

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON DECEMBER 20, 2011 AT 9:00 A.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 A. Holt, District 4  
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk  
Deborah Minnis, County Attorney  
Arthur Lawson, Interim County Administrator

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order then opened with a prayer. She then led in pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag.

Deputy Clerk Beryl Wood called the roll and documented attendance as noted above.

Chair Taylor then instructed the public to silence their cell phones while in the board chambers. She then instructed prospective speakers to complete a "Speaker Form" and file it with the clerk.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS WRITTEN.**

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Ron Sachs Communications Presentation**

Mr. Ron Sachs, President of Ron Sachs Communications, addressed the board. He announced that his company was resigning their contract with Gadsden County and he stated his reasons for doing so. He said that his staff had been met at too many incidents along the way with an uncooperative spirit and lack of collegiality by the board and the TDC. He continued as follows:

**Sachs:**

We thought we were helping to manage tourism promotion in this great community with a limited budget although I respect the value of every single dollar. But at too many steps along

the way, we have been met not with the spirit of cooperation and collegiality, but with one of disunity, conflict and controversy. I am not accustomed to that. I come from being a news man and I have been in some tough stories. In 17 years of doing what I do here in public relations, we have had some challenging clients. But, I have to tell you, none were more challenging than your wonderful community.

My gift to you, I always consider it a gift when someone tells me something that helps me learn something about myself, is that you need to probably spend part of 2012 in a community retreat where your very hard-working and dedicated TDC can be better appreciated by the elected officialdom. By that I mean the County Commission. We have worked with you all. I have great respect for the hard job that you have to do, but, you lack unity. You lack a shared vision for this community.

We have not wasted your money. We have been judicious custodians of the public dollars and leveraged it for you in my studied opinion for far more value than your limited dollars would buy elsewhere or otherwise. Still, my staff has felt too often the bites of this board. The bite of others in the community who would rather spend the money to promote one event or one municipality than the community as a whole.

So, we are practiced crisis managers and people call us when the stick has hit the fan. I cleaned that up for you a little bit. The stick didn't hit the fan when we were retained. We were retained to promote this community. What I want to tell you is that you have a crisis and it is a crisis of confidence in yourselves and what this community has to offer and the lack of your ability to have a unified front. To a contractor like me who is trying to work with you proactively.

I am not going to tell you that what you paid us was insignificant. But, our fee for this community is half of what our general fee is for anybody. We have approached this work as the most important work that we do because it is for a great community in this region that is underappreciated. Not just outside your community, but by you, yourselves. You have a wonderful community here. I think the people deserve a more unified commission and a shared vision for what you want the rest of the world to know about you. Instead, you have conflict, controversy and chaos.

So, I say to you in parting, Happy Holidays. Again, it is not a good business model for a public relations guy to stand up in front of a public body and criticize them, but I am doing it because you need it. I would say that the best thing you can do for this community is and all these folks and the taxpayers who put you up there is to engage in a retreat facilitated by an outsider who doesn't have to buy into something that you have and try to come up with a shared vision and a sense of unity. I suggest that whether it is somebody else in our profession or volunteers in your community that you promote yourselves on a positive basis and not a negative one.

In the story of Chicken Little people didn't know there was a crisis until identified a crack in the sky. I am here to tell you today that there is a crack in the sky over Gadsden County. The last thing I want to tell you is that our firm is also proud to represent National Solar Power. Great Company. They had lots of options as to where to take this largest solar farm in the southeast. Though we represent them nationally, we have a loyalty to Gadsden County. We did everything

in our power to show them the positive attributes in this community as the place to locate this farm. We held a new conference on the steps of Florida's old Capitol just a few miles east of here. Most of you were there standing up proudly about that big announcement. I hope that you are smart enough and good enough stewards of this community's authority to not lose the opportunity to have this second coming of the Coca Cola in your community. There are already being better received in other communities than they have been received in some quarters here in Gadsden County. I think the eclipse of a good economy in this community would be caused by anything you do to jeopardize this folks making this their headquarters.

So, I want to say to you again, Happy Holidays. I am proud to have had the opportunity to represent you not once, more than once, but successfully in the past. This parting is by my choice because, frankly, life is too short to work with people who don't want to cooperate. That doesn't mean that we can't always do better, but I have searched our souls about what we have done and how we have done it and I feel pretty good about what I am as a businessman, what my colleagues are and what our company is about. Frankly, we are going to work with people who want to work with us. I hope you can find someone who is as dedicated as we are because the people of this community deserve a commission that is unified on the things that matter most. Folks, you lack there. "

**Chair Taylor:**

Thank you for coming, sir. Are there any comments?

**Croley:**

I've got a comment.

**Taylor:**

Yes, sir.

**Croley:**

Mr. Sachs, I want you to know that I appreciate your work and recognize your service. I have a lot of citizens to complain to me about the way this TDC has been handled here recently with the events and changes that have been going on by some people. I am not going to be hesitant to say as a fellow businessman and knowing your reputation and knowing the rapport that has gone on over the years, that there are problems up here with people interfering inappropriately with the TDC. It is going to come back and bite some people if they continue. Your comments are appreciated by some of us.

Thank you.

**Holt:**

Madam Chairman?

**Taylor:**

Yes.

**Holt:**

Thank you. Mr. Sachs, we worked together on several projects and I do appreciate everything you have done, especially the one on the hospital.

Our problem is not just with TDC. As I have said, there are several boards that we have appointed or that previous commissioners have appointed. We need to look at those boards and see about our working together. Hopefully, that will be agendaed pretty soon. TDC is not the only board that we need to sit down with and have a retreat as you have suggested. I guess we could have a lot of retreats. But, the bottom line is that we need to go back and it is not this boards doing, I must say because they did not appoint all of those board. So, getting to know the members of those boards and what their objectives are community wide. We need to sit down with them. But, we definitely need to sit down and look at those.

**Sachs:**

Commissioner, thank you again for your comments. . Again, I have nothing but good will in my heart. It breaks my heart quite a bit to be here during the holiday season and give you this news. But, you need an outside professional facilitator to come in and do that. If you are facilitating yourselves, you are really just basically organizing the chaos in a different sequence.

I will also tell you as we begin our 17<sup>th</sup> year in business, It is a tough thing in this continuing tough economy to be a business person. But, our firm has grown every year that we have been in business. Our oldest client, the FL League of Cities, that is the Statewide Association of more than 1400 cities and towns, is still a client today. So, I know that we are not difficult to work with. I am not going to say that you are. But, when I wake up in the morning and I am not ready to be a better person, there is no reason to get up. I think you all can do better. I think the community deserves better when it comes to sharing a vision and a sense of unity about how you want this community perceived internally and externally.

**Taylor:**

Commissioner Morgan?

**Morgan:**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Sachs, we certainly appreciate your service to our county. I can tell you that we learned a lot on the TDC from the experience that we have shared with you and your staff. I think we moved forward in branding Gadsden County in a very positive way. I hope that the dollars we have invested don't become dollars just frivolously spent now that we are not going to let reap the benefits of this change in direction. I do understand your point of view. I hope that we can learn from the comments that you have shared with us. I agree with you 100%. I hope that in the future we will have the opportunity to do business with you again.

I hope you have a Merry Christmas.

**Taylor:**

Thank you, Mr. Sachs, you may be seated.

**Sachs:**

I would like to say one last thing. When we first came to compete for this work, we shared a couple of big ideas. This is a great community and you need to put a couple of anchor events on your calendar that people from all over would come to visit for, not just from neighboring counties. I mean from all over. We talked about a Tomato Festival or a Coca Cola Festival. As we leave you, my further gift is to suggest to you that you spend some focus on putting on a couple of anchor events like that on different parts of the calendar. You can build on that and create the economic engine from those events.

God Bless you all. Thank you for the privilege of working with you.

**Taylor:**

Just a couple of comments.

At our last meeting we had with National Solar, some of the board members came to that same podium and praised this board for the unity and for how well they are seeing collegiate between these members. I have had other people in the community to say it as well. There is no board in these United States that are always 5 – 0 when they are voting or are always in unity on different agendaed items. But, the intelligence of it is at the end of the day is that we can still work together at our next meeting and not become rock throwers or back biters. We can have our differences and be intelligent enough to rise above those and still be able to look at the priorities that we all have as collegians around this board and that is for the betterment of this county.

Sometimes the board has different directions. Does that mean that it is a plan that is going to cause chaos? Not necessarily. Does that mean that now we are on the road to destruction? Not necessarily. As a matter of fact, ladies and gentlemen, I am hoping that you are here somewhere and this board in the month of January. You are going to hear some very positive information coming from this staff and this board from its year -long work.

Mr. Sachs has done a phenomenal job. There has never been a question about how well they have done. There have been some questions, however, about some invoicing, but that was primarily about it. Not about how well they have done their jobs. I would never compromise someone's reputation in that fashion. That was the only one. It was an administrative issue that I personally have.

Again, division? To be divided around the board is not abnormal. That happens. The intelligent rise above it. And, we have done that on several occasions. We still come back and work together after a divide. We still shake each other's hand; we still greet each other with salutations at the beginning of the day. We still do that. The comments made about this board – I do not agree with. Are there issues? There are issues in every board in these United States. We are not any different. We are going to have them. It is all in how we handle them that makes us a board.

So, again, I want to thank you, sir, for coming. I want to thank your business for what you have done to elevate this county and we wish you well. The vision is clear. Actually, you hit on something that I have in mind as well. I think it was said by Commissioner Holt when we had a

joint meeting with TDC. That was to do more community-wide events that bring people here for a purpose. The Coca-Cola idea, the Tomato idea, a national treasure hunt over in Havana idea. We have a new amphitheater. These are opportunities now that we can capitalize off of here in this county. Have more focused tourism coming to our county. Use those dollars for that.

Again, the marketing aspect went very well. I would never criticize that. We overspent last year in this budget by almost \$30,000. That is always a heartburn, all I want to do is to do what we need to do to make sure that this county is represented in a quality way and that we have quality government as well as people realize and appreciate the work that we do up here.

So, to say that it is in deplorable conditions is not true. To say that it is decisive – on some of occasions, yes. To say that we lack the ability – the people in this county voice differences on that because they voted for us to be up here. To say that there is a need – well, you mentioned that we hosted at the Capitol steps when we were chosen by National Solar, we need to do that here, too. I want to see that happen here, too so the people can embrace the idea even more, especially before this election comes up.

Again, good job, sir. Thank you very much for coming. We, too, wish you and your company well wishes and that you all continue to do the good job that you have been doing for years and for the years to come.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Lawson?

## **2. Pat Thomas Insurance Presentation**

Interim Administrator Arthur Lawson introduced Mr. John Pat Thomas.

**Taylor:**

Do you have a lump of coal?

**Thomas:**

Pardon?

**Taylor:**

Do you have a lump of coal?

**Thomas:**

No, ma'am, I do not have a lump of coal.

(laughter)

On behalf of Pat Thomas and Associates and the Florida League of Cities for Municipal Insurance

Trust, who you made a decision to partner with for your insurance coverage, I am here today to tell you that Santa Clause has come to town. Because of your partnership with the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust, it is paying dividends. The property portion of this trust has been profitable and therefore, they are returning a portion of your money back to you based on a prorated share of your property premium. So, Santa Clause has come to town and I present the Commission a check for \$37,466.00.

**Taylor:**

I wish it was not illegal to clap, but it is.

**Thomas:**

It is not illegal to make sure that the press is here and gets all this.

**Taylor:**

On behalf of this county and my commissioners, thank you.

**Thomas:**

Like I said, you all made a good decision in who you are going to deal with for your insurance coverage. Like I said, it is paying dividends right now. So, thank you.

**Taylor:**

We were just told that we lack ability, but we made a good decision on that one. So, thank God for that one. You can pass it over to the Clerk of Court.

**Thomas:**

I must tell you that the Sheriff already claimed the money.

(huge laughter)

**Taylor:**

We will decide, Mr. Lawson, I guess, as to where those funds will go – whether into contingency or into the reserves. You need to bring that back as an agenda item for this board to make that decision.

Thank you, sir. You certainly lightened our spirits and thank you for that.

**Mr. Lawson.**

### **3. Future Site of the Gadsden County Law Enforcement Youth Community Center Presentation**

**9:23**

**Sheriff Morris Young addressed the board.**

Good morning, Commissioners. It is good to be here this morning.

As you know after seven years that I have been in office, we have been trying to shift paradigms in law enforcement. We have been a reactive mode for years in trying to clean up the problems in our community. About four years ago, I started looking at closed down buildings throughout

the county. We have three schools, the nursing home over near Cleveland St and MLK. I took a few commissioners out there just to look at that particular building trying to get something as it relates to a center to give our youth something to do here in this community.

As you know, there are a lot of problems. I know you read your newspapers and you watch the media and you know that we are very busy. I commend my staff. They do a very good job. When a crime occurs, we do everything we can regardless of how major that crime is, to clean it up real quickly. We have been trying to shift paradigms from reactive to prevention mode here in the community.

It just so happens that a few months ago Mr. Graves Williams came to me and said, "Look, I've got a building here and we can't sell it and we want to donate it to the Sheriff's office." We looked at it as a storage facility for our vehicles, etc. Captain Barkley came up with the idea and said to me, "Sheriff, maybe this is your opportunity now to make a youth center with this particular building."

