Hearing-First Reading of Ordinance 2021-015 Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, FL, Amending and Adopting Rules of Procedure and Decorum for the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of Ordinance 2021-015 which would add to the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances certain provisions amending the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners Rules and Procedures.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any comments from the public and there were none.

Commissioner NeSmith said they have had extensive discussion on how they would govern themselves and could they make changes after tonight. Mr. Knowles stated if they make changes, they would need to do so tonight. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the evaluation of County Administrator was included as far as the schedule? Mr. Knowles said there was no direction to include that. He added said this was how they would conduct a meeting, not how to evaluate the Administrator. That would be a separate policy.

Chair Viegbesie asked if there were any other questions and there were none.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**7. Approval of Plan of Finance Resolution Concerning Financing of an Affordable Multifamily Residential Rental Apartment by the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for approval of a Plan of Finance Resolution approving the issuance by the Escambia County Housing Finance Authority of up to \$16 Million Multi-family Housing Revenue Bonds to finance the acquisition and rehabilitation of an affordable residential rental apartment project located in Gadsden County Florida and authorize the chairperson to execute the resolution.

Commissioner Green asked if they could give information in the future as to how the County could have its own housing authority and was told they would try to put together and get information to them.

**Fran Jones, 4984 Alvin Dr., Pensacola, FL** appeared before the Board to address issues. She said the developer was planning to put \$60,000 into each of the units. She said the County getting its own housing authority would give flexibility.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**8. Point Milligan CEI Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a FDOT SCOP project.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**9. Fairbanks Ferry CEI Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was also a FDOT SCOP project.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. Potter Woodberry CEI Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a CIGP project funded by FDOT.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**11. Approval of the Small County Outreach Program Agreement (SCOP) County Road 267A Spooner Road**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a SCOP project for the widening and resurfacing of County Road 267A, Spooner Road.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**12. Approval of a New Agreement for the Fairbanks Ferry Road SCOP Construction Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated there was a situation but everything has now ironed out.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**13. Appointment/Re-appointment of Board Members to the Gadsden Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for appointments or Re-appointment to the Gadsden Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors.

Commissioner Holt said they need to put this out and give people an opportunity to apply.

Commissioner NeSmith concurred with Commissioner Holt. He said he was only familiar with few of the names. He had questions about the hospital and the entire arrangement.

Commissioner Green asked how long it would take to get information out and asked if they were on a time deadline. Mr. Dixon said they do not meet on a regular basis and they have time.

Chair Viegbesie said he was going to say if others were interested, they need to apply. From what he was hearing it was the will of the Board is to advertise for citizens to apply and bring the item back.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ADVERTISE AND BRING THE ITEM BACK AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**14. Approval for the Gadsden Fire Service to Apply for the Assistance Firefighter Grant**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval for the Gadsden Fire Service to apply for the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Holt asked if possible, in looking at the map, to get something on the map showing where fire stations are and also there needed to be an inventory done at each site.

Commissioner NeSmith said he forgot to ask earlier, the request for this equipment came from the Director of Fire Services. Mr. Dixon said that was correct.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**15. Comcast Access to Gadsden Memorial Hospital**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented to the Board for approval to allow Comcast access to the Capital Regional Medical Center-Gadsden Campus premise that is leased to Capital Regional Medical.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER NESMITH, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**16. Gadsden County Facilities Management Software**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the Board for approval of the Dude Solution proposal. Mr. Knowles had comments.

Mr. Knowles said there will be minimal changes to this document. He asked they change venue requirements so the County would not have to travel there and add the Statement by Public Enemy crimes.

Chair Viegbesie asked if this was time sensitive and Mr. Knowles said they could table the item.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO TABLE THIS ITEM.**

**17. Approval of Agreement for Legislative Advocacy and Public Relations Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the agreement for a Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy and Public Relation Services. He said the Board of County Commissioners has retained lobbyists to represent the County interests for the past years in developing and implementing a State Legislative effort to enhance State level funding and services to Gadsden County.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR VIEGBESIE HAD A COMMENT BEFORE CARRYING THE VOTE.**

He said before carrying the vote, he received a request from the lobbying firm, Stephen R. Winn and Associates to work with Lawson and Associates and would like to reach out to them to work together.

Commissioner Green said it was a great idea but asked what the fiscal impact would be because there was a \$25,000 allotment right now and would the Board have to increase the budget amount in order to accommodate the new firm?

Chair Viegbesie said that would be a discussion between Winn & Associates and Lawson & Associates.

Commissioner NeSmith said in reference to a query from Commissioner Green, Chair Viegbesie was forwarded information and that was a discussion they should have. The second question was there any reservation on the County's part for them to contract with Lawson and Associates, if it was all in order.

Mr. Knowles said moving forward yes, they need to make sure the lobbying firm was registered with the House (each year). Mr. Knowles said did not happen for the two prior years. Commissioner NeSmith wanted to understand the process, did that put the County in any legal problems? Mr. Knowles said he was not here for one of those years.

Commissioner Holt said she did not receive the email others received, she did her own investigative work. In 2018 they had another lobbyist so they did not have to register. She said to look at the years they got something and the years they did not, she was more concerned about when they did get something as to when they did not.

Chair Viegbesie said in hearing what he was hearing, he had no problem with approving this item contingent the registration for lobbying in Florida was done. If not, the contract becomes null and void.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**18. Consideration of approval of the Agreement for Community Planning Technical Assistance (CTPA) Grant with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said this was approval of a CPTA agreement between Gadsden County and the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for the purpose of updating the Gadsden County Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Element.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER GREEN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**19. Approval of the Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Greensboro for Fire and Rescue Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the Inter-local Fire and Rescue Service agreement between Gadsden County and the Town of Greensboro's Volunteer Fire Department for one year. He said he received an email from Council member Henderson stating they were unable to reach an agreement.

Mr. Dixon explained how some of funds were spent and said it did not raise any concerns.

Chair Viegbesie said he had a Speaker Request and an email that was received and requested to be read.



(A gentleman from the audience started talking and said he did not understand the process. Chair Viegbesie asked if he wished to speak on the item and he stated he wanted to speak on all items. Security escorted him out.)

Chair Holt said they were not trying to restrict anyone from speaking, she wanted to make sure he understood the process. Ms. Daniels stepped out to speak with him.

Dr. Joe Parramore appeared before the Board. He asked the record to reflect the Town of Greensboro has made no attempt to engage with the Volunteer Fire Department at any time. He submitted for the record the 2020 Department report. He wanted to address one allegation that was repeatedly made that those firefighters abandoned the Town of Greensboro; they would never abandon their call of service. To Commissioner Holt's request regarding equipment, he met with Chief Walker and gave his commitment that they would recover what equipment they could. Chief Walker had a meeting with Mr. Henderson and acquired an equipment list of equipment that was issued and signed for by town personnel. They extended another olive branch to the Town of Greensboro and have not heard back from them. They have never once reached out to seek an amicable agreement. In the packet under Background of staff's recommendation, it states that the Town of Greensboro is currently providing fire and rescue services within the scopes of training with due diligence in the unincorporated areas of Gadsden County. He stated that was not true.

Chair Viegbesie said he was heartbroken over this situation. He said the Administrator acknowledged there were expenditures made outside of fire and safety activities. His other concern and question were from what he had heard in Dr. Parramore's comments, who was currently providing Greensboro and surrounding areas with fire service.

Commissioner NeSmith said he was intimately knowledgeable of the issue; he has participated in meetings with Dr. Parramore, Mr. Hunter and their work was incredible. He also heard voices that they want their own fire services. He was hoping he could come to the meeting to hear they had come to an amicable agreement. However, the Town of Greensboro does maintain autonomy and they decide who they allow into their municipality.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would make a motion to support this document and approve it

Commissioner Green said his hope was great. However, he said he did not see it happening. His question to the Administrator was what was the purpose of the funding? He stated it had been used for other items, but was not illegal. He thought they were giving it to support fire services. He also was concerned if they were giving money for this, they do not have commitment from volunteers.

Commissioner Holt said what they had seen so far was implications of misuse of funds and missing equipment. If they could not go back and straighten that out, they have to move forward. She said Commissioner Green was asking for accountability and is what is in contract. She said to get a motion and second and move on.

Mr. Knowles pointed out two provisions in the contract that have been made. Section 8, the Records section, the Town of Greensboro shall maintain financial records of expenditures from the Town of Greensboro Fire Department within guidelines of the State of Florida Uniform

Accounting System for Local Governments, shall no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the end of each quarter provide the County copies of the list of all Town of Greensboro Fire Department expenditures for the quarter and quarterly reports of fire activity within the unincorporated limits of the County in a form that is uniform throughout the County. He said also in the Payment of Funds Section 9, any and all payments made by the County and to the Town of Greensboro for the provision of fire and rescue services shall be used only for expenses of the Town of Greensboro's Fire Department and an accurate accounting of all funds is required. He said he was not sure how much micro-managing the County could do.

Commissioner Holt said it had in there about financial reporting and responsibility, they need to make sure that they have a report on the equipment.

Mr. Dixon said, as each Commissioner has said, the County has not been very accountable in maintaining certain records. One thing they have been talking about was tracking fire systems.

Chair Viegbesie said they were where they were, he gave his opinion, his concern was who was currently providing the citizens in Greensboro fire protection services.

Commissioner NeSmith said again, thanked Dr. Parramore and the former volunteers for bringing to Board's attention the issues.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH GREENSBORO AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. CHAIR VIEGBESIE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN OPPOSED THE ITEM.**

**20. Approval Request for Outside Employment**

Item pulled

**20b Appropriations Requests**

Mr. Dixon introduced the added item and said it was for their approval of the recommended rankings of their Legislative program. He explained in order to meet the deadline, they do require that the Board rank the programs. He said they all agreed that Midway was in the worst way in terms of starting part of the septic-to-sewer program an enlarging the host facility. The convinced Midway to cut it down into slices.

Commissioner Hinson said he was curious, he was talking with Suwanee County, they were trying to start sewer plant. He said they had a lot of areas and thought they needed to start thinking about that to see if it was a good idea.

Commissioner Holt said she had listed they needed a County water sewer project but also need to look at operations of same. She said sewer does not make money, water and electricity makes money. She added it needed to be added in such an area because no-one wants to be next to a sewer plant.

Commissioner NeSmith said that was an excellent idea and thanked Commissioner Holt. He said this was a topic he wanted to discuss with the Board. He said in-line with them working on goals and objectives for Staff, they were in the first month of the Administrator's second year

and they needed to complete that process. In reference to Commissioner Holt's and Commissioner Hinson's comments, what stops them from providing their own water/sewer and electrical services?

Mr. Dixon said in the past when counties built utilities it was mostly water and sewer, it was involved with the developer and the county did not have the taste to manage those facilities and it was turned over to another government, Talquin. He said Talquin was a government essentially; it was a co-op.

*Commissioner Green stepped out at 7:43 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson suggested a wonderful project and they need to prioritize their conversation.

*Commissioner Green returned at 7:44 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie said this was for future conversation.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE LEGISLATIVE HANDOUT FOR 2021/2022 AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

##### **21. Updates**

Deputy Clerk said there was nothing to report.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

##### **22. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said he knew they would be traveling and they had the holiday schedule in front of them. They were expected to participate in the Friday evening parade.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

##### **23. Updates**

Mr. Knowles said he had nothing to report.

Commissioner Holt asked him on the annexation issue, she asked to be sent the email again from Opal. She said they need to have rules on accepting roads and annexations. She asked their responsibility right now.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

##### **24. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

###### **Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Commissioner Holt asked about the flow chart on the road paving issue. She asked for the changes on Item 16 for the document and asked him to send to them so they could review.

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he has brought this up over the years. It's getting cold and a lot of residents have mental health issues. He said they need to address the homeless issue in the County. He said they need to find ways to look at everything, tiny homes, etc. He said they need to hold these conversations. They also need to look at emergency housing programs.

He said they need to look at aides. Who does he send recommendation to, Mr. Dixon? He was told yes.

He said Dr. Walter Smith, FAMU, passed away and knew they would be doing something in Tampa and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month at Al Lawson Center. He said he would like to have proclamation.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

He thanked Coach Willie Simmons for having an awesome season this year.

He asked about Jarvis Rittman and Mr. Dixon said they asked to wait until the end of the season.

Commissioner Hinson mentioned the booster shot and flu shot, thanked the community for getting their shots. Chair Viegbesie said he also had had the pneumonia shot.

He thanked Gadsden County for being strong and said they need to pray for the children of the county.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith echoed what Commissioner Hinson just stated and thanked all the Commissioners for keeping them in good light with the media.

He said regarding the homeless issue, Gretna Commissioner Jeff McNealy, has coordinated and organized a group of stake holders in community to address the homelessness.

Commissioner Hinson said they also started an initiative, Gadsden County Collaborative that Commissioner Holt was a part of.

Commissioner NeSmith said they need to schedule another workshop to conclude their goals and objectives for 2022. Chair Viegbesie said they also need one on the CARES Act and one on the American Rescue Plan. He said they also need one strictly on economic development.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Jeremiah Lee, Public Works, for keeping (inaudible) on Lincoln Drive. He has not seen debris, mattresses or tires in that area.

He thanked Mr. Dixon for working with the citizens on Hardaway Highway regarding the barking dogs.

He wished Commissioner Green a happy belated birthday and congratulated him on his engagement.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, Vice Chair, District 5**

Commissioner Green thanked each of them that did celebrate with him Saturday.

He wanted to start with the workshop he requested on the SHIP program. He said they need to take advantage of whatever programs they have available to meet the needs of their constituents.

Also, he had on his list animal control and was told it was hard to get in touch with Animal Control.

He asked if there was an update on Old Federal Road and understood more cars were still coming in.

Mr. Dixon said they reached out, it was one of those situations where they are going to have to be diligent in their process. The property owner has not heeded County warning in Chattahoochee or here. He said they were remaining diligent in following their process.

He said they talked about this and a while back trying to get information on security of the building. Mr. Dixon said they still have that money set aside. He asked Mr. Meeks to come forward.

Allan Meeks, Facilities Manager, appeared before the Board. He said they have a layout Justin Ford has done.

Commissioner Holt said she left one thing off and wanted an update on the COVID memorial.

*Commissioner Hinson stepped out at 8:14 p.m.*

Commissioner Holt wanted people to know they did care.

She said she was also still getting questions regarding the hospital.

**Commissioner Anthony O. Viegbesie, Chair, District 2**

Chair Viegbesie echoed what everyone has said in congratulations.

He said he received a message today from an affiliation to the Governor's Office regarding \$2.5 Million EMS building. All they need to do now is to spend the money and have the invoice and will get the money. He said this was for all fiscally distressed rural counties. He said as they approve the improvements, submit the invoice and we would receive the money.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
December 7, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VEIGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:17 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 21, 2021 AT 6:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:

**Present:** Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Chair, District 2  
Ronterious “Ron” Green, Vice Chair, District 5  
Eric Hinson, District 1  
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3  
Brenda Holt, District 4  
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator  
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney  
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk  
Sara Green, Deputy Clerk

**\*\*Due to technical difficulties, recording started after meeting started\*\***

**CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Viegbesie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Rev. Jimmy Salter gave the Invocation and Chair Viegbesie then led in Pledge of Allegiance to U. S. Flag.

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon asked to pull item 13 and item 14 from the agenda.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at 6:04 p.m.*

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**CONSENT**

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

1. **Ratification Memo**
2. **Approval of Minutes**
  - **September 9, 2021 Budget Public Hearing**
  - **September 20, 2021 Budget Workshop**
  - **November 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting**
3. **Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with National Hook-up of Black Women, Inc. (Gadsden Chapter) for Spooner Road**
4. **Approval of Resolution for New Chairperson-Facsimile Stamp**

5. **Approval for the Gadsden County Sheriff’s Office Peer Support Team to Attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Responder Mental Health & Wellness Conference**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

**CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

*Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator’s Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto:CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov) until noon on December 21, 2021. 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.*

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

6. **Public Hearing-(Quasi-Judicial) Greensboro FL 1776 Telecommunication Tower Conceptual/Preliminary Site Plan (SP 2021-05)**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above referenced item and said it was for consideration of a request for approval of a 250-foot-tall self-supporting communication tower with a request for two deviations from setback requirements as outlined in the report.

**Justin Stiell, Senior Planner II**, appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk.

Chair Viegbesie said he had two speaker forms and asked if anyone else wished to speak

**John Revell, 307 Live Oak Lane, Havana, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He said they did contact him, wanted to move the tower 150’ and that would move it closer to the Town of Greensboro city limits. They asked one resident what they wanted and she told them she wanted them to follow the set-back rules. He said they told them there were no alternative sites the tower could be moved to. He added this would affect a lot of people. He read “The tower was compatible to area”. They tried to reach out and talk to 13 land owners to try to put the tower on; nine did not respond, one did and he owns three pieces of property. If they met the set-back rules, everyone in Greensboro would support it.

**Vernon Neal Blount, 125 Harrison Road, Greensboro, FL** appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He stated his road was the road they want to use to build the tower. The tower would be less than 400’ from his house. This will affect his property value and would be a hardship if he wants to sell his house. Rules are for a purpose, everyone should abide by them. He said he did not want the tower there as the site was very small. He hoped the Board would vote against this.

**Robert Volpe, Esquire, 119 N. Monroe Street, Tallahassee** appeared before the Board. He said he reached out to everyone, but was unable to reach Mr. Blount.

Chair Viegbesie announced again this was a public hearing and asked if anyone else wished to speak and there was no-one.



Commissioner Green thanked the Applicant for reaching out to the residents in the area. If there was never no change, they would be stuck in the same predicament that they have been in.

Commissioner NeSmith echoed what the Vice-Chair just said. They have to make decisions that help move the County forward.

Mr. Stiell reappeared before the Board. Commissioner NeSmith asked if the change met the set-back requirements. He said the Land Development Code provides for set-back deviations and this met all but two of the set-backs.

Commissioner Hinson thanked the citizens and attorney that appeared before the Board. He asked if alternative sites existed. Mr. Stiell said an alternative site analysis was done and it was determined that this does meet that.

Commissioner NeSmith said commissioner Hinson hit on a very important question. There has to be an optimal location for the tower to transmit properly. Commissioner NeSmith asked and he responded that was the best location for the tower to transmit properly in that area.

Mr. Volpe reappeared and said an alternative site analysis was done and potential properties are considered by radio frequency engineers. This was the best site to triangulate and was the best alternative.

Commissioner Hinson asked if this was best location or the only location.

Mr. Volpe said there were 13 properties and was private property-they did not want the towers on their personal property.

John Revell reappeared before the Board. He said there were thirteen land-owners that this site would fit. He assumed a letter was sent and had no response but from the one land-owner. This was still not meeting the set-backs for 1500'.

Mr. Volpe re-appeared before the Board. Chair Viegbesie a asked if there were certified letters sent out and if was there any response. He stated he did not contact them himself.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the client contacted property owner and asked if they all were contacted in same way. Mr. Volpe said yes, and believed they did talk with other property owners.

Commissioner Holt said there was comment made this did not meet any of the 1500' set-backs. He said it was 890' feet from the closet residence.

Mr. Stiell reappeared before the Board. She asked him his definition of rural residential. He stated that rural residential is a future land use category that is defined within their code. None of these properties fall in the rural residential future land use category. She said if they deny, they have to give reasonable reason why. She then asked Mr. Volpe about the 1000' feet on the NE corner, and if the property fell within the 1500 feet. He said it did that it was not designated rural residential.

Commissioner Hinson said was sure lot of research was done and asked if they had any heartburn regarding this matter. Mr. Dixon said there is always have heartburn about these things and rules were designed to harm as few people as possible. This is difficult process for everyone involved. The applicant and neighbors have shown their willingness. The rules say they have to have they great reason to not approve this. Commissioner Hinson said the photo in the packet was not same as what Mr. Volpe passed out as an exhibit. Mr. Stiell said it was not the same as the document provided.

Commissioner Green asked if was the same map with different numbers. He asked for a moment to review.

Mr. Blount reappeared before the Board. He said was listening to the definitions of rural residential. His house is located on 2 acres, did that not make it rural residential? He pays taxes on his property.

Mr. Stiell reappeared and said one item he placed at their seats was an email from Mr. Revell that has a map on back.

Commissioner Hinson said this was public hearing and all information must be in two weeks in advance-to come in the day of, he wanted to be sure the lines were right.

Commissioner Hinson wanted to disclose he received an email from Mr. Revell but never responded to it.

Commissioner Green said he was about to have heartburn also but saw they had what was needed to decide.

Ms. McKinney-Williams said they had asked what was required at a quasi-judicial public hearing was public notice, the date and time of the hearing and the map of the location of the property. Separate and apart for purposes of the public hearing either side can present evidence which has occurred, testamentary evidence and documentary evidence. The packet had just referenced, there is testimony in the record that that packet contained an email and a copy of the map. The map was generated at the request of the land-owner and provided well in advance. In addition to everything helps that is in the actual packet and all evidence that they can consider and review when making their ultimate decision. For purposes of why it is required in order to get here, all they needed was a notice with the map, it did not have to be that map. That is the evidence that the Board can now consider in making their decision.

Commissioner NeSmith said between the dialogue, his questions were answered.

Chair Viegbesie said they could not please everyone. They cannot find a perfect solution for everyone but they have to look for the situation that is best possible. He said COVID is still going on and now there are the variants. There are parents that have to drive kids to fast-food restaurants for internet connection to be able to do homework; they have elderly that cannot go to the hospital and has no internet connection for telemedicine.

Chair Viegbesie asked the will of the commission.

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Mr. Revell for his time and attention. Given Commissioner Holt's query earlier, the petitioner has met all the requirements.

**COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

**7. Public Hearing-Legislative-Consideration of Ordinance 2021-013, Adoption of the Capital Improvements Schedule for Fiscal Years 2021/22-2025/26 (LSPA 2021-04)**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and said it was for consideration of a recommendation to adopt Ordinance number 2021 -013 to adopt the annual update of the Capital Improvements Schedule for Fiscal Years 2021/22 -2025/26 of the Capital Improvements Element. He said they knew some things were not on the list and not only would they be bringing goes back to them, in the next few months they will be adding or discussing adding new capital improvements to that.

Chair Viegbesie said having heard that, if there was no sense of urgency, he asked they consider making sure the Ordinance WAs complete before approving. There needs to be a way to make the capital improvements list more complete and harmonizing better.

Ms. McKinney-Williams said she not sure there was a right or wrong way.

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure he had clarity on the issue and understood this list was compiled before the two new commissioners came on. He was told the list could be amended as needed and was why he was comfortable in moving forward.

Commissioner Holt said the reason she asked for the flow-chart was because there was at a need for visibility.

Mr. Dixon asked Mr. Stiell if he was right in saying they could continue to improve the list and make sure they were meeting obligations and deadlines of the plan. Paving and repaving of roads would be separate from Capital Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Hinson said he was thinking this was something they did not want to lose money on the funding. If they could not articulate, then they might need to have a name workshop. He said they need A workshop, become educated and then they could decide.

Commissioner Holt said SCOP and SCRAP will come to them all the time. Once they pass this, all they do is add more roads and keep moving because other Counties will be glad to take the funding.

Mr. Dixon asked if roads of concern could be added tonight? Mr. Stiell asked if those roads were paving and re-paving.

Chair Viegbesie said resurfacing, paving, widening, and restructuring.

Mr. Stiell said this was an amendment to the Capital Improvements Element in the Comprehensive Plan. The projects are laid out and pulled from the Capital Regional

Transportation Planning Agency. He said anything identified in those documents would be included in the work program.

Commissioner Green said wanted to concur with commissioner Hinson on having a workshop so they could be educated on the road improvement process.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THIS ITEM AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

**8. Approval to Accept Reduced Payment for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien dated February 3, 2014**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**9. Gadsden County Facilities Management Software**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for approval of the Dude solutions proposal. He said it was budgeted in the facility's maintenance budget.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR VIEGBESIE HAD A QUESTION.**

Chair Viegbesie asked if this was a sole source provider and was told yes.

Commissioner Hinson said that funding coming from the CARES Act. He thought they were going to have a meeting first, the meeting got cancelled and now they want to use funds for this.

Chair Viegbesie said the reason the meeting was cancelled, the information on that workshop was not ready in timely manner. He does not support items being added at the dais, does not give them time to research properly. His understanding was the CARES money has all been allocated.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. Appointment to the C2 Juvenile Justice Circuit Advisory Board**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the board to appoint a representative to serve on the Juvenile justice Circuit Advisory Board.

Commissioner Green recommended commissioner Holt; commissioner Holt said she was going to nominate Commissioner NeSmith. Chair Viegbesie seconded commissioner Green's nomination.

Commissioner NeSmith said he concurred for Commissioner Holt to occupy that position. He offered to be alternate.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO RECOMMEND COMMISSIONER HOLT AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH AS ALTERNATE AND CHAIR VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Holt said that was why she like being retired, so she would not have to be bothered. She was a retired school teacher, a retired math teacher and that meant she was a disciplinarian, she did not think children want to see her.

**CHAIR VIEGBESIE CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**11. Approval of the Gadsden County Public Library Pandemic Technology Enhancement Program**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval and execution of the Gadsden County Public Library Pandemic Technology Enhancement Program for \$117,250.

*Chair Viegbesie stepped out at 7:51 p.m.*

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner Hinson said this required money and would it be coming from the American Rescue Plan. Mr. Dixon said it was coming from a national program and would be a grant from national program.

**VICE CHAIR GREEN CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**12. Cochran Road Change Order Number One**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item. He explained this was for approval of change order number 1 for Cochran road resurfacing and drainage improvements. This was something the engineers and FDOT did not see. The Change was requested and DOT has agreed to partially pay. The total cost of the change will be \$39,301.00 and DOT has agreed to fund \$25,769.66 and the county will be responsible for the remaining amount which it will come from Public Works budget.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER NESMITH HAD A QUESTION.**

Commissioner NeSmith wanted to make sure the dollars were coming from Public Works budget and was allocated and was told yes.

*Chair Viegbesie returned at 7:55 p.m.*

Chair Viegbesie said this was an item he had expressed to the County Administrator he was not in favor of because of the change orders. Now this will cost the County \$13,531.34.

Commissioner NeSmith asked the Administrator, based on his experience, was this unusual to have a change order? Mr. Dixon said if you read closely, change orders were built into these contracts because of things not caught.

**VICE CHAIR GREEN CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.**

**13. Re-Approval of the Gadsden County CARES Act Residual Funds**

Item Pulled

**14. Re-Allocation of Funds for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan (GCARP) Program**

Item Pulled

**CLERK OF COURT**

**15. Updates**

There were no updates.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**16. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said the County office will be closed for Christmas on Friday and Monday; the State has closed Thursday and Friday both weeks. The Courthouse will be closed Thursday and Friday this week and Friday next week as will the Tax Collector's Office.

Commissioner Hinson asked about FCI. Mr. Dixon asked if he wanted him to comment on it. Commissioner Hinson said yes, he wanted to know how soon they could have a conversation. Mr. Dixon said as soon as he could, he was running at top gear.

Commissioner Hinson said he would like to have the names, addresses and phone numbers of everyone that applied and received funding for the CARES Act. Chair Viegbesie asked the attorney if that was public record and she said yes.

Chair Viegbesie asked as they prepare their plan and the heavy load they will be carrying, to consider working with the congressional partners in regards to the national source.

Mr. Dixon said they have recently talked about homelessness and the services that go with that situation. They have met with Mr. White who was the builder of the Kearney Center and tiny houses. One thing they will bring back is a listening opportunity on what was happening in Gadsden County and how it could be addressed Gadsden County style.

Commissioner Green asked if there was a way to find out the correct way to address the local homeless issue in the County. Mr. Dixon said he participated in the Veteran's homelessness every year in his capacity of Sheriff's office.

Commissioner Hinson said they had \$100,000 for homelessness in the CARES Act and it got taken out.

Commissioner Holt said this sounded like a workshop.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**17. Updates**

Ms. McKinney-Williams said she had nothing to report but Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**18. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Commissioner Holt said she wanted on the agenda the Mobile Health Unit; increase in gas, and an update on the hospital. Move

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said he had received his booster shot.

They need to have a couple of meetings next week to close some things out, the American Rescue Plan, etc.

He said they had an issue that came to the Board and got pulled and he wanted to make sure he was in line with what was going on and wanted to make it sure did not affect him or the Board by it being pulled.

Chair Viegbesie said the reason it was polled was because of an email the attorney sent, they wanted to make sure they did what they needed to do so as to keep the board free of any kind of legal ramification and to keep the Administrator out of any legal implications so they could continue to do what they need to do. The item will come back with the action that was taken to keep Board, as well as the operations, free of any charges of ethics and violations by the Board.

Commissioner Hinson asked the attorney if there were any ramifications.

Miss McKinney-Williams said she could provide a general response to this question as to whether the Board is implicated in any kind of dual Office holding issue concerning a particular provision of the Ethics Code. In general, the Ethics code applies to public employer and public officers. Each public employee/individual person is subject to the Ethics code. They are required to comply with terms of the ethics code. If there is a question about something concerning the Ethics code, it would not be the Board, as a body, responsible for Cid compliance. It would be the individual members or officers. To answer the question, generally, are there any concerns regarding the Board, she did not believe so. Regarding the specific information Chair Viegbesie was talking about, she was not privy to it, Mr. Knowles is. She said to answer the general question, the Board was not impacted.

Commissioner Hinson said wanted to make sure by not responding, they were ok.

Mr. Dixon said he asked for the item to be agendaed, he asked for the opinion because that was what responsible public officials do. Secondly, he would never bring drama to this board. Thirdly, he has removed the conflict by resigning from his position as Executive Director of Health Council. That was the removal of the conflict.

Commissioner Hinson said he wanted make sure they were fine.

Commissioner Holt said she thought she would never have to clarify this; years ago, there were two professors that wrote grants for the County for \$3 million dollars and did not notify the County. They were subcontracting with health care providers, the reason this whole issue came together was because people were coming over here taking advantage of the numbers and one person in that group wrote them self a check for \$97,000 for the two years. They brought the information back and had it agendaed and the group that was doing the writing set up an office. She said she called City Hall and asked if they had the organization here and they said yes but they had not been there long enough to have the lights turned on. That was how the health council came together and was why the administrator was over the Health Council. She said she was not speaking for Mr. Dixon she was speaking for the Health Council. Mr. McKinnon was the director for years and then the Health Council selected Mr. Dixon before he became administrator. The County had to have some say-so as to what was written in the county's name for healthcare. Now we have to argue over someone being the Executive Director; didn't care about the \$3 million raised, didn't care about the \$97,000; that was what was upsetting about this. If the county has no say so over it, then it goes back to what it was.

Commissioner Hinson said if was everything legal, move forward, why move away.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at 8:40 p.m.*

Commissioner Hinson said if they were doing what was right, move forward. Personally, he did not know that the previous County Administrator was doing this or the current Administrator.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3**

Commissioner NeSmith thanked Ms. Daniels for making their stay in St. Augustine pleasant and for not having any hiccups.

*Commissioner Holt returned at 8:43 p.m.*

He said regarding homelessness, they have a census coming up in 9 years and they need to be able to track homelessness and all population.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, Vice Chair, District 5**

Commissioner Green said he had a couple of concerns: High Bridge Road striping is not there; he received a compliment on services at the Emergency Room that a constituent received; received a call today about a dog and it would be nice if they had a portal on the website. He also has questions on who to contact for Animal Control, when the number is called there is no response. Mr. Dixon said he had no answer for that, there should be no reason the calls were not being answered or returned. He said he would be speaking with Mr. Meeks.



Chair Viegbesie said he has also been called about animal control, there are issues in every district.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he could give the number so people would know where to call. Mr. Meeks said they have moved and have not gotten the landline set up. The new software they approved will help.

The number is 850-875-8658 for Animal Control.

Commissioner Green asked when would the landline be set up. Mr. Meeks said the number has been forwarded to Sherita's cell. Commissioner Holt asked for a number for evenings and weekends because that was when most people were home.

Commissioner Green said he did not want to address this now but since it has been made publicly known, he wanted to make sure it was clear it was Mr. Dixon's decision to resign. Mr. Dixon said the Health Council has a Board and he was in that position prior to coming to the County. He said he asked for an opinion from the attorney and wanted to make sure there was no conflict. The conflict was that he was executive director of the Health Council, and to take away the conflict, he resigned.

Said Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone.

And

**Commissioner Anthony O. Viegbesie, Chair, District 2**

Chair Viegbesie said his only comment was already made by Commissioner Holt about the mobile health unit.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:05 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**