

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP AND SPECIAL MEETING
HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON
AUGUST 18, 2011 AT 4:00 P.M., THE FOLLOWING
PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ.**

Present: **Sherrie Taylor, Chair, District 5**
 Gene Morgan, Vice-Chair, District 3
 Eugene Lamb, District 1
 Doug Croley, District 2
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Nicholas Thomas, Clerk
 Arthur Lawson, Interim County Administrator
 Jeff Price, Sr. Budget Analyst

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order late (4:20pm) due to technical recording equipment issues.

Mr. Lawson, Interim County Administrator, addressed the Board and said that Jeff Price, Sr. Budget Analyst, would facilitate the meeting.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE BUDGET

TENTATIVE BUDGET

Mr. Price addressed the board pointing out the changes made to the budget as a result of the last budget workshop on July 28, 2011.

- Page 4 – Changed the name “Solid Waste” to “Neighborhood Services” and made it a division of Public Works. The solid waste program was eliminated and resulted in a savings of \$221,000 in expenditures. It also increased franchise fees (revenue) by \$20,000.
- Moved Administrative Coordinator costs from County Administrator’s budget to Neighborhood Services budget – moved \$80,000 to that department
- Increased EMS rates by \$290,000; increase the insurance adjustments by \$250,000 – net increase of \$40,000.
- Medical Insurance – new rates added to the personnel section in the 8/18 budget edition
- Decreased Sheriff’s transfer by \$74,000 in the 8/18 edition.

Don Crum, Director of Emergency Medical Services for Gadsden County addressed the Board concerning the trips made to Tallahassee Hospitals.

Commissioner Morgan asked had hospital trips on ambulances to Tallahassee decreased with the opening of the hospital in the County.

Mr. Crum stated that there were fewer trips being made now as opposed to the number of trips being made prior to the opening of the Rural Emergency Facility

Commissioner Taylor said that in order for Board to make intelligent decisions there needed to be data as to how much is collected on Medicare Patients. She suggested to Mr. Crum that when he had information please provide proof or if he didn't, tell them he would have to get back to them with that information.

Clerk Thomas commented that he was content with Resolution of EMS transfer to General Fund. He said that it would help the General Fund.

No action was taken by Board.

Waste Site Closing

Chair Taylor discussed the deletion of the 6 part time positions.

Mr. Lawson noted that the cuts resulted from the closing of the Waste Sites.

Chair Taylor directed Mr. Lawson to make sure there would be some transition for those departing employees with services such as Workforce Plus.

No action was taken by Board.

Public Comment (Community Organizations & Constitutional Officers)

David Gardner, Gadsden Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Board with his request for \$100,000 for Economic Development activities performed by the Chamber. He presented the Board with handouts on the recent Economic Development Report and the update on National Solar Power. He also expressed his gratitude for their support of the last two years. He commented that most businesses in the County were operating in a survival mode, trying to retain their employees during critical times. He said that the Chamber was working intentionally and tirelessly to recruit new businesses as well as trying to retain the small businesses already in the area.

Pam Harrison - Tribue, Small Business Chairperson, discussed the education and assistance they offer to local small businesses through the Chamber of Commerce that help them write a business plan and establish themselves. She commented that she is currently helping some small entities obtain their

501(c)3. She mentioned some of the new shops that have opened in the area, such as Main Street Café and the Cupcake Shop working together.

Chair Taylor thanked both David Gardner and Pam Tribue for their presentations.

No Action was taken by Board.

Mary Dekle, Legal Services of North Florida, addressed the Board requested \$10,000.00 for their efforts through Legal Services.

Paul Arnold, Sr. Attorney for Legal Services, commented on the programs they offer throughout the county. He stated that the work that has been done through Legal Services saved the community money. He discussed in length the preservation of families, preservation of finances and preservation of homes. He said that they have assisted 32 families with foreclosure assistance in the last year.

Chair Taylor thanked them for their commitment to the citizens of Gadsden County.

No Action was taken by Board.

Major James Morgan, Captain Jim Corder, Gadsden County Sheriff's Office

Major James Morgan & Captain Jim Corder appeared before the Board on behalf of the Sheriff's Budget request.

Captain Corder discussed the possibilities of building a new jail, the addition of new pod, and needed air conditioning repairs. He told the Board that as of this moment there were 9 individuals charged with 1st degree murder who are not properly secured in the jail. He went on to thank Clyde & the Board for the repairs they have be able to do.

Major Morgan discussed the items that currently needed to be fixed immediately such as locks and showers that continuously run water.

Commissioner Croley asked about the \$340,000.00.

Clerk Thomas stated that the \$800,000.00 had been spent, leaving a balance of more than \$500,000.00.

Commissioner Croley stated it is the Board's responsibility for physical repairs and he was irritated because they weren't getting done. He asked how long it would take to rebuild the monies to a level sufficient to accomplish the work that needed to be done.

Clerk Thomas stated that the Board could transfer monies back to budget anytime.

Mr. Lawson replied that procurement policies must be followed unless the board waives them. It could be accomplished more expeditiously except for time constraints imposed by board policy.

Commissioner Holt asked that the BOCC get quarterly reports on the jail in the future in order to make sure the work is proceeding. She agreed that it was the Board's responsibility. She commented that the federal lobbyist (that was cut from the budget) could have helped the board go after federal dollars to accomplish such things as the jail.