Captain Barkley along with Captain Corder – they have been very, very busy in the last six months. Captain Corder and Major Morgan came up with a plan for a faith based re-entry program in our jail. We see over 4,000 people in that jail every year. Repeating offenders. For some reason, they like the jail. I don't know why, but they like to the jail. We see these folks and we see over 1600 juveniles in our community continually to be referred to DJJ because of problems they are having in school and in the community.

Folks, it is time out now, and I ask you to sorta come along with us as we shift to a prevention mode. I need ya'll on this and that is why I am standing before you here today to present this. We've got a dark cloud that hovers over Gadsden county.

Our judicial system – if you look at the dollars that we put toward our judicial system, over \$29.1 million per year. That figure is coming from local, state and some federal funding. But, let me tell you this. A population of 48,000 people – you can take this to the governor's office or to our legislators and say, "Look, we will take this \$29.1 million and give it to everybody. We will divide it up. And we will be able to pay everybody in this county \$60,000 per year just to stay out of trouble. Now, that means that you've got to get rid of the court system. Nick and all of us will be out of a job. But, Hey, I will be glad to sit home and draw \$60,000 per year just to stay out of trouble. That means the good, the bad, the ugly, the rich, the poor. Everybody gets \$60,000 per year just to stay out of trouble. Keep a million in contingency and maybe if somebody gets in trouble, we will call the state police. We can get a circuit judges in Tallahassee to deal with them. But, people, we could pay \$60,000 to everybody in this county just to stay out of trouble.

Now, you tell me. Will we be considered an impoverished county? No. So, I ask you to just take a look at this particular presentation and like I said before, I commend Captain Barkley. He has put together a staff and they are looking at ways to maybe implement this particular piece in our community.

Thank you.



***A video was shown at this juncture.***

Captain Barkley then spoke to the board explaining the vision they have for transforming the building

**Barkley:**

I hope you enjoyed the video. I saw Mr. Croley had his feet up a minute ago when the first slide came on. It is o.k.

What this building represents to us and we are so glad to have this chance. I have been in law enforcement for thirty years and more and I have been very concerned about the juveniles in Gadsden County having nothing to do. I feel like that if we don't offer them something and look at a new vision, as law enforcement officers and as county commissioners, we will fail.

If we look at the statistics, we've got 48,000 individuals in Gadsden County. We have 9,000 outstanding warrants to be served. That means that one out of three individuals in this county could be arrested today. So, we are failing somewhere.

We feel like this is an opportunity to move us forward. We have an opportunity to give the youth in Gadsden County a place to go. I have been very concerned. I tell my Lieutenants in law enforcement, "There is nothing for the youth to do in Gadsden County." There is no place for them to go. We have a recreation center here in Quincy, but it the only one to offer services in Quincy. WE have outside areas – Havana, Chattahoochee, St. John, Greensboro, Gretna, all over. They have nothing to do. We feel very strongly that we must do, as law enforcement, do something for our youth.

Within the last two or three weeks, we arrested several youths, eighteen years old, that committed some violent crimes – robbery, shooting. We checked with the school administrator and found out that those kids were good kids. But, somewhere down the line, we, as law enforcement officers and citizens have failed them. I feel like we owe it to them to have a new vision. We cannot sit still and say, "O.K. it is o.k." If we keep doing the same things, we are going to come up with the same results. I feel very strongly that the youth in our community are failing because we have nothing to offer them. We ought to be ashamed. We should be eager to do something to give our youth.

I am proud to know that someone down in South Florida, a farmer, saw fit to give us a building that is 74,777 sq. feet with 34 acres of land. Now, that is a blessing.

We visited Jacksonville, FL a while back and they said we are 90% there. The biggest challenge is getting that building. And we have a donor that is going to give it to us. 74,777 feet of space. There are also buildings out there for educational programs, tutoring and mentoring programs. If we let this opportunity pass us, we are failing as individuals in Gadsden county. How can we look our young people in the face and say, "I am not going to do anything for youth in Gadsden County?" It is an embarrassment to me as a law enforcement officer and it should be an embarrassment to you, too, to see our youth failing everyday. One out of three people in Gadsden County could be arrested today. That is a high number. Are we going to sit back and

say that we are not going to do anything? I don't think so.

I know that the Sheriff has a vision. We have a vision and we feel like this is the answer. This is a large building. One of the largest that I have seen around the state. This is something that we need to challenge. We have talked to the Senator and the legislators and they have embraced this concept. I hope that we can come forward and we can embrace this concept, too and give the kids in Gadsden County something to look forward to and not continue to hang around on the street.

It is a new day. If we can get this new building and everybody can agree to that, it is going to be a new day in Gadsden County. That is what we want.

Thank you all.

**Young:**

Now, we will have the follow up presentation by Dr. Nash.

**Dr. Nash:**

Good morning everyone, I am Dr. Beverly Nash, Consultant for Sheriff's Department. What you have seen is what is and what we hopefully – What we have done is put into writing the vision for the center. That is what you are looking at. What we want to do is make the first goal of the Sheriff's Department to make the community a strong, safe and sustainable community. In doing so, we want to reduce the juvenile incarceration and to promote juvenile alternatives.

What is a vision? We made a statement of that. We want to facilitate the system in our community that will strengthen and protect our youth and make Gadsden County safer and sustainable. We want to partner, in terms of our mission, with the community and empower our youth to achieve and make better choices. That is also what this center is intended to do.

What is it going to require? It is going to require collaboration. First of all, do you all have the printed version? O.K. It is going to require collaboration and not just the county commissioners, but the community as a whole. By doing so, we want to talk about and make the community aware of the plight of our community. We want to respond to the crisis and needs of youth and families. We want to always manage our dollars better and again, we want to reduce incarcerations and provide our young people with alternatives.

The Sheriff has a saying, and it has caught on in the Sheriff's Department – "Building playgrounds, not jails." That is the shift.

What do we see happening with this center? We want to reduce our repeaters. We want to provide a multipurpose full service facility. We want to build collaborative partners. We want to make juvenile services available to the entire county. We want to sustain and provide funding for those services. We want to develop and maintain the professional development of the staff at the center. And, we want to always advocate for the juveniles in this county.

One of the things that we believe is that the system is like quick sand. Once a kid gets into

trouble, you know that it is hard for them to get up.

As citizens and public officials, we want to make sure that all our young people deserve and get an even handed, efficient and effective system, just like any other young person anywhere else in the state.

Why are we acting now? The Sheriff has talked about the money. \$60,000 that each one of us can get. Captain Barkley talked about the warrants, but also, we know that our institutions are dangerous. It makes a criminal more of a criminal. Our kids are exposed to violence and abuse and maltreatment. We have had in the county 25 young people to go to DJJ facilities. The state has the histories since 2000 of mal treatment in these facilities.

Also, we know that the Juvenile detention system is ineffective. For our county, our local facility is overcrowded. Our repeaters are high and when a child or a young person goes to a juvenile facility, we know that that their future in is endangered in terms of their education and employment.

Also, we know that our juvenile facilities often times are necessary. Most of our young people commit crimes that are not a public risk.

What we do know is that we have the staff, the facility and the skill with which to create a county-based, culturally competent network for our young people. And we see that in the form of a multipurpose youth and community service center. We believe that the center will be smarter, fairer, and more effective toward our juveniles in this county.

Again, How do we plan to build it: Through a coalition of schools, the county and city governments, the community and our stake holders.

I am not going to go through the list because you have the list of possible collaborative partners. State, school, county, community – all these people can be engaged in the center.

What we provide with two years (inaudible)? 1) Timeline; 2) Secure and identify the space; 3) continue to plan for the center; 4) to assist with professional architectural plan; 5) finalize the budget and fund development; 6) to finalize all the stake holders and their commitments.

Our Phase III will be to continue with the assessment of the property and to do the appropriate mapping of the facilities as needed.

Again, this is a short list.

We are organized in that we have started the planning process. We start here with calling the community to action – our key stake holders. We want to expand our partners. We want to continue to educate the community on the shift that we are proposing, from detention to prevention and intervention.

Often times we want to know what the center will hold. Well these are some of the programs

that we see that our young people will be engaged in with a multipurpose full service center.

We are going to have an assessment part to it. We are going to have intensive community supervision. Community based programs. Diversion alternative units. A residential facility. We are really going to get into case management, which is follow up with services to our young people.

We are also going to deal with data and data collection. That is one of the issues at the state level for Gadsden County. The numbers are not always quite highlighted properly. Truancy. And we are going to have a place for our school resource officers.

We want a place for athletics, educational and computer labs and training and organized summer programs.

Again, some insight in terms of the kinds of athletics and kinds of recreational services that could be housed at the center.

What is required? A financial commitment, number 1. We want to raise the money to renovate the site and start it up in order to carry out the mission and the vision of the center. We want to insure that there is sustainability and we always want to gain commitment from key stake holders. We are also going to need funds to not only integrate, but to move services to the renovated site. We want to equip it with technology that is needed not only for education, but for case management and financial administrative tasks. We want to have a center that will also have funds for professional development and to adequately and efficiently get the word out about the educational services that will be at the center.

I bring you a quote from a student that I think is apropos for what we are trying to do. She talks about how we, as a community, needs to be active participants and partners with our young people. She said that when this happens, they can be better served. The end result is that the partnership and the services that we provide to our young people increase our public value to our entire community.

Thank you.

**Sheriff Young:**

Commissioners, this is what we bring before you today and I know you have a lot of questions. And, like I said, we are only in the initial phase. We are law enforcement people. We are just trying to keep our community safe. What I ask you today is to maybe to put a staff from the county together to assist us. We are going to need a lot. I know there is some funding and I am going to say this and then I am going to ask you to look at the small county surtax. Before we got that surtax in 1996 when it was diverted towards other things like public works and fire services, it was initially set aside to build a jail. We are not asking you to build a jail anymore. I am no longer asking you to build a jail. It has been a long time since I came up here and talked to you all about a jail. I know we have done a great job of just keeping the roof on that building out there. Anytime you have an overcrowding facility, you are going to have issues. That jail out there is over 20 years old. Now, what do we do next?

I think if we look at this start looking to find the dollars for this, and we are going to take this to our legislative delegates in January. We have already started to talk with some of them on the Republican side and on the Democratic side. They have embraced this. We are going to continue to look for funding at the local level, the state level and the federal level. We actually have somebody in Washington D.C. now looking at this particular piece so that we could look at some federal dollars. I am just coming to you now and I know you have questions. Whatever they may be, you can ask those about this particular building. Who gets the building? What it is going to cost to get that building? You can ask those.

But, the main thing is that I think we've got a project right here that is going to save Gadsden County. I know it will. "

The following comments and questions were raised by the board:

**Holt:**

Great idea. I have always said that if you don't work with them in the beginning, you are going to pay for it in the end. That is just the way it is with youth. I was about to say something about job training. That should definitely be included in the program. As well, small business advocacy, marketing for small businesses. I know a lot of teenagers have great ideas and they are practicing those ideas on school campuses as of right now. Not just training them how to be better in businesses, but market their businesses. It is a whole other piece. If we don't, the drug dealers are going to get them. Drug dealers have great marketing plans. "I have \$10,000 and all I need for you to do is sell these drugs.

**Sheriff:**

Well, I can tell you, Commissioner, one of the things that we are doing on our re-entry piece is that we have actually partnered with the Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce and they will actually go into our jail and teach our inmates entrepreneurship – teach them how to start a business. Everybody can't get a job. Everybody knows that jobs are a scarcity in this community. So we have embraced that with our jail inmates.

**Holt:**

One thing – I don't know if you have looked at it and this is just a suggestion. Look at David Busters in Atlanta. That is one piece that they have done before going into an empty building. They go in and do the renovations like you are talking about, but what they were also doing was that they had indoor activities just like that, but before a youth could get in, they had to go through certain things that they had to do. They had to do their homework at a center they have for that then there were other things they had to do before they could get to the basket ball court or the bowling alley. So, that was good. They also had video games. But, they pushed the educational piece.

What is it going to cost and how long is the lease?

**Sheriff:**

We are looking at two phases. One when we initially came in contact with Mr. Williams about

this particular building, we thought that we would just use the space for our vehicles and equipment. The owner is willing to lease the building to us for 100 years or whatever. He just wants to lease it.

Another thing, and it is not a catch 22, the building is worth about \$4 million. The owners of that building are going to looking for the legislators and the community to give them a tax break. But, whatever we can do to get that particular building for this center, we need to do it.

**Holt:**

Well, that length of time has a lot to do with what kind of funding you can get. I think it is a great idea. Whatever we need to do to get any funding, to get them off the street. I say this all the time, if they are going to eat at the same time we eat – and they are going to come into your house to eat if they have to. I know them very well. It is better to get out there and prevent these things. They don't mind saying, "You have it and I am going to get it." So, those are things that we need to make sure that we do.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

**Taylor:**

Mr. Croley?

**Croley:**

Good morning, Sheriff Young, it is good to see you and Merry Christmas.

**Sheriff:**

Same to you.

**Croley:**

You referenced Mr. Williams. What Mr. Williams?

**Sheriff:**

That is Graves Williams. He is actually friends with the owner of the building.

**Croley:**

Mr. Taylor?

**Sheriff:**

Yes, sir.

**Croley:**

All I can say is that it is a money factor. It is also a fact that you have other commitments already made. We are putting \$75,000 per year in Boys and Girls Club. Were you aware of that?

**Sheriff:**

It is not helping at all.

**Croley:**

It is not helping?

**Sheriff:**

No, sir. Commissioner, we have more than 9,000 youth in our community. You do the math. You are allocating \$150,000 toward it.

**Croley:**

We've got two of them.

**Sheriff:**

I think you've got about 25 kids in each one of them. Check them out.

**Croley:**

I don't know how many. We don't get much in the way of reports.

**Sheriff:**

You are not going to get 9,000 in there.

**Croley:**

So, Boys and Girls Clubs are not doing any good. Commissioners, you might want to remember that comment.

I see a lot of things up there on your program. Swimming Pools. The City of Quincy and the other communities, several of them offer swimming pools. How will this be different?

**Sheriff:**

One of the things that we are looking at and I had in the presentation. We are looking at resources that we already have in the community. That is one of the things. We've got gyms, basketball gyms; we have very few tennis courts. We've got golf courses. We are even going to the owners of these golf courses to have them buy into this particular center. We know that we are not going to put a golf course out there, but we want our kids to be on a competitive level. We might have 1% of our youth in this county that might like golf, but we want to take that 1% and make sure that before we put them on those golf courses that they are ready for the course and not just go out there and just tear it up. That is a resource for us. But all the resources in the community – we are going to tie them in to this particular center. We are even going to the other municipalities to look at their recreation departments. We are going to ask them to tie their recreation into this particular facility. So, we are going to utilize the resources that we have available in the community. Like I said and I will say it again, when you have just a band aid affect in a community, you are not targeting the entire community. We know that we have troubled youth. We have good youth. We've got rich and poor youth. But, they all need an outlet. We don't have that here in Gadsden County.

I know back in the 1970's as a child, I was able to go to the movies here. We caught the bus in Gretna at the school and went over to Tallahassee to the skating rink. That is where I first learned to skate. We don't do these things now. It is all about utilize what resources we

currently have.

**Croley:**

I will take your idea under advisement. Thank you.

**Taylor:**

Commissioner Lamb?

**Lamb:**

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The vision – it is a great vision. Captain Barkley is a friend of mine and it is a great vision. I am behind you 100%. This is a great concept.

Let me say this, too. Whatever programs that you have in our different neighborhoods or different communities, it will help the youngsters directly in that community. I don't care what kind of program it is, if it is a positive program in any community that is a help. From what I can see, this program – and you know that I am very familiar with this type of thing and I support this – I think it is a very good concept and I think you have really done a lot of good work with this plan and this is where you should start. Right here where you've got it. This program is for the whole county from what I can see. Just like Dr. Nash stated, get all the municipalities involved. Get the county involved. If I don't have a youngster or a young kid coming up, that doesn't mean I shouldn't support the program. You see, this is for Gadsden County. They have all of this in Leon County. You are right; we don't have anything over here. WE are way behind. This is why I work so hard in recreation here. We are behind in supporting our youngsters.

Now, we know that a lot of your churches and so forth have recreation for some of the youngsters. But, they are missing a whole lot of young people as well as old people. We need things that older people can do in this county.

I think this is a very good concept. I think it is a great vision. I think you have the information here that we can see. We shouldn't get all wrapped up in what it is going to cost. It is priceless when it comes to young people. So, don't worry about the cost. Let's get it done.

You are getting the Legislature involved, you are getting the municipalities involved, and you are getting all the governments involved. What can't we do something? Why can't we have something on this scale in Gadsden County? The money doesn't bother me what so ever. Not any whatsoever. I didn't have this opportunity when I was coming along, but I can provide this for somebody else. When we leave this earth we ought to be able to say that we tried to help somebody along the way. That is what we should be saying to ourselves and not be selfish and try to keep everything to ourselves.

I support this vision. I support the concept that you have in front of us here. I believe that it will work and all we have to do is get behind it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.



**Sheriff:**

Yes, sir. Thank you.

**Taylor:**

Commissioner Morgan?

**Morgan:**

Thank you, Madam Chair and good morning, Sheriff and Mr. Corder.

**Sheriff:**

Good Morning.

**Morgan:**

Thank you all for the presentation. Merry Christmas to you. We appreciate the information.

First of all, let me say that I applaud your efforts to begin exploration of a very positive program. I think that it is great that Mr. Williams has agreed to be the one to help us out in the county. All those things are very commendable. I think it is important to focus on our youth in any way that we can do that.

I looked at the agenda item and I looked at all three pieces that are very informative. I see the word “program” many times. Unless I have overlooked it, I don’t see the word, “parent” anywhere in this information. That concerns me, so let me talk about that for just a second.

I think Commissioner Lamb mentioned that many of these youth programs that we have now in the county and some of them are very successful. I think that if you will look at those, what you will discover is that each of those programs requires a responsibility from the parent, grandparent and or family members to participate. They have a stake in the program. I would encourage you as we move forward on this to look for ways that you can come up with responsibilities and requirements for these parents, grandparents and/or family members who are there. We may have to look a little harder to find them, but they are there. Those kids don’t get here unless there are some parents or grandparents or some family members. Somebody loves those children. I think it is important that we make sure that they are included at the top level and that there are requirements in place.

You see this kind of programs work when the parents discover their youth and the youth discover their parents. I think that is something that we really need to focus on to move forward.

Now, I do have some input regarding the information you had about education. I think that is commendable. Education should not be awarded or there should not be awards for attending, but awards for improving. Yes, they should go to school and I know that truancy is a big issue. I saw that was part of the program that you talked about. But, it is not just about going to school; it is about taking responsibility to learn. In my opinion, that is how a child should be rewarded. I think when you are asking the tax payers to invest in programs like this, we should demand that. WE should follow up and see if it is working. If it is not, make changes where they need to be

changed.

You have been very successful in a lot of different programs throughout the county with the help of your staff. I think this is something that can be very positive for our county. I do hope that you will take those suggestions because that is something that you will hear about from the community. People are going to look at it and say, "Here is another program. The dollars are out the door and it hasn't really changed a thing."

I do have one other comment. We had a mention from one of the commissioners regarding Boys and Girls Club. I can tell you that we have a program in Chattahoochee and I have seen some positive results there. I have been involved in some programs over there and there are parents involved with their children there and we have seen things change for the good. I know if they are done correctly, these things can work.

Now, from a business standpoint, while money isn't the primary concern, it obviously is a concern. Anytime that we are taking public dollars, as you well know, we have got to have some answers when people ask us, "Who, what when, where and how?" That being said, I think it is very important to outline a detailed business plan that we can look at. That would have a lot of questions answered in advance.

For example. The building itself. I read the agenda item and it said that he was going to give the building to us for \$1.00 per year. Now, does that mean that we will be leasing the building? I am not in favor of us taking ownership of another building. I can tell you that right now.

**Sheriff:**

Right, right. And we don't want to take ownership.

**Morgan:**

Right. I thought that was the plan, but, it needs to be clearly outlined and discussed in advance.

**Sheriff:**

That is why we need that staff that we requested to work through some of these issues.

**Morgan:**

I have no doubt that will be the case. I know Mr. Williams is not one to burden the county. He wants to help the county as he has done in the past in several other ways. But, that would be my primary concern. Just putting together the cost issue, upkeep, insurances, liabilities and all that kind of thing. They need to be included when we look at this project and you coming to this board for a decision.

I certainly applaud your efforts and I thank you all. Hope you have a great holiday and Merry Christmas.

**Taylor:**

Let me say that all the commissioners brought out some very fine points. But, to wrap it up and let's move forward. Number 1 – I agree with Commissioner Morgan when he said "reward for

progress.” To come is one thing, but to be progressive is one thing that we are looking for and I am sure you all are, too.

I agree with Commissioner Holt who said, “Let’s put academics out there before we put a basketball in their hands.” Some centers already have that concept and it works, especially if they enjoy the basketball part of it.

The funding that you have sighted here is one that we are going to have to have legal take a look at. As you know, those dollars have been earmarked for specifics. Looking at this particular area for funding may be a stretch, but I am certainly willing to look and to look at it with assertiveness to make sure that if there is an opportunity that we move forward with it. That will be a legal issue.

We will have, the board will have to make an agreement to have the county staff to direct its employees to come and make a body so that you can work with them. That has to go from this board to Mr. Lawson and then he can then formulate his own staff to work with you. But, we will hopefully have a majority vote to give the county administrator that direction in just a moment.

As most of you know, I have worked with children all of my life. The name of my program is “Children Are Our Future,” which simply means that they are our future. I applaud Captain Barkley, I applaud Dr. Nash and I applaud you, Sheriff and your staff – Major Morgan, Captain Corder, I applaud all of you for this mission. Now you see the future and how to capitalize on what type of future this county will have and that is obviously through our youth.

There is an old cliché’ that says “Children is the way that God said that the world must go on.” Every time one is born, He has indicated that the world must go on. We must invest in our future by investing in our children. This is a great opportunity here. Like you said a moment ago, we must embrace it 100%. We will do our job as a body to try and bring this to fruition. We will follow the law, however, which you are very familiar with. We won’t break the law in doing so. But, that doesn’t stop us from finding the right path to take. This one-cent sales tax may or may not be, but we will follow the law. If it can be done, then you have my support.

That is all I am going to say about it. I will say this to you, sir, - Thank you very much. May God bless all of you over that in that Sheriff’s Department? You have a yeoman’s job. I know that it is as if you are trying to put a bandage on the Mississippi River to get this thing healed and you are still finding issues. As a matter of fact, I am still looking for my T.V.s and my VCR. But, I am not going to get into that.

**Holt:**

They took them out?

**Taylor:**

They took them. But, I am not going to get into that.

Let me do a couple of directive things and then we are going to move on.

Board, he has asked for county staff to assist him in developing this plan. We need to take a

motion around this board to direct staff to do so.

Lamb:  
So moved.

Holt:  
Second.

Taylor:  
There is a motion and a second to direct the administrator to organize county staff to work with the Sheriff in trying to bring this program to fruition or to give directions.

Croley:  
Can you

Taylor:  
Just a second, sir.

There is also the question on the one-cent sales tax. Again, you want to take on the habit of having this board to direct our attorney instead of individuals directing our attorney. So, I am going to put it out for a motion to have the attorney take a look at this one-cent sales tax to see if it could be used as a funding source. I put that out there.

Lamb:  
Let's take care of the other motion first.

Taylor:  
I didn't carry it?

Lamb:  
No.

Taylor:  
Well, you see, I am getting excited.

There is a motion and there is a second.

Croley:  
Question?

Taylor:  
There is a question.

Croley:  
Now, I don't have a problem with the staff looking at this concept. But, is the staff looking at it as an objective manner to determine the financial feasibility of what the county can do? Because I

am going to come back.

Sheriff, I support you on your concept. But, I want you to understand that unlike a lot of folks, as you well know me, I don't get all carried away with all the hoopla. I look at business facts and can we objectively afford to do it then measure the success of the endeavor. That is something that I want to make clear that I understand. Is the staff being directed to do this at all cost to ram this through? Or, are they going to be given the task of looking at this objectively to see if it is affordable and something that can be sustained over a long range basis?

Taylor:

What I am hearing around the board, the majority of the board is that we want to see this brought to fruition. So, I am not asking to jam it through. I am asking them to follow the law, stay within the law, stay within our policies and procedures, but do what we can to help. That is what I am saying and I think that is a safe comment to say even for what you are saying. Not jamming it. Stay within our criteria and our ability as a board to do what we can to help. That is what I am directing staff to do.

Croley:

Alright.

Taylor:

There is a motion and a second to have staff come and assist with this through the direction of Mr. Lawson. Are there any other questions? (no response) Hearing none, all in favor of this motion, let it be known by saying, "Aye."

All:

Aye.

Taylor:

Opposed, the same sign.

(No response.)

Taylor:

Motion carries.

Now, on to the one-cent sales tax.

**We need a motion to have the attorney look at this to see if there are some opportunities and I need that in the form of a motion.**

**Holt:**

**Madam Chairman.**

**Taylor:**

**Yes.**

**Holt:**

**Are we only going to look at that one? Or are we saying to look at the half-cent along with other options?**

**Taylor:**

**The half-cent certainly will not qualify because it is hospital directed. I am saying the one-cent.**

**Holt:**

**Right, but do we want to look at other options at the same time. I would move that we look at the half cent and other options.**

**Taylor:**

**I follow you exactly. Let's do it this way. As far as the one cent, we need to know if we can legally do that. So, let's just have the attorney to look at the one-cent. Then we can direct the staff to look at what other funding sources there might be.**

**Holt:**

**That will work.**

**Taylor:**

**Does that make sense to you?**

**I need a motion to direct the attorney to look at the one-cent sales tax.**

**Holt:**

**So moved.**

**Lamb:**

**Second.**

**Taylor:**

**There is a motion and a second to have the attorney to look at the one-cent sales tax as an option.**

**Morgan:**

**Question. For this particular project.**

**Taylor:**

**Yes, sir.**

**Taylor:**

**There is a motion and a second, are there any other questions? (no response) There being none, all in favor of the motion, let it be known by saying, "Aye."**

**All:**  
**Aye.**

**Taylor:**  
**Opposed, the same sign.**

**(no response)**

**The motion carries.**

**Now, Commissioner Holt, you may motion to have other options be looked at as well.**

**Holt:**  
**So moved.**

**Lamb:**  
**Second.**

**Taylor:**  
**There is a motion and a second. Are there any questions? (no response) There being none, all in favor of this motion, please let it be known by saying, "Aye."**

**All:**  
**Aye.**

**Taylor:**  
**Opposed, the same sign.**

**Morgan:**  
**No.**

**Taylor:**  
**The motion carries 4 – 1. It is a 4 – 1 vote.**

**Sheriff:**  
**I thought I would get five.**

**Morgan:**  
**Not for your project. We were talking about – that particular motion was for the (inaudible)**

**Taylor:**  
**No, no. It was for his project.**

**Morgan:**  
**I thought the prior vote was for that.**

**Taylor:**

**No. The prior vote was to have the attorney to take a look at the one-cent sales tax. Then Commissioner Holt thought that we might need to look at other funding sources for the same project in the event that we can't use the sales tax.**

**Morgan:**

**I misunderstood that. I would be in favor of that, but I don't know if I can change my vote.**

**Taylor:**

**Madam Parliamentarian, how do we fix what Commissioner Morgan just did?**

**Morgan:**

**I've got some other things if ya'll can fix that, too.**

**(laughter)**

**Minnis:**

**He can change his vote because he did not understand the motion. He can change his vote now that the motion has been clarified.**

**Morgan:**

**Thank you. I apologize.**

**Taylor:**

**That will change it to a 5 – 0 to move forward with staff developing the plan with other funding options.**

**Thank you very much for coming.**

**That is all.**

**Corder:**

Commissioner Taylor, I did come up here to talk to you all about something the Sheriff did not mention about this program that will be beneficial. The re-entry program will not cost the tax payer one penny. This program is completely paid by the inmates through the inmate trust fund. So, this does not cost a dime to the tax payers.

Also, the University of Florida has donated 10 acres of land for the inmates to go out and learn to farm horticulture and the crops that they grow, they can sell to the prison that is next door to the jail to get a reduction in our food cost.

**Sheriff:**

This is something that we are going to bring before you all, too, when we get it all laid out. We are not using public funds on this. We are going to get it all laid out and we are getting everything together on it. When we have all our players here and you all can ask any questions then.



Thank you.

Taylor:

Thank you very much for coming and Happy Holidays!

Sheriff:

Do I need to stay for security or anything?

(laughter)

No,sir. I am good.

**ACTION TAKEN:**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 TO DIRECT THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ORGANIZE A COUNTY STAFF TO WORK WITH THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE ON THE PROPOSED CONCEPT AND FEASIBILITY TO CONVERT THE PROPERTY OFFERED TO THE COUNTY AND BEGIN A YOUTH PROGRAM AS AN ATTEMPT TO DECREASE YOUTH RELATED CRIMES IN GADSDEN COUNTY.**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 TO HAVE THE ATTORNY EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF USING THE SMALL COUNTY SURTAX TO FUND THE YOUTH CENTERED PROGRAM AND FACILITY RENOVATIONS AS DESCRIBED BY THE SHERIFF.**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 4 – 1 TO DIRECT THE STAFF TO LOOK AT OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS WITH WHICH TO FUND THE YOUTH CENTER DESCRIBED BY THE SHERIFF. COMMISSIONER MORGAN CAST THE “NO” VOTE.**

**CLERK OF COURTS**

**5. Presentation of County Finance and County Clerk Issues**

Clerk Thomas:

Madam Chair, I would like to make a brief report on the fiscal year 2011.

As you recall, one year ago at this time I made a report for fiscal year 2010 and you had had a very good year. The general fund balance went from \$2.3 million to \$3.8 million. I told you at the time that it was probably a onetime event. Let me clarify one thing while I am talking about fund balance.

I know that you got a figure in the auditor’s report saying that you had \$4.3 million, but the \$3.8 million is money is unassigned. When the auditors make their report, they roll up some funds together into the general fund. But, the \$4.3 million included some money that you already had.

What we looked at as being uncommitted and that was \$3.8 million.

We are coming to the end of FY 2011 and your revenue in the general fund is up \$242,000, which will go into your fund balance. Your general fund balance is now up to \$4 million. That is pretty good.

There is one other thing I would like to briefly mention. The transportation fund had a pretty good year. The fund balance in the transportation fund at the end of FY year 2010 was down to about \$800,000 from \$2.5 million. So you have been using that money and that is what it is there for. But, for FY 2011, you had excess revenue over expenditures in the transportation fund because the fuel tax revenue came in good. You had about \$899,000 additional dollars there. That will be able to restore your fund balance in your transportation fund a little bit.

I also want to just mention Library services. This is something that I will have to check into, but the money received from the State was down. You probably already know this, but it might be something for you to take a closer look at.

I want to mention EMS. If you look at EMS, you will see that you collected about \$1.7 million. The total budget was \$2.3 million. The reason I want to mention this is to highlight the discussions we had back during the budget process. Ultimately, what I am saying is that you are probably going to have to transfer money to EMS.

If you remember, during the budget process, you increased your fees and you initially thought that you would get enough additional money to cover the deficit in EMS and then have about \$300,000 to transfer back to general fund. But, if you look at this figure from fiscal year 2011, you can see that that was clearly was not going to happen. You didn't budget a transfer from general fund. What I am saying to you and Mr. Baker is don't be surprised during the course of the fiscal year if you have to transfer some money from the general fund to EMS. Just don't be overly surprised about that. That is my point.

Overall, it was an o.k. fiscal year. Your debt didn't change a whole bunch. You have \$4 million in your general fund balance.

I will answer any questions if you have any about that.

Taylor:

Are there any questions for the Clerk?

Morgan:

Yes, ma'am.

Mr. Clerk, thank you for coming and reporting to us. \$4 million fund balance. Our auditors suggested that we be in the range of \$5 million to \$8 million for a budget our size. Is that right?

Thomas:

Something like that.

Morgan:

So, we still have a ways to go. Do you agree that we have a ways to go?

Thomas:

Well, I never said \$8 million. The auditors said that. I had set a goal of \$5 million and that would be great and it is being realistic. With all your other obligations, it will be hard to get to that point. I will say that during the course of the past couple of months, you have been able to manage your expenditures for the new fiscal year without undue strain unlike so many times in the past. Sometimes I had to report that cash is low and you notice that I have not said anything about low cash this fiscal year.

Morgan:

I have noticed.

Thomas:

So, \$5 million is what we thought would be a good and reasonable goal and a reachable goal. \$8 million is probably unrealistic considering the current environment.

Morgan:

Would there be anything wrong with that goal?

Thomas:

Oh, no. There wouldn't be anything wrong with it, sir.

Morgan:

Just making sure.

As we move forward into the next fiscal year, I know you have constant conversations with our Property Appraiser and our Tax Collector – What is your primary, Number 1 Concern from a budget standpoint that this board is considering?

Thomas:

Well, you know, there are lots of needs as we heard just a few minutes ago. Commissioners, you are here to get things done and I realize that. So, from my prospective, the concern is always "Are we overreaching? Do we have enough money to get done what you want to get done?" So, my prospective is a little different than yours just because we have different responsibilities. But, I was pleased with this past fiscal year. I am concerned about EMS and I am concerned that we didn't make all the jail repairs and that might be a problem in terms of repairs. I am not talking about expansion; I am just talking about getting the building repaired. Nothing else just jumps at me at the moment.

Morgan:

The Property Appraiser was before us at a meeting recently and he discussed the fact that the ad valorem tax dollars are projected to be lower than they have been in the last four years combined. That obviously brings concern. That is why I was asking for some input there.

Personally, I think it would be very important for us to remain focused in investing in needs versus spending money on wants for the next year.

Thomas:

Potentially, the property appraiser issue is a potential problem we will have to talk about just like the state government. You know, one of the things that I am not sure that you realize is that county governments have really been fortunate as it relates to the State of Florida. They have cut prisons, they cut clerks, they cut schools, and they have cut all of their own departments, but in terms of the revenue sharing that the state government gives to counties, there has not been any significant cuts. So, my concern there is that perhaps when they come back to Tallahassee and they have to cut some more, it may be your turn. County governments have not paid the price that others in state government and others in local governments like the clerks have been cut. I don't know if there is anything you can do about it. But, if you look at it, it is possible. It is all a matter of what J.D. Alexander wants.

Morgan:

I agree with you 100%. I hope that we hear what you just said. Thank you.

Taylor:

Are there others?

Croley:

Mr. Clerk, thank you for this report. I just want to say something and maybe I am not following you. Are you saying that this fund summary covers the period of 10/1/2010 up through December of 2011 or was this from 10/1/2011 up through December of 2011?

Thomas:

It is the fiscal year 10/01/2011 up through September 30, 2011. However, you know the fiscal year ended September 30, but there is a lot of activity that goes beyond that in order to close the year out.

Croley:

O.K. I am with you. I just wanted to make sure that I was reading it correctly.

One other question. Fund 112 – County Transportation – those funds – what can be paid out of that? Can rolling stock like dump trucks, motor graders, Can those be purchased out of that fund 112 or is it strictly limited to

Thomas:

Sure.

Croley:

So, it is not limited to just to actual road work and

Thomas:

You can fund your transportation department, everything that is directly transportation.

Holt:

I wasn't really in favor of raising fees at EMS. I remember the point that I made was that if people can't pay \$20, they aren't going to pay \$40. So, I think we should look at that to see if we are in line and see what we can do to help EMS and maybe get with the new director, if possible. Have the manager to get with the new director and see if there are things that need to be fixed or see if there are some things that we can help them with simply because we want to make sure that everyone is willing to pay something even if they can't pay the full amount. I have heard a few comments. I've only gotten about three calls about the fees. They were not with EMS, but with the Emergency Room. I think that Mr. Scott said he was there three hours and got a \$4,000 bill. I asked him, "What were you doing out there, mining for gold?" But, I think they have that straightened out now. I haven't gotten a return call from him. But, I just think it would be good to have staff to look at that department and if they need help, we need to get in there and help them.

I think the counties have done pretty well in not getting cut, especially in an election year. It is because the House and Senate want to get re-elected. If you cut counties, you cut all these services. That means the Sheriff's Dept, EMS, and everyone gets cut. Road and Bridges – that is what people usually vote by, what services you can provide. I think that has a lot to do. The Association is pretty good, too, at getting some things out of the Legislature. Hopefully, we will not get cut because if the county gets cut, those services are going to get cut. People always say that they are going to cut the funding, but we are not going to cut services, but that is impossible. If order to take \$.50 out of a dollar, we are out a dollar. You can't provide the same services with less money. It doesn't work.

Thomas:

Madam Chair, I would just like to clarify again what I was saying about EMS. This is the first time in 25 years that the county did not subsidize EMS. So, that is what this EMS budget is built on. If that doesn't hold true and the money does not come in as projected, don't be overly surprised that EMS will need some help.

Holt:

Right, Thank you.

Taylor:

I am hoping that the media catches this. This is welcomed news because this past year, there was some impressions given that some of the commissioners were just having a free fall with dollars being spent. We put children to work this summer. We did emergency repairs for homes. We did some other programs and I am glad to sit here and see that even though we provided services beyond and above, at the end of the day, we were still fiscally minded and the county had a surplus. It still falls on that cliché that I said and I will say until the end of time, "You can't go wrong when you are doing what is right." It always comes out for betterment when you follow the tow when doing what is right and doing things that we have done in the past for goodwill. I am glad to hear this report. As a matter of fact, this is what I was speaking about a little earlier when we had that first presentation. I had understood from the clerk's office that there was going to be a surplus this year. To be honest with you, Commissioners, when the Property

Appraiser and Tax Collector came in with their presentation that they do annually in hanging back dollars, I think the county should follow along in that suit and hand back almost \$200,000 to put into our reserves.

Thank you so much for your presentation.

Based on all that we have seen thus far, I think we are stepping out pretty good. Lots of positive notes. Lots of positive notes.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Items 8, 10 were removed for discussion.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CROLEY AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA TO WIT: Items 5-7; 9, & 11.**

#### **5. Approval of Minutes**

August 23, 2011 Special Joint Meeting with Tourist Development Council  
September 20, 2011 Regular Meeting

**Action Taken: Approved as part of the Consent Agenda approval.**

#### **6. Ratification of Approval to Pay the County Bills**

**Accounts Payables Dated:           December 9, 2011  
  December 16, 2011**

**Payroll Dated:                               December 15, 2011**

**Action Taken: Approved as part of the Consent Agenda approval.**

#### **7. Approval of Chair's Signature for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts – State Housing Initiative**

- Patricia Robinson , 643 South Adams St., Quincy, FL 32351
- Johnny and Myra Scott, 1394 South Atlanta St, Quincy, FL 32351
- Patsy Swain, 221 Gay St., Havana, FL 32333
- Annie Morris , 23 Long Branch Road, Midway, FL 32343

**Action Taken: Approved as part of the Consent Agenda Approval.**

#### **~~8. Acknowledgement of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grant in the Amount of \$94,050 for 2009 Hospital Renovations~~**

Removed from the consent agenda and placed for discussion following the consent agenda.

**Approval to Accept the 2011-2012 Mutual Aid Operations Plan between Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County Fire Departments and the Annual Forestry Report and Operating Plan**

**Statement of Issue:**

This item seeks Board approval of the 2011-2012 Division of Forestry Mutual Aid Operation Plan between Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County Fire Departments. Staff also seeks approval of the 2010-2011 Annual County Commissioners Report between Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County, which details all the events from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011. The details are for burning permits, wildfires, and land management.

**Background:**

The Division of Forestry provides this report, and request that all of the Commissioners review it. This report also consists of the Operating Plan for Gadsden County. The Operating Plan works along with our volunteer fire departments. The Division of Forestry and the local volunteer fire departments work together to maintain wildfires.

**Analysis:**

The Division of Forestry covers 300,622 acres of land in Gadsden County. The Florida Forest Service's prorated fire control expenditure in Gadsden County for fire protection for the past fiscal year was \$218,409.01, which included \$24,043.54 from Gadsden County and \$194,356.47 of state and federal funds. During this one-year period, the Florida Forest Service responded to 74 fire related incidents in Gadsden County that burned a total of 344.1 acres of state protected lands.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The fiscal impact for this year will be \$24,043.54. This money is budgeted in the Fire Service Budget.

**Options:**

- I. Approve the 2011-2012 Mutual Aid Operations Plan Between Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County Fire Department and the 2010-2011 Annual Forestry Report and Operating Plan. Authorize the chairperson to sign the Mutual Aid Plan.
2. Do not approve the 2011-2012 Mutual Aid Operations Plan between Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and

Gadsden County Fire Department and the 2010-2011 Annual Forestry Report and Operating Plan.

3. Provide other direction.

**County Administrator's Recommendation:** Option I.

**Attachment:**

- I. 2011-2012 Mutual Aid Operations Plan Between Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and Gadsden County Fire Departments.

**Action Taken:** Approved as part of the Consent Agenda approval.

**10. Acceptance of the FY 2011 Preliminary 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. Report**

Removed from the consent agenda for discussion following the consent agenda.

**11. Confirmation of the County Administrator's Appointment of Tommy Baker as the New EMS Director**

**Statement of Issue:**

This agenda item seeks Board confirmation of the employment of Thomas W. Baker as the new Emergency Medical Services Director.

**Background:**

The County Administrator has the authority to select, employ, and supervise all personnel and to fill all vacancies, positions or employment under the jurisdiction of the Board. However, Section 2.83, **b**, of the Gadsden County Code of Ordinances and Florida Statutes 125.74(K), requires the Board of County Commissioners to confirm Department heads employed by the Administrator.

**Analysis:**

In order to fill the vacant Emergency Medical Services Director position, staff completed an open competitive search for a new Director. The Administrator and an interview committee interviewed the top two applicants and concluded that Thomas Baker was the top candidate. Based upon his qualifications and his previous work history as the EMS Director for Gadsden County for twenty plus years, Mr. Baker has the basic academic, professional and managerial skills required to successfully perform the job of the Emergency Medical Services



Director. His application and resume are attached.

Therefore, the County Administrator requested employment confirmation of Thomas Baker in order to be in compliance with the County's Code of Ordinances and the Florida Statutes.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The fiscal impact will be the salary and benefits of the Emergency Medical Services Director as negotiated by the County Administrator.

**Options:**

1. Approve County Administrator's recommendation to confirm employment of Thomas Baker as the Emergency Medical Services Director.
2. Do not approve the confirmation.
3. Board Direction

**County Administrator's Recommendation:**

The County Administrator recommends approval of option #1.

**Attachment:**

- I. Thomas Baker application and resume.

**Action Taken: approved as part of the consent agenda.**

**8. Acknowledgement of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grant in the Amount of \$94,050 for 2009 Hospital Renovations**

**Statement of Issue:**

This agenda item seeks Board acknowledgement of the County's previous application for HRSA grant funds in the amount of \$94,050 and to provide documentation for the County Clerk and Auditors and permit the County Finance Director to move forward to draw down the available grant funds.

**Background and Analysis:**

On May 19, 2009, the Commission approved the County Administrative Coordinator's request to apply for federal grant funding through the Health Resources and Services Administration ("HRSA") to be used for repairs and renovations to the Gadsden County Community Hospital. A copy of an excerpt from the minutes of the May 19, 2009 meeting is attached as Exhibit A. The grant application was submitted on June 18, 2009 and subsequently approved by HRSA on September 15, 2009. A copy of the Notice of

Grant Award cover page is attached as Exhibit B.

During the year-long period following the grant award the County was eligible to draw down the \$94,050 in funds and was obligated to fulfill certain financial and progress reporting requirements under the terms of the grant. Although the County did neither, the grant funds are still available today. Over the past month the County has submitted almost all outstanding reports and received authorization from HRSA to move forward in drawing down the \$94,050 in grant funds. At this time, the County has neither requested nor received any of those funds.

Out of an abundance of caution because of the time elapsed since the Commission's previous approval, and at the request of the Clerk, this agenda item seeks the Board's acknowledgement of the County's previous application for HRSA grant funding to provide documentation for the Clerk and Auditors prior to the receipt of any grant funds

**Fiscal Impact:** The grant will provide \$94,050 to reimburse the County for costs incurred to repair and renovate the Gadsden County Community Hospital in 2009 and 2010.

**Options:**

1. Acknowledge the County's previous application for HRSA grant funding and permit the County Finance Director to move forward in drawing down the \$94,050 in available grant funds.
2. Do not acknowledge the County's previous application for HRSA grant funding.
3. Board direction.

**Interim County Administrator's Recommendation:**

Option I: Acknowledge the County's previous application for HRSA grant funding and permit the County Finance Director to move forward in drawing down the \$94,050 in available grant funds.

**Attachment:**

1. Excerpt from the minutes of the May 19,2009 County Commission meeting
2. Notice of Grant Award Cover Page

**DISCUSSION FOLLOWED:**

Commissioner Morgan asked the Clerk if he had any concerns about approving the grant at this point in the process.

Finance Director Connie McLendon explained, "When we received the grant application, I got a copy of it from the County Attorney and it had an expiration date on it of 2009. So, that was my concern. The other concern was that I was not sure that you all were fully aware of it and to go

into an agreement like this and go after money of this amount, I wanted to be sure that you all were aware of it. Some of you may be aware of it and some people not. That was my thing, just get it back on the agenda and get it approved by you all.

It was clarified that the money was to be used to reimburse the county for the cost and repairs of the hospital. It was suggested that it be used to help build out the other wings of the hospital.

**Action Taken:**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CROLEY THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 TO APPROVE THE GRANT DESCRIBED ABOVE.**

**10. Acceptance of the FY 2011 Preliminary 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. Report**

**Statement of Issue:**

This item seeks acceptance of the Preliminary 4th Quarter Report for FY 2011.

**Background:**

In April of 2006 the Board adopted a comprehensive financial management policy. Section 3.03 Budget Management and Amendment Policy states the following: "...Finally, consistent with the spirit of this policy, the Board shall require the County Administrator or his designated budget officer to develop during FY 2007 and thereafter regularly submit quarterly (three month) budget status reports to the Board. These reports shall include:

- The status of major revenue collections and/or projections
- The status of actual departmental expenditures in comparison with budgeted expenditures.
- Notification of special issues that could possibly affect the current or future financial status of the Board."

**Analysis:**

In summation, operating departments under the jurisdiction of the County Administrator have expended approximately 94% (*versus the County's established benchmark of 100%*) of their allotted budgets through the fourth quarter of the fiscal year. Overall, data through the fourth quarter (October 1, 2010 thru September 30, 2011) provides enough definitive data to constitute the adjustment of original budget estimates at this time. This report is preliminary due to the fact that the final close out budget amendments and any Finance adjustments have not been posted.

**Options:**

1. Approve Acceptance of the FY 2011 Preliminary 4th Quarter Report
2. Board Direction

**County Administrator's Recommendation:** Option #1

**Attachments:** FY 2011 Preliminary 4th Quarter Report

Commissioner Morgan called attention to Public Works budget which showed a significant decrease over the previous year.

Jeff Price, Senior OMB Analyst stated that the department realized a number of savings throughout the department.

Commissioner Morgan then commended Public Works Director Charles Chapman for the fine job he is doing in that department in terms of managing the costs.

Commissioner Taylor responded, "Savings is good, but not when there are still bridges and roads left to be serviced. As a matter of fact, one of my items that we need to discuss will be paving the parking lot down at the Senior Citizens Center. It has fallen apart and I am so afraid because some of those seniors have to walk with walkers down there. But, I will talk to you about that. A yeoman's job. I have to say that it is true and Commissioner Croley has harped on this so much about bridges and their decay. We need to make sure that we are on top of those areas as well.

Holt:  
Madam Chair?

Taylor:  
Yes.

Holt:  
Yes. I echo the sentiments there and also I would say that if we are saving money, the roads must be fine. I don't see it. I don't see saving money and having the money for what we were supposed to be using it for. I've got some areas, and I am sure the other four commissioners have areas, where we need some work done. I am not a banker and you are not a banker. That is what the money is for. Let's get some roads done.

Thank you.

Morgan:  
Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that I was the one that pulled the items so I just wanted to clarify some things.

These savings are not particularly because we are not paving needy roads and things of that nature. It is improved efficiencies in operations and things of that nature. Would you say that is

what contributed to that, Mr. Chapman?

Chapman:

To take the first part of your statement – Public Works does not pave roads without the board's consent first and foremost. Second of all is that we have changed our operational model. Even beginning back in 2008 and going into 2009. We are reaping the benefits of doing proper scheduling, routine maintenance as well as concerted strategic strike forces on different areas of our operation. So, what you are seeing is a onetime incident where things have come to fruition and reaping a little hanging fruit from doing our scheduling.

We are monitoring our work order intake. For those of you who may not be familiar with our definition of work order, customer call-ins are things that need to be addressed. Currently, we are in a track to see a decrease of close to 30% in our work order intake volume.

Morgan:

Thank you, Madam Chair. That is all I have.

Taylor:

Can I get a motion to approve?

Morgan:

I move to approve number this item.

Croley:

Second.

Taylor:

There is a motion and a second to approve Item 10. Are there any other questions or comments?

Holt:

Yes. We want to get the work done.

Taylor:

We want to get the work done.

Holt:

Thank you.

Taylor:

There is a motion and a second. All in favor of this motion, please signify by saying "Aye."

All:

Aye.

Taylor:

Opposed, the same sign.

(no response)

Thank you, let's move along.

### **CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD**

#### **Marion Laslie**

My name is Marion Laslie, 5 Dante Court, Quincy.

I wanted to know if we could get an update on the National Solar Power Revised economic Development Agreement. I have not been able to find it on the website and I wondered what the status is.

Taylor:

What we are going to do is that this board, at the last meeting, as you well know because you were there, at the end of the meeting, we are going to discuss as to when we will bring it back for further discussion. And, as well, when that information will be out there for the public. That is coming up for discussion in just a few minutes up under Commissioner's Concerns. I plan to do it up under my time.

Laslie:

Thank you, I appreciate it.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS AGENDA**

#### **12. Approval of Financial Support for the In Town Shuttle**

##### **Statement of Issue:**

This item seeks Board approval of financial support for The Shuttle, a public transportation service within the City of Quincy. Big Bend Transit has requested that the County pay one-half of the expenses with the city of Quincy paying the other half. . The In-Town Shuttle cost \$106,800.00 per year, but the funding will be depleted in March. The amount requested of the County was \$49,123.00.

##### **Background:**

Big Bend Transit, Inc. has operated an in-town shuttle service in the City of Quincy since May 1, 2005. This service was made possible from funds that StarMetro and the City of Tallahassee received from the Federal Transportation Administration for Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom (NF).

The project provides a fixed route/fixed schedule service within the major municipality, Quincy. The Shuttle provides for opportunities to employment, training and educational facilities. The project was designed to utilize the existing coordinated transportation system of Gadsden County as a feeder system, to gather and distribute the passengers residing outside the municipality and throughout the county area, and to provide transfers to the inter-county Gadsden Express. The project demonstrates an important service concept for a unique ridership group. The services are provided five days per week on a 16.3 mile fixed schedule/route 9.5 hours/day.

Since the service began on May 1, 2005, 61,041 trips were provided over the 77 months to approximately 1,400 riders, citizens of Gadsden County. The ridership has steadily increased over time. The lowest daily ridership of 43 persons was in the first month of service and the highest daily ridership was 83 persons, for an average monthly daily usage of 66 persons.

Funding will be depleted by March 30, 2012. To continue, the project needs the financial support of the City of Quincy and the Gadsden County Board of Commissioners. The cost to operate The Shuttle for one year is approximately \$106,800.00. It is hoped that the City of Quincy will sponsor \$49,130 and the County Commission will sponsor another \$49,130. It is anticipated that \$8,550 will be generated through the fare box collection paid by the ridership.

**Analysis:**

Transportation is often the vital link between not only quality of life, but also, employment, education and other life sustaining needs for some of the most vulnerable citizens of the County. The Shuttle provides a needed service to the citizens of Gadsden County that have no other means of transportation to employment, training and education opportunities. Employment is the engine of the local economy, helping to sustain and encourage growth. Economic development is crucial to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Gadsden County. Without the proper education of its residents, the County most likely will see no improvements in the economics and quality of life of its citizens.

The Shuttle has proven to be a successful service. It is a service that the ridership depends on to improve their quality of life. It would be a shame to discontinue a thriving program due to a funding issue.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$49,130 for one year

**Options:**

1. Approve the funding for The Shuttle.
2. Do not approve the funding for The Shuttle.

3. Provide other direction.

**County Administrators' Recommendation: Number 3 – Provide other direction.**

**Attachment:**

Letter of Request from the Gadsden County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.

**DISCUSSION:**

**Ted Waters, Big Bend Transit**, addressed the board representing Gadsden County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board regarding the In-Town Shuttle. He explained that the shuttle travels in a 16-mile loop, but the funding will expire in March 2012. It was funded most recently with federal grants through the City of Tallahassee. He also stated that they have asked the City of Quincy to bear half of the cost to keep the service.

**Board Discussion:**

Commissioner Morgan clarified that this service is only available to the citizens of Quincy only, not the entire county. He surmised that if this is done for the Quincy In-town Shuttle, it should also be done for the other municipalities as well. In light of the fact that the county cannot afford to do it for all municipalities, he could not support the request.

Mr. Waters stated for the record that the entire county does have access to the coordinated system where anyone can receive door to door service to connect to the In-town Shuttle or the Gadsden Express for only a \$2.00 fare.

Commissioner Holt remarked that she did not realize that the In-Town Shuttle was funded through Tallahassee. She stated that she felt they should consider it especially if they can demonstrate the benefits of the program. (Do they connect to services offered to Havana and Chattahoochee or Greensboro? Etc. If they do, then that is an obvious benefit to the entire county.)

Commissioner Croley inquired about the door to door service to which Mr. Waters explained, "It is the coordinated transportation system of Gadsden County...It is what is called the Transportation Disadvantaged where individuals can apply for the program. Once they are in the system, they can have that service for \$2.00."

Commissioner Croley discussed the federal dollars that come through Star Metro Bus System. He recalled that he had reported earlier that those federal funds seem to be "drying up." He stated that he thought the dollars would be more wisely spent to concentrate on trying to save the Gadsden Express because it is a more widely used service



throughout the county.

Commissioner Lamb said that he was very familiar with the program. However, he was hesitant to support the In-Town Shuttle for the same reasons as the other commissioners. Upon questioning Mr. Waters, he learned that the Quincy In-Town Shuttle averages 80 trips per day and conceivably reaches 40 different people a day that are making a round trip.

**Ms. Bonita Anderson** from Apalachee Regional Planning Council addressed the board. She explained that part of her responsibility is staffing the local transportation disadvantaged coordinating board. That board is made up of Gadsden County representation, not just a Quincy board. She went on to say that the board felt like the in-town shuttle was a partnership service within Gadsden County even though it is local to Quincy; it provides life sustaining services to those people. (Health Dept, doctors, drug store, grocery store. The Coordinated System is operating county-wide and bringing people in from Chattahoochee and Gresham Park and Greensboro into Quincy where they get off of that system bus and onto the Quincy In-Town Shuttle to reach the locations they need. They then go back on the In-Town Shuttle and connect back with the Coordinated System, which returns them to their home.

Chair Taylor reminded the commissioners that Quincy is the county seat of county government and it is also where the doctors, hospital and retail stores are located. People from all over the county come to Quincy because of the services that are only available in Quincy and they use the Quincy Shuttle services to get to those services after they get to town.

Commissioner Holt suggested that the matter be agendaed in order to look at the opportunity to continue the service.

Commissioner Croley called attention to the fact that the County will be called upon to participate to a greater extent just to keep the Gadsden Express to Tallahassee after February 2013.

Chair Taylor encouraged each commissioner to speak to their respective municipality about extending the public transportation to their cities.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 5 – 0 TO AGENDA THE QUINCY SHUTTLE DISCUSSION FOR THE SECOND MEETING IN JANUARY.**

**13. Discussion and Consideration for Additional Funding for State Lobbying Services**

**Statement Issue:**

The agenda item is presented to the Board for consideration to provide additional

funding for state lobbying services to help defend Florida State Hospital from further privatization.

**Background:**

The Board approved \$10,000.00 in its 2011/2012 budget for lobbying services for a lobbyist to represent the County before the State Legislature. Christian B. Doolin and Associates were approved by the Board on October 18, 2011 to provide lobbying services. Last fiscal year, the Board allocated \$25,000.00 for those services. This item seeks consideration of the Board to amend the budget to provide additional funding for lobbying services at the same funding level as last fiscal year. The total amount of requested funds is \$15,000.00.

**Analysis:** No additional analysis.

**Fiscal Impact:**

If approved, the fiscal impact would be \$15,000.00. Staff would need authorization to find the required funds within the approved budget. The reserve for contingency is the only source of funds identified at this time.

**Options:**

1. Board Direction

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Morgan once again tried to reason with the commissioners about the urgency to take measures to protect the jobs that remain associated with Florida State Hospital in Chattahoochee and advocate to that end. He pleaded with them to restore the funding for the lobbying services to the same amount as last fiscal year - \$25,000.

Commissioner Lamb agreed to restore the funding fully, but stated that he would prefer to have the services bid out rather than renew the contract.

Chair Taylor pointed out that Mr. Doolin already represents the Small County Coalition, which is already defending the Chattahoochee jobs. She was not in favor of increasing the funding.

County Attorney Minnis reiterated that there is a contract in place with Mr. Doolin, which would have to be rescinded with 30 days notice.

Commissioner Holt was supportive of Mr. Doolin and cautioned the other commissioners that the County cannot downplay the effectiveness that his firm has demonstrated in representing the county on legislative issues. However, she suggested that the board should simply go with the contract that is in place until after the session is over, but it would be imperative for the commissioners to go the city commissioners and the School Board members to the Capitol and lobby along with the lobbyist to propel the Gadsden County agenda forward. She also stated,

We are not going to have a major turnaround in this process in the State of Florida until we have some good elections on the state level. It is just going to be that way...Until we have some good elections, the snowball is not going to stop, but until then, we don't need to upset the applecart by trying to get this man out of here when we need him. We need for him to get us to where we need to be. Let's move on and discuss this contract after the session. Discussing it before the session is not good policy."

Commissioner Croley was supportive of trying to advocate for the hospital, but was opposed to funding increase without the participation of the other stake holders that are affected.

Commissioner Morgan voiced his appreciation to the board for entertaining the discussion, but was disappointed in the lack of support to increase the funding level for the lobbying services.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER LAMB, THE BOARD VOTED 2 – 3 TO INCREASE THE FUNDING FOR LOBBYING SERVICES. THE MOTION FAILED. COMMISSIONER S LAMB AND MORGAN VOTED "AYE." COMMISSIONERS HOLT, CROLEY AND TAYLOR OPPOSED THE MOTION.**

**14. Request from Angie Raines to Waive the Variance Process and Fees Associated With Her Application for a Waiver from the Provisions of the Immediate Family Exception**

**Statement of Issue:**

The County Commission was asked to consider a request by Angie Raines to:

1. Waive the requirement to go through the Variance process in order to seek relief from the provisions of the now expired (2008) Immediate Family Exception (Gadsden County Land Development Code, Section 6600);
2. Waive the fees associated with the Variance process if the applicant is not granted a waiver to the Variance process.

**Background:**

Mrs. Raines was approved for an Immediate Family Exception in 2006. Her property is located in the Agricultural (AG1) Future Land District which requires a minimum of a five (5) acre parcel size. The exception allowed Ms. Raines to create an approximately 1.25 acre parcel out of her approximately 6.50 acre master parcel. The 1.25 acre parcel was deeded to her daughter per the provisions of the Immediate Family Exception.

**Analysis:**

Mrs. Raines recently contacted the Planning & Community Development (P&CD) department to inquire about the process for seeking relief from the provisions of her previously-approved Immediate Family Exception. She noted that her daughter was experiencing financial difficulty and needed to sell the property and mobile home on the property. Staff explained that the normal process for seeking relief was to apply for a Variance to the conditions imposed by the

Immediate Family Exception, the main provision being that the nonconforming parcel created through the process cannot be sold outside of the family.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Although the fees for each variance request vary, a realistic estimate of the total fees required to go through the process is approximately \$2,700. If a waiver to the Variance process is granted by the County Commission, there will be no financial impact to the P&CD department since no Variance application will be processed. If the applicant is not granted a waiver to the Variance process, but is granted a waiver of all Variance fees, the County P&CD department will be responsible for processing the Variance application without collecting application fees to pay for staff labor costs. The P&CD department would also be responsible for all costs associated with newspaper ads, mail outs and a Citizens Bill of Rights meeting.

**Options:**

1. Waive the requirement that the applicant apply for a Variance to seek relief from the provisions of the Immediate Family Exception;
2. Require that the applicant apply for a Variance to seek relief from the provisions of the Immediate Family Exception, but grant a waiver to all or part of the fees associated with the Variance process,
3. Require that the applicant apply for a Variance to seek relief from the provisions of the Immediate Family Exception and pay all fees associated with the Variance process;
4. Discretion of the Board

**County Administrator Recommendation:** Option#4

**Attachments:**

1. Site map
2. Section 6600 of the Gadsden County Land Development Code, Immediate Family Exception
3. Variance Fee Sheet

**a**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER LAMB AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HOLT TO APPROVE TO WAIVE THE VARIANCE APPLICATION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY EXCEPTION AND TO GRANT THE WAIVER OF FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE VARIANCE PROCESS.**

**Discussion followed.**

**Commissioner Croley :**

When the property was conveyed, was there a deed restriction recorded on the property that it had to be sold back to an immediate family member?

Matheny:

Yes.

Croley:

So, there is a deed restriction recorded in the deed.

Matheny:

As far as I know.

Croley:

Is Ms. Raines going to explain how she is going to deal with a warranty deed conveyance that's got a restriction on the deed?

Matheny:

If you would like to talk to Ms. Raines, she is right here.

Croley:

Ms. Raines, Good morning.

Taylor:

Excuse me, but would you please state your full name and your current address, please?

Raines:

**I am Angie Todd Raines.** I am a fourth generation Gadsden Countian and I live in Havana, FL.

Taylor:

Would you give us your complete address?

Raines:

I live at 87 Hidden Valley Trail, Havana, FL.

Taylor:

Thank you so much. Please continue.

Raines:

I can explain to you how we go to where we are and what we want done. I might not know the terminology of what you said. Would you ask me that question again?

Croley:

Well, what I am trying to understand, Ms. Raines, is when you conveyed the 1. Whatever acres to your daughter, did you place on that deed a restriction that it had to be sold back to a family member? It was supposed to have been a provision in this immediate family **exemption** as I understand it.

Raines:

I will try not to be lengthy, but it's a personal issue that has a lot of caveats. We did sign that. We were in an emergency family situation and truthfully, we would have signed anything we had

to sign to get what we needed to be done. I will speak quickly if I can. We bought the property from right before we got married. My husband and I when I was 19 years old. We bought the property, built a house after 10 years. We didn't do it on the best part of the property hoping to be able to sell the frontage when we got old. My husband couldn't come today because he is at home with lung disease and we are now old. We can't sell the property. We have been the only members of our generation that survive today. We stayed in Gadsden County and helped with three elders. At the time we needed to have a mobile home put on the property because my daddy died and we had my mother who had a massive heart attack. My daughter had a complicated pregnancy and was in the hospital for two months. WE needed places for everybody to live.

Croley:

Ms. Raines, may I interrupt you? I appreciate that. I know your family from way back. It is not necessary for you to get into that type personal history. All I am asking you is, is there a deed restriction on the deed you conveyed to your daughter that says that the property must be sold back to an immediate family member?

Raines:

They explained that to us when we were going through the process of trying to find out how to sell the property. Yes. But, I am saying that we got into this situation under duress wishing that we had been able to put a mobile home on the property when we needed it. We had been paying for the property for 30 years. In retrospect, even though we wish we were not in this situation, if we had it all to do over again, we would have to do the same thing. We took care of everybody in our home and on our property.

Croley:

I understand that and I appreciate your point. What I am saying today is that I never supported this immediate family exemption stuff because of this very situation that you find yourself in. It has caused hardships for people throughout the county, especially financial hardships when they have tried to sell the property.

My concern is even if this board takes an action, you still are faced with a deed restriction on the property. If you had that cleared up, I am not aware of any way you could be held back from selling the property.

Mr. Matheny, have you looked at the deed to see if there is such a deed restriction?

Matheny:

I don't have it here with me, Commissioner, but I believe there is one just like you say.

Croley:

The point I am trying to make, Commissioners, is this is not a matter of you giving a special exception to somebody. You set a bad precedent when you do that because the next person that comes along, what are you going to do with them? She needs to clear up the restriction on your own deed.

Have you talked to an attorney about that?

Raines:

I am trying not to go to an attorney. We are trying to find out what we need to do. We have over seven acres.

Croley:

I am familiar with the property and like I said, I am familiar with your family.

Raines:

It is not incongruent with the neighborhood.

Croley:

But, this board can't remove that deed restriction.

Ms. Minnis, you are the attorney here, she does need to deal with the deed restriction first and then if you deal with it, you might not need to even come up here.

Raines:

How do I deal with the deed restriction?

Taylor:

Excuse me. This is what we are going to do. On this item, it is for a waiver of the variance process/fees. That is what agendaed was and that is what we need to be about. Obviously, there are other aspects to this. What has us in a quagmire here is that this should have been weighed out before you got here, especially the issues the commissioner is raising at this point. I can see clearly that you are just seeking information to get to the point that you need to get to for your family.

Commissioner Lamb wants to see that happen, but we can only go by what we have been staffed with – what is written here. What is written here is what we can do. But, what is being brought out even further is the fact that there are some statutes or laws in place that prohibit us in our capacity or our ability, so you really need to sit and talk a little bit more on this particular item with an attorney. There are ways that you can get some legal assistance without having to purchase and attorney, given your financial situation. Mr. Lawson can discuss that with you as well.

I think you all need to go back, and I appreciate the commissioner for bringing this up, and look at this a little closer as to what can be done in your capacity. Again, we are voting on what is in front of us within our capacity. Based on what has come up now, we can't move forward with this particular item.

I will yield to the attorney to voice her opinion to make sure because I would like to see your situation resolved so that you can move forward in your life. But, let's let legal give us some direction.

Minnis:

Yes, this is a little bit more complicated than it initially appeared. Yes, our ordinance does require it to be sold back to a family member. But, Commissioner Croley is pointing out that it is now in the deed from you to your daughter. That situation would have to be corrected. Even if we gave you a variance, you would still have to go through a process of correcting that deed. Anyone who does a title search of the property would find the deed with the restriction in it, so the difficulty of selling the property outside of a family member would come up. So, there is an additional thing that has to be done.

As the county attorney, I cannot advise you on that particular matter because as a personal matter between you and your daughter with the deed, you would need to consult with an attorney, but then contact me and Mr. Matheny to see what would need to be done to get the deed changed and corrected. That would have to be done in order for that property to be sold outside of the immediate family.

Raines:

So, even going through what I was first told to do by the county that would no longer apply?

Taylor:

Do you mean the variance process?

Raines:

Are you saying that it doesn't apply?

Taylor:

No ma'am. What I am saying is that it is a multiple process.

Minnis:

We would have to waive our ordinance, which says that, under our ordinance, since we gave you an immediate family exemption that required you to keep the property within the family, we would have to waive that. However, our waiving our own ordinance is not going to correct the deed that you gave to your daughter. That is a separate legal process.

Taylor:

Commissioner Holt?

Holt:

Yes, Mrs. Raines, you can get a copy of the deed from the Clerk's Office over there. You get a copy of the deed and look on there and see if it says that the restriction is there. That restriction. Now, that will state whether you can sell it outside your family. That does not necessarily mean that you can't sell the property. You can sell the property to anybody for anything if they will buy it. Some people don't care about deed restrictions, but what they are saying is that you can look at it. If you can't afford an attorney, you can go to almost any real estate broker and they will look at it for you and let you know whether that restriction is there. Then, they can't recommend an attorney for you, but they will let you know a lot of times if you need to see one. But, you need to take care of that first.



This process, you will come in with if there is a deed restriction on there. If there is not a deed restriction on there for family exception, then you can go ahead and sell it. But, you need to look at that first. That is all they are telling you to do. Go and look at that deed first, then if you need to come back and apply for a variance or a request to waive the variance, you come back to do that right after then. It is a lot easier for you.

Taylor:

What I am going to do now is to have Commissioner Lamb withdraw his motion from the floor based on legal opinion.

Lamb:

I so move.

Taylor:

Who had that second?

Lamb:

Commissioner Holt.

Taylor:

Will you withdraw your second?

Holt:

Yes.

Taylor:

You withdraw your second. Alright, so we are done with this for tonight. I thank you, Commissioner Holt for chiming in. Sometimes when we get toward the end, we try to get it along, especially when we want to help the citizens. But, I think we have given the proper marching order. If not, then stick with the administrator, Ms. Raines.

Morgan:

I motion to table.

Taylor:

There is a motion to table this variance.

Holt:

I will second it.

Taylor:

There is a motion and a second. Are there any questions?

Holt:

Madam Chairman, I seconded it for discussion, but go ahead.

Taylor:  
Just on the variance.

Holt:  
We may not need to table because she may not need to come back.

Croley:  
That is what I was trying to understand, what is the basis of tabling?

Taylor:  
In case she needs to come back, she will have the opportunity.

Croley:  
When you table a motion that is usually done during the immediate sitting session. If you want to defer something, you do it to a date further. Am I not correct?

Mogen:  
That is what my intentions were.

Croley:  
What are we deferring to because Ms. Raines – really her best choice is to go get an attorney? You would be wise to seek legal counsel. That is what Ms. Minnis is saying.

Morgan:  
Madam Chair, I will withdraw my motion.

Taylor:  
Alright, let's move on. Step one – talk with the administrator, let him give tell you what this board has said. I know it looks like mud right now. Maybe he can make sense of it. It is very clear that you need to get legal advice. Then, after you have gotten the deed cleared up, you need to come back and be on the agenda. It will be on the agenda so you can come back.

Raines:  
Well, I don't know why I was here in the first place.

Taylor:  
Well, we are trying to get you there. Actually, it was a benefit simply because now you have clearer direction. It was a benefit, so you have to look at it as a positive. Thank you so much again.

Alright, whatever we can do, talk to either Commissioner Lamb and see what we can do without seeing him first, Mr. Lawson.

**15. Approval of Resolution 2011-046 and Sun Trust Documents for Financing of Renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector Building**

This agenda item seeks Board approval of Resolution # 2011-046 and SunTrust documents for financing of renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector building.

**Background:**

At the August 22, 2011 workshop, the Board authorized staff to solicit a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the financing of renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector building.

At the October 4, 2011 meeting, the results of the RFP were presented and the Board approved the selection of SunTrust Equipment Finance and Leasing Corp. of Towson, MD. (October 4th agenda item attached).

**Analysis:**

Staff has been working with Doug Dillon with SunTrust Equipment Finance and Leasing Corp. of Towson, MD to prepare the needed documents. These documents have been reviewed by staff as well as the County Attorney and Bond Counsel

**Fiscal Impact:**

This loan will be financed over a period of five (5) years, with annual payments of approximately \$84,076.78. The payment will commence twelve months from the funding date. These funds will be from non-ad valorem revenues. There will be adequate funds allocated in the budget to cover the loan payments. There will also be a fee of \$2,500 associated with documenting and closing the loan and as additional \$250 to use the Lessor as the escrow agent.

**Options:**

1. Approve Resolution# 2011-046 and SunTrust documents for renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector building and authorize the Chairperson to execute the loan documents.
2. Do not approve Resolution # 2011-046 and SunTrust documents for renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector building and authorize the Chairperson to execute the loan documents.
3. Provide other direction

**County Administrator's Recommendation:** Option 1. Approve Resolution# 2011-046 and SunTrust documents for renovations to the Property Appraiser/Tax Collector building and authorize the Chairperson to execute the loan documents.

**Attachments:**

1. October 4, 2011 agenda item
2. Purchaser's Disclosure Letter
3. Certificate as to Public Meetings and No Conflict of interest

4. County Officers Certificate
5. Certificate Regarding Interest Rate
6. Tax Certificate
7. Form of Opinion of County Attorney
8. Loan Agreement
9. Escrow Agreement for Project Fund
10. Capital Improvement Revenue Note, Series 2011
11. Bond Information Form
12. Information Return for Tax-Exempt Government Obligations
13. Resolution# 2011-046

**Action Taken:**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CROLEY AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT THE BOARD VOTED 4– 0, BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AND GAVE THE AUTHORITY TO THE CHAIRPERSON TO EXECUTE OF THE SUNTRUST LOAN DOCUMENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE PROVIDED THAT THE CLERK AND THE ATTORNEY HAVE NO CONCERNS REGARDING THEM. (COMMISSIONER LAMB WAS NOT PRESENT FOR THIS VOTE.)**

Mr. Lawson asked that all commissioners linger after the meeting long enough to sign a form pertaining to the loan agreement, which requires the signature of all the commissioners.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR’S AGENDA**

**16. Update on Matters Which the Board Requested**

**Request from Planning and Community Director Anthony Matheny Regarding Advisory Committee to Sit on EAR Based Amendment and Bike Plan**

Mr. Matheny reported that Kimley Horn, the contracted consultants, had approached him about taking measures to be certain that adequate representation of the entire county participates on the advisory committee as they are going through the process of changing and modifying the Comprehensive Plan to meet the requirements of the EAR based amendment process. Their recommendations will ultimately bring to the board in a workshop setting and at a public hearing for final adoption. He asked each commissioner to appoint a person from their respective districts to the Advisory Committee. He recommended Derrick Taylor as someone to represent the mining industry.

Chair Taylor asked Mr. Matheny to provide the commissioners with a description of the type skills or expertise that would benefit and guide the committee.

Commissioner Croley:

I’ve got a question about all of this. What is Planning and Zoning’s role in this? You haven’t even mentioned them and they have been totally involved in all of this. Why are you suggesting setting up an advisory board now that goes around them?

Matheny:

We just felt like we would come straight to the County Commission and have each commissioner district represented.

Croley:

We felt?

Matheny:

We felt. Kimley Horn and myself.

Croley:

Well Commissioners, before I embrace this whole thing of appointing an "Advisory Committee", I want to hear back from the Planning and Zoning Commission. They do all this daily work on this type thing. Why would go appoint an advisory committee to go around them? That doesn't make good business sense to me.

Taylor:

Alright. Let's do this simultaneously.

Holt:

Yes, I think we need the committee. We have a planning and zoning commission and they do what they do, but this would get even more people involved in the process. Whatever we do is going to affect the whole county. If we have nine people sitting here and we have another nine over there, we are going to get better input. I don't see where there is a problem. We are not taking anything away from Planning and Zoning. I would like to have other people out there listening and be involved in it and then they can take it back into the community and be able to work with them.

Croley:

May I respond to Commissioner Holt?

Taylor:

Sure.

Croley:

Commissioner Holt, I don't disagree with you about having more people involved. I don't even mind if you have an advisory committee. I just want to know that the Planning and Zoning folks are involved on equal footing so that you do what you are saying. The process that I am hearing is going around the Planning and Zoning and they are not being included. So, if such an advisory committee can be set up that also includes the Planning and Zoning, I don't have a problem with that.

Holt:

I don't see it that way. I don't want to go around them.

Morgan:

Commissioner Croley, I agree with you. I think it should be presented to P & Z to get their input

and then take direction there.

When is your next meeting?

Matheny:

P & Z? I think on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January.

Morgan:

Is there any reason why this couldn't be agendaed and ya'll discuss that?

Matheny:

We can take it to them if that is what the board wishes. That is no problem. We can agenda that.

Morgan:

I can't speak for them, but, I am saying that I agree that I think that they should be given the opportunity to provide input. I certainly understand all the potential reasons for the advisory committee, but I would like to get input from Planning and Zoning.

Holt:

Madam Chairman, may I make one suggestion? It may be possible to have a representative from the P & Z on the advisory committee and that would pretty much solve the problem. You would have P & Z input and with the Advisory Committee, you would have the attorney representing mining and then each commissioner would have an appointee.

Croley:

I would like

Taylor:

Listen, listen, and listen. We are not going to beat this one. It sounds like there is more discussion that needs to be made.

Let's agenda this so that we can have a formal discussion. Right now, it is not an agendaed item and for the board to discuss it now is really outside the law or our statutes. So, we are going to leave this as it is. Let's agenda it for one of those meetings in January. Then we can have our discussion.

Thank you very much.

Matheny:

I have a quick question because I am a little confused. Does the board want me to take this to the Planning Commission first, which will be January 12<sup>th</sup> and bring it back to ya'll with their recommendations?

Taylor:

On the third meeting in January of the first meeting in February.

Matheny:  
That will be fine.

Taylor:  
Now, you should have that along with the criteria that you want each of those members to have. We can then be more intelligent in our selection process.

Holt:  
I was going to say that I don't think they necessarily need to meet some criteria, but we just want to know what you are looking for. Someone may not have all these degrees etc, but they may be a good citizen willing to serve on that advisory committee.

Taylor:  
Exactly. We won't discuss this anymore.

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S AGENDA**

##### **17. Update on Various Legal Matters**

Ms. Minnis had nothing to report.

#### **DISCUSSIONS ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

##### **18A Commissioner Eugene Lamb, District 1**

Commissioner Lam was no longer present at this juncture.

##### **18b Commissioner Doug Croley, District 2**

Real quickly, I just want to say Merry Christmas to all of you. I wish you all and your families as well as all the citizens and the county staff a happy and merry Christmas.

I also want to quickly mention and compliment the City of Gretna and the ECI Gaming Operation. I went out Saturday afternoon at the invitation of the City Manager Antonio Jefferson. I saw the overwhelming attendance, the folks there. Commissioner Holt, congratulations in your district on what it looks like may be a very successful commercial endeavor.

I have also mentioned to Mr. Reed at the CRTPA, I know they may have some transportation needs out there. If we can leverage some state or federal funds to help Commissioner Holt in moving the safety needs out there and any other things that might be appropriate.

Commissioner Lamb is gone, but I want to congratulate him on the successful park opening. I was unable to attend, but I heard that it went well. I believe that you were there, Commissioner Taylor, so I want to extend my complements to you.

Taylor:  
Thank you.

Croley:  
That is it. Thank you.

**18c. Commissioner Brenda A. Holt , District 2**

**18d Commissioner Gene Morgan, Vice-Chair, District 3**

Morgan:  
Thank you, Madam Chairman. First off, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and I hope that all our families can share in the true gift of Christmas this season.

Additionally, I want to thank our interim county administrator. I think he has done an outstanding job this year and I really appreciate him taking on additional responsibilities. I commend your efforts. I think you are doing an outstanding job. Thank you for a good year.

To our attorney, I want to say thank you to you and your firm. I didn't mention this when we were going over the fourth quarter financial report that Mr. Price turned in, but not only do you provide us with excellent direction and legal representation, you came in under budget, which was drastically lower than what it was in the past. You've done a great job and I thank you for those efforts. I know that you have a difficult time working with five different commissioners and others pulling at you in a hundred different directions. Thank you so much for your leadership in that area and your legal advice and expertise.

I would like to again request the item that we discussed earlier, Item 13 that considered discussion and approval for additional funding for state lobbying services to defend Florida State Hospital to be re-agendaed for further discussion at our next meeting. I will put that in the form of a motion, please.

Taylor:  
There is a motion on the floor, is there a second?

Croley:  
I am going to second it.

Taylor:  
There is a motion and a second on the floor. All in favor of this motion let it be known by saying, "Aye."



Croley: Aye.  
Morgan: Aye.

Taylor:  
All opposed?

Holt: No.  
Lamb: No.  
Taylor: No.

Morgan:  
Alright. Thank you.

Further comment. You know, we opened today's meeting and we had an opportunity and we were listening to learn a lot about ourselves and how we govern and how it is to have a relationship with Gadsden County. I hope that we not only heard the words, but that we actually listened to the advice we were given. It is hard to do that sometimes. I remember growing up and I would rather get a pretty good beating than have to listen to a verbal talk from my parents about how to do the right thing and how to consider doing something differently. It is more painful to do that sometimes. But, it absolutely provides an opportunity. I hope that the words that Mr. Sachs spoke to us today and the advice he gave us – which we will listen to what he is saying.

I am extremely disappointed that he chose to fire Gadsden County as one of his clients. I know that is something that I know is not done easily. I certainly respect his decision because we don't want it to affect his company moving forward. Our area here in Gadsden County and Leon County, you know he is just well known, it is a spectacular firm over there and they have done a great job of not only helping people to brand themselves in a positive manner or whether it be a county government or municipality, private industry, individuals and new companies. He is extremely good at what he does. He didn't just wake up that way, he learned that skill. They are veterans who offer skills to us that we don't have even though sometimes we think we do. I hope we haven't severed the relationship that we can't have in the future. So, again, I would just encourage this board to listen to what we heard. Go to the Clerk's website and listen to what Mr. Sachs had to say to us and reflect on that. I think it will make us better as a governing board and in some ways as individuals trying to move the county forward in a good way.

Thank you very much and Merry Christmas!

**19e. Commissioner Taylor, Chair, District 5**

Taylor:  
Real quick. National Solar – We need to go ahead and schedule a meeting for that as soon as possible. When did you all have in mind? Where are you on the agreement? When will be the next best time?

Minnis:

Time wise, we can't move forward with the actual agreement to sign it until after the referendum has been voted on. Part of what they are asking for in the agreement is tax abatement. So, at this point in time, the county does not have the authority to move forward with that part of the agreement. We will also have to put an ordinance in place, which will require a couple of hearings. I have a draft ready, but because we have not been authorized by the referendum yet to do tax abatement, I am not releasing that until you have the authority to do so. It is ready. You won't be able to get the ordinance at the first meeting in January, which is when we hold our public hearings. We won't have enough time to advertise it after the January 31<sup>st</sup> election. We will be able to get it in on the first March meeting. February will be too close also for the same reason. We have to advertise ordinances for 10 days. So, after the election on January 31<sup>st</sup>, we will put it in the paper for 10 days. Our second meeting in February is not a public hearing meeting. So, our next public hearing meeting will be March.

But, we have everything and we are moving forward. We are looking at changing that National Solar suggested as far as the workshop. We are open to any requests or information that you want to provide us as an individual. If you want to email me individually, don't copy anybody else; just send it to us if you have some concerns about what is in the contract. We will be more than happy to look at those and further discuss it.

Holt:  
Madam Chairman?

Excuse me, I would like to see a copy of the draft before then so that I could see and go through it.

Minnis:  
At this point, the draft is the one that you would have gotten at the workshop. There have been no other drafts floating around except at the workshop.

Holt:  
But, those items that he said were not going to be in and they have not been changed to what?

Minnis:  
My understanding is and I will verify this that the draft you should have gotten on the 13<sup>th</sup> should have had the requested changes from National Solar from the first agreement that they sent out.

Holt:  
O.K. Alright. Thank you.

Taylor:  
Thank you.

So, it looks like in answer to your question that Ms. Minnis, it looks like that the first meeting in March – and we will schedule that as a regular public hearing so that we can entertain it.

Now Commissioners, what the attorney has said, and we do have some changes and some

recommendations and suggestions for this, that we need to email those to her. If I were you, on that particular day, I would not schedule too much on the agenda. We need time to discuss it. If it comes to the point that our negotiation does not allow us to vote on it, then of course, we can reschedule it. However, it will be agendaed as at particular time where we can vote on it if we come to the conclusion that it is a ready, set, go agreement. We certainly don't want to hold this agreement up. We don't want to hold up this company. But, then again, we are not going to sit here and sign off on just any kind of contract. It could come back to haunt us.

Minnis:  
Just so the public

Taylor:  
Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me.

Minnis:  
Oh, I am sorry. I didn't know you were not finished. I apologize.

Taylor:  
The idea here is that we get all input from all commissioners as well as the community and also allowing them to raise their concerns to Mr. Lawson. Then he can send them directly to the attorney. That is the avenue for that. This board is the only one that has authority to work directly with the attorney.

So, that is that. Now, I am going to hear from you and then we are going to hear from Commissioner Croley and then we are going on with mine and we are going to get out of here within the next five minutes.

Minis:  
Just for clarification, my request for emails does not mean that the entire contract will not be brought back in a public meeting for public comment as any other contract would be. This is just for me to get information to discuss with National Solar – whatever is put into that agreement for the board to consider signing off on will be brought back at a public meeting.

Taylor:  
Exactly. Because of comments being mailed to you does not necessarily mean that it will go into the contract or the draft. It will just be something that you will be ready to entertain.

Yes.

Croley:  
I think you have answered my question. It was mostly, Can the citizens get their information? You have answered that, so thank you.

**Simon Scott Senior Citizens Building Parking Lot**

Taylor:

Alright. Moving on, I would like to welcome the new EMS Director, Mr. Tommy Baker, a classmate of mine. We came out in 1975 together. I would like to welcome him and congratulate him on his return. Thank you very much, we are looking for brighter and better things as always in anything this county wants to do.

I did mention earlier, Commissioners, and someone mentioned during discussion about county buildings and things that are going on. We do own, as my understanding, the Senior Citizens Building. Again, I want to bring up about that parking lot out there with all the pot holes in it and the uneven concrete in it. Please because of their limited mobility and they come there in numbers and I am more than proud to say that it is a mixed group of people from different backgrounds and different ethnicity that comes to participate. **Please get somebody down there and fix that parking lot. If I need to put it in the form of a motion, I so move.**

Croley:  
**I will second it.**

Taylor:  
We have a motion and a second to have someone go down there and repave that whole.

Croley:  
Well, at least let us know what it cost.

Taylor:  
If we can do it within our own coffers, which we should be able to, please fix that parking lot. And the building itself just needs a whitewash, that is all. It is still standing really strong. It is ours and there are a minimum of things that we can do in-house. So, that is a part of my motion, Mr. Lawson, if you will insure that staff gets on that right away. It was brought to me by the same gentleman that comes in here. Mr. Scott. He has some very sever issues with the building. I told him that it was out of our hands and he needed to speak with you, Mr. Lawson on a bill that he received.

Moving real quickly.

Croley:  
We haven't voted yet.

Taylor:  
I am sorry. That is what you were saying. I thought you were saying, "I want a caveat."

There is a motion and a second.

Morgan:  
These discussions, are you talking about coming back to give us an amount of money it is going to take to get it repaired or you talking about going ahead to do it? I just want to clarify.

Croley:

He needs to get us the cost.

Lawson:

I will bring back the cost.

Morgan:

Before it is done?

Lawson:

Yes.

Morgan:

O.K.

Taylor:

But, if it is a minimum and it is in-house and we have it already budgeted, then we can do it if it is already budgeted for this year and it is available for it.

Croley :

Commissioner, I think we are on the same page if you will allow him to check it out.

Taylor:

Well, I just hate for us to prolong it for another 3 – 4 weeks especially given the fact that we have recognized it and have knowledge of it. I am just afraid if we can go ahead and take care of it since the dollars are there.

Croley:

You know Mr. Scott. He is

Lawson:

Madam Chair, I don't know how much the parking lot is going to cost. We may have to pull funds from somewhere else. Mr. Collins does not have extra funds in his budget. Also, there is an agreement in place with Senior Citizens that we take care of certain exterior parts of the building and they are supposed to take care of the interior parts. So, there are other issues involved than us just going down there and fixing stuff.

Taylor:

Well, the stuff is specific. What you just said was the exterior, which is our responsibility. The parking lot is what I am talking about. The outside white washing is still the exterior. So, you have confirmed what I am asking as far as our responsibilities.

Lawson:

But, I will still have to bring you back a cost on the parking lot. That is going to be maybe a pricey item.

Taylor:

Well, I am hoping we can get to it. Again, one look at the benefits of paving, we would probably look at Chapman as a possibility. I don't know. But, anyway, whatever you can do to come back to us as soon as possible.

That is a motion and a second. Did we carry it?

O.K. Thank you very much.

Morgan:  
I don't think you carried it.

Minnis:  
We had a motion, a second and discussion.

Taylor:  
We didn't vote for it?

Minnis:  
No, you didn't vote yet.

Taylor:  
Well, you know, toward the end we get a little tired and the one that works the hardest gets tired the most. And Mr. Croley, he works the hardest.

I am only kidding.

There is a motion and a second. All those in favor of this motion, please let it be known by saying, "Aye."

All: Aye.

Taylor:  
Opposed, the same sign.

(no response)

Taylor:  
Thank you, Commissioners. I apologize.

Real quick.

### **WorkForce Plus**

We need to get WorkForce Plus scheduled on the agenda to talk about its future in this county going forward. I did meet with the director to highlight some concerns that I have with WorkForce Plus, then received some information that is coming down the pipe that each

commissioner and the county needs to know as far as differences in the way that agency is going to function per the Legislature. So, we need to get that agendaed as soon as possible so we can share some information and then discuss it a little bit further. That is **a motion to have Workforce Plus come before us. When you hear that there are new things coming up through the Legislature as well as talk about the future as far as it can help us with economic development. That is my motion.**

**Croley:**  
I second it.

**Taylor:**  
There is a motion and a second. Any questions? Please say “no.” There is a motion and a second. All in favor of this motion please let it be known by saying, “Aye.”

**All:**  
Aye.

**Taylor:**  
Opposed, the same sign.

(no response)

**C.W. ROBERTS**

We need to know about C.W. Roberts. I know that they are out there and that we are at the very end of what they asked us for. We just need to know information only. Maybe one of the meetings in January we need to schedule that.

**Minnis:**  
Madam Chair, I was going to schedule that for the first meeting in January.

**Taylor:**  
Very good.

There were some pluses this morning that I am very proud of that we can put up under our coffers at the end of the year. There is \$37,000 check that came in from dividends. There is \$4 million in revenue that we now have. When I first got here, there was only \$800,000 in the fund balance when I came in in 2008.

We have a new facility that the Sheriff is looking at that could really turn this county around by stopping some of the crime wave that is going on if we just try and redirect spending. Building playgrounds and not jails is an awesome cliché’.

Funny thing, I have not served even one day on the TDC Board, not one day, and I must say that it is going to be interesting. I must say that at the very least, it is going to be very, very interesting and I welcome the challenge. I hear about a lot more opportunities in this county and a lot of events and activities are coming to this county. Let’ s get on board and work together. I would

never sit and allow anyone to offer criticism about this board. We all have our own unique talents. We all around this board want to see this county do well. We may approach it differently, but there is not one of us that do not want to see the quality of services extended to our citizens. All of us want that. But, to have someone talk viciously about us being divided and criticize us, you know, I think it is beyond what was needed at the time. People are welcomed to their own opinions and they are just like anyone else, they have their opinion, but I am proud to work with this board. I pray for this board all the time, individual commissioners and the administration. I pray for them all the time that He will keep in front of them what it is that we are supposed to be doing and that is to improve the quality of services for our citizens. That is my only desire up here. We might do it a little differently, but at the end of the day, it is going to come out right. All we've got to do is do what is right. To have the criticism that we had earlier is just God showing us that is was really baseless because of what came afterwards. Did you see what came afterward? What came afterwards was a check for \$37,000 check – first time in almost two years – not the first time, but the first time in this year that the Clerk sat there and congratulated us on \$275,000 surplus. He also congratulated us on this being the first time in 25 years that we did not have to support EMS. So, positive things that came after those comments. I would take that as fact that we are on the right directions. I thank God that I am serving with these four members that He has chosen to serve around this board. I thank God for it. For all that has happened here today and I am not worried about what is going to help next year. All we have to do is just do the right thing.

Have a happy and safe and prosperous new year. I thank God for every one of you. I plan to see you again on the third of January.

(Gavel sounded the meeting closed.)

### **Receipt and File Agenda**

- 19.** **For the Record:** Gadsden County Citizens Planning and Zoning Bill of Rights Meeting Minutes – August 23, 2011

### **Next Meeting dates:**

**January 2, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.**

**January 17, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.**



**ADJOURNMENT**

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD, THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING  
ADJOURNED AT 12:20 P.M.**

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**SHERRIE TAYLOR, CHAIR**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, CLERK**