Commissioner Lamb stated that the Sheriff's office had enlightened the board on the conditions at the jail. He concurred with Commissioner Holt in saying that they need to go out and find new money. He said that he supported the effort to get a new jail, but until that could be done, the Board needed to make sure that what is there is safe and functional. He ended with saying that they needed to move forward and give more attention on the Jail.

Commissioner Morgan stated that his position was to make the jail a priority and get the work done.

Chair Taylor commented that with only the \$250,000.00 that was in the budget the work would never get done. She said the Sheriff had plans for a new jail in hand and the plans for a new pod. She said the money is out there in the form of Bonds. She thought the Citizen Committee concept was a great idea, but she was told the work had already been done by the Sheriff's own study and some of the money is there. She commented that a \$9 million jail is out of the question at this time, but a \$2 million pod could be done.

Staff was directed to come up with a solution and come back in October with a proposal.

Captain Corder commented that the \$250,000.00 would pay for the locks and they were an absolute need.

Chair Taylor asked again, "Why haven't we done anything with monies that were set aside?" She went on to say that she was told that the appropriated money was not enough to take care of all the things that needed to be done.

Commissioner Holt reiterated that the Board should prioritize the work according to the greatest need and do only what it could afford to do.

Commissioner Croley asked Mr. Thomas for his opinion about the possibility of doing a bond for the jail. Commissioner Lamb stated that a Committee should be formed with Citizens from the Community, Law Enforcement and the Finance Department to discuss the problems and make a recommendation for a solution going forward. He said the Jail is for all of Gadsden County. He thanked Building Official Clyde Collins for all of his hard work in trying to keep it going.

Commissioner Morgan said that the board should make the jail project a priority and move forward to get the work done.

In response to Commissioner Croley's comment regarding potential funding sources for the jail, Clerk Thomas confirmed the project may be eligible for bonding, however there were other sources of revenue that the Board could earmark for the project. He gave different scenarios. As far as a bond issue, Clerk Thomas stated that he could not support a \$9 million bond in light of the fact the county already has two outstanding bond issues. (Hospital and roads) With the revenue outlook being so bleak, he would be opposed to another bond issue. However, he did say that he felt the discretionary sales tax pledged toward a \$ 2 million dollar bond or loan for a pod that would be doable. He said that the Board must first determine what kind of pod and the size it needed.

Commissioner Croley said that he didn't think a Citizen Committee was the way to go but, he thought the Committee should be formed with people such as Clerk Thomas, Property Appraiser, Tax Collector and County Administrator. He said that the Board needed to know what the costs are going to be.

Discussion followed among the Board.

Chair Taylor directed staff to come back with a proposal in 60 -90 days to get the jail problems addressed.

Relocation of the Driver License Office - Dale Summerford, Tax Collector

Dale Summerford, Tax Collector, addressed the board regarding renovation of space at his office to accommodate the new state responsibilities placed on him to issue drivers licenses. He highlighted the issues involved and gave them his expectations of the expenditures for next fiscal year. He stated that it will be necessary to add at least two additional employees to handle the new responsibilities. He stated if he was to go the current location on the west of town (Highway Patrol Station,) he would operate in a deficit mode. He estimated that he could not run that office with less than 4 people. In addition to increased staff, there would be the expenses of operating a separate facility.

Clyde Collins, Building Official, said that he could renovate the Tax Collectors office for approximately \$200,00-\$250,000, but getting it done by the November 30 deadline poses a problem if they attempt the job in-house.

Mr. Summerford reiterated that it would cost additional funds to go out to the west of town to the current Driver's License. He stated that they would be working from a deficit position. He said that legislature has mandated the job has to be done. He mentioned that he and the Clerk Thomas discussed the possibility of getting the funds from the bank. **He then asked that the board do a short term loan of**

\$250,000.00 - \$300,000.00, so that the work that is needed could be done. He said that they would be returning to the Board \$100,000.00 and Property Appraiser \$30,000.00 later in the fiscal year and at that time some of the funds could be returned.

Commissioner Morgan thanked Mr. Summerford for getting work done for \$250,000.00. He said that as of September 13, 2012 they would have \$205,000.00 of the \$300,000.00. He said that we needed to get the loan, so the work could be done as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Holt commented on cuts across the Board for all Constitutionals. She said that personally she was not for borrowing money or getting bonds. She stated that jail should be are 1st priority.

Commissioner Croley said this is matter that needs to be worked out between Clerk Thomas, Mr. Vanlandingham and Mr. Summerford and come back with recommendation. I'm for avoiding loans and bonds. "I suggest we have another meeting, we are not getting anywhere. Mr. Lawson can't bear taking all the cuts, it should be across the board."

Chair Taylor along with consensus of the Board gave Staff directions:

- **Funding - Bring back various options for cutting budgets of all constitutional offices as well as Commissioners at 1%, 2%, 3%; bring back figures and tell what will be generated from each.**

Future Meetings

Mr. Lawson commented that another meeting would be needed as soon as possible to discuss the findings of the Commissioner's entire request.

- August 22, 2011 - Monday at 4:00 p.m. - Budget Workshop instead of 6pm (Allocate a few hours)
- September 6, 2011 - Regular Board Meeting
- September 7, 2011 – First Budget Public Hearing

BOCC Priorities and Directions

There was discussion about a bill from Preble-Rish for \$91,000. **No Action was taken by the Board.**

ADJOURNMENT

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR TAYLOR DECLARED THE MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 6:50P.M.**

Sherrie Taylor, Chair

ATTEST:

Nicholas Thomas, Clerk

Prepared by Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk