

**AT A BUDGET HEARING OF THE BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR
SEPTEMBER 18, 2017 AT 6:00 P.M., THE
FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Sherrie Taylor, Chair, District 5**
 Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1
 Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2
 Gene Morgan, District 3
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Robert Presnell, County Administrator
 David Weiss, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair called the Final Budget hearing to order at 6:00 p.m., asked everyone to stand for the Invocation and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 4-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Final Budget Public Hearing for Adoption of the Final Millage Rate and Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2017/2018

Mr. Presnell explained this was the second and final public hearing. He said if there were any changes to be made, they needed to do that first to adjust the numbers and if none, they would proceed with the hearing.

Chair Taylor asked for them to look at the Final Millage rate first and asked for public input and there was none.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE TO ADOPT OPTION 1 AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOLT.

Mr. Presnell asked to read into the record before they voted. He said on September 7, 2017, after Board discussion and public comment regarding the tentative millage rate and budget, the Board adopted the tentative millage rate prior to adopting the tentative budget. The advertisement for the second public hearing ran in local papers on September 14, 2017 and the Board must adopt the Final Budget. For Fiscal Year 2017/2018 the final Gadsden County operating millage rate is 8.9064 mills. The calculated rolled-back millage rate is 8.8425 mills, which is 0.0639 mills less than the current rate of 8.9064 mills. The current year rate of 8.9064 mills as a percent change of the rolled-back rate is 0.72% more.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

CHAIR TAYLOR CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

Mr. Presnell said staff recommended approval of the final FY 2017/2018 budget of \$48,117,164.

Chair Taylor asked for public input and there was none.

Commissioner Hinson asked if there any new items or money had been added to the budget that the Board was unaware of. Mr. Presnell said not that he was aware of. Mr. Price said there had been no changes. Commissioner Hinson said he noticed Midway Senior Citizens had not been added in the budget, money was there but the name had not been added. Mr. Price said it was left off the Table of Contents, apologized for it, but the money was in the budget.

Commissioner Hinson asked why the Summer Youth was cut \$10,000. Mr. Price said they had received notification from the Board that FICA was taken out by mistake and listed separately and should have been combined. The total budget should have been for 120 and should have included FICA. Commissioner Hinson said the Board asked for 125 students plus 10 with the disabled children. Mr. Presnell explained the 10 was included in that figure. Commissioner Hinson said the Board asked for 125 students and Mr. Presnell explained with the taxes, they had to decrease the number to 120 to cover payroll taxes. Mr. Presnell explained there was \$120,000 budgeted. Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Holt said it was to be 125 students. Commissioner Holt asked if FICA was taken out of their check and Mr. Presnell said yes and the County had to match it. Commissioner Holt said if they had 125 students, there would not be enough money to match FICA. Mr. Price said they had budgeted \$111,000 plus the \$9,000 to match the FICA.

Commissioner Morgan asked if they were changing the amount in the Budget. Mr. Presnell said they would have to add to change from \$48,117,164 to \$48,117,174.

Commissioner Morgan asked how much they were currently spending on the Summer Youth Program and Mr. Presnell said \$120,000. Commissioner Morgan said they were now proposing to spend \$130,000-Presnell said yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his concern was not the summer program; he said he had not seen the \$50,000 for the Veterans Memorial monument for the Courthouse. Mr. Presnell said it was added.

Commissioner Holt asked about parks. Mr. Presnell said they were instructed to add a total of \$30,000 for the two parks.

Commissioner Holt asked for clarification on the summer program. Mr. Presnell said they were doing 125 students and they would have to cover the FICA and asked Mr. Price if \$130,000 would cover and Mr. Price suggested they find it within the budget so they would not have to change the budget.

Commissioner Morgan asked why they were increasing the number and Commissioner Hinson said they were doing what they were told to do last year.

Commissioner Hinson said he still felt uncomfortable about something. He said he did not want to say anything but he had the same problem last year. He said there was a funding source that each

Board member had \$10,000 to spend and thought that should go up to \$15,000-\$25,000. Chair Taylor asked if that was for emergency repairs and Commissioner Hinson said yes. Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not catch what the Commissioner said. Commissioner Hinson said they had an emergency funding and each Board member had at least \$10,000 and felt they should increase it to \$15,000-\$25,000 for each commissioner. Commissioner Morgan asked what he was talking about. Chair Taylor said there was a motion on the floor. She then said motion failed for lack of second.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO INCREASE THE EMERGENCY HOUSING FUND TO \$20,000 FOR EACH COMMISSIONER TO SPEND AND CHAIR TAYLOR MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER MORGAN HAD QUESTIONS.

Commissioner Morgan asked what they were talking about. Chair Taylor said there was a fund they started years back for emergency management where each Commissioner was given \$10,000 to help with roofs, floors, windows, etc. that constituents in their district might need. Mr. Presnell said it was currently listed as emergency housing. Commissioner Morgan said they wanted to now double that to \$100,000 and Chair Taylor said yes. Commissioner Morgan said they were telling everyone no on paving roads but adding money to replace a statue that was there; doubling money on this, increasing summer youth dollars and asked if that was really the priority they wanted to line up here on this budget?

Chair Taylor said there were three that wanted to get roads paved, Commissioner Holt, himself and her that supported getting the dirt roads paved. Commissioner Morgan said it was not in the budget. Chair Taylor said the quagmire was how to get the funding to do it. Commissioner Morgan said he had laid out a three year plan on how to do it without borrowing the money.

Commissioner Holt said repairs would come back before the Board before being approved and that the Commissioner could not approve it themselves on what to do and it did not look good during campaign years. Chair Taylor said they eventually come before the Board and Mr. Presnell pointed out if under a certain amount it would not come before the Board. Commissioner Hinson said whatever they have been doing, to continue. He felt like there was a serious need and he just wanted an increase of \$10,000.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he understood what Commissioner Hinson said and there was a possibility that no money would be used. He asked with all expenditures they were considering, where would the money come from to make the budget balance. Mr. Presnell said it would be increasing the budget by \$50,000 and was not sure they could find that within the budget so it would change the numbers and therefore would come from the cash balance. Commissioner Viegbesie asked if \$20,000 discretionary housing emergency would have less of a burden on the budget than \$20,000 per commissioner. He suggested if it did, Commissioner Hinson amend his motion to \$15,000 to relieve some of the pressure in their ability to balance the budget. He said he knew that someone had to pay money and it was taxpayers' money. He added if Commissioner Hinson was willing to reduce the amount from \$20,000 to \$15,000, he was willing to go with it.

Chair Taylor said either way they would have to tap into the reserves and she was happy for the increase because she always used all of hers by December and was pleased with whatever increase she could get. She added if they could do it one time it would be helpful to lot of people.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked Mr. Presnell what burden it would put on Staff's ability to balance

the budget without going further into reserves. Mr. Presnell felt with \$5,000 for a total of \$25,000 there could be enough cuts made it make it work. He said he was concerned about \$50,000 and they would increase the budget number by that amount; the money was in the cash reserves.

Commissioner Hinson said for them to try it for this year; if it did not work go back to the previous year.

Commissioner Holt asked for an opinion from the attorney and asked if she chose to put a ramp on one house and not another, what would happen? Mr. Weiss asked if the nature of this program was similar to the SHIP program and Commissioner Holt said no. Mr. Weiss said his impression was this was a SHIP type program that was funded with County funds not State but was the same type process. Mr. Presnell said it was mirrored after the SHIP program and the Board adopted a similar plan with no waiting list, it was first come first serve. Mr. Weiss said he would need to look into the program before giving an opinion. Commissioner Holt said she would like to know how to do this before spending any money. Mr. Weiss said at this point, to put money into the budget to fund it, and he would look into it before spending the money.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he had referred two to Ms. DeSilva and was not sure if the money came from his "allotment".

Chair Taylor agreed they should be consistent.

Commissioner Morgan asked the attorney if they were talking about moving monies around to meet the request and Mr. Presnell said if they did the \$25,000 increase that would be his position but if they did the \$50,000 they would need to change numbers. Mr. Weiss said they needed to have a final number. Commissioner Morgan asked if they were voting on budget or budget dollars. Mr. Weiss said they needed to find where it would be moved from.

Commissioner Taylor asked the Administrator to identify the funding source and he said the Reserves would be the simplest and they would go from \$117,000 to \$167,000 in their motion.

Chair Taylor asked Mr. Presnell to give them the total and he said \$48,167,164. Chair Taylor said with that amount being said, she asked Commissioner Morgan if he had comments and he felt it would make no difference. Commissioner Holt said as long as she got the legal opinion, she was good. Commissioner Viegbesie said his concern was still how that would impact the fiscal stability of the County and he was not comfortable with \$50,000 but was ok with \$25,000. Commissioner Hinson said it sounded great to him.

Chair Taylor asked Commissioner Hinson to put that amount out.

Commissioner Morgan pointed out there was a motion on the floor. Chair Taylor asked what the motion was and Commissioner Hinson said for \$20,000. Chair Taylor asked if he would withdraw his motion and she would withdraw her second.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the budget was increasing and asked where the difference was coming from. Chair Taylor asked if he was suggesting to put that in the motion where the money was coming from.

UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HINSON TO INCREASE THE BUDGET BY \$10,000 AND CHAIR TAYLOR MADE THE SECOND, THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE AND COMMISSIONER MORGAN OPPOSED. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BUDGET OF \$48,167,164 AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER MORGAN OPPOSED. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Morgan left the meeting at this juncture.

Chair Taylor said she would like at some point, to address the dirt roads and see if they could come up with an avenue to get the roads done.

Commissioner Holt said they have people on dirt roads that cannot get in and out. Chair Taylor said she supported them before on trying to get that done; they just could not come up with a way to pay for it.

Commissioner Hinson said he would go with \$350,000 to her; \$350,000 to Morgan; \$125,000 to V and remainder he and Chair Taylor split.

Commissioner Holt said the reason there would be a kick-back on it would be because people have been waiting so long. She added that when Commissioner Watson was the commissioner, they agreed his roads got paved, his people have been enjoying those roads all these years and everyone else had been left in the mud. Now because the commissioners changed, they were asking how they could go back on their word and they are correct and now they “want to split the baby” and people are upset. She said to not split the money when came to them because it was \$10 Million over here.

Commissioner Hinson said he was for everyone, but where he was coming from this year, they got almost \$400,000 in addition.

Chair Taylor said they had passed the budget and asked that they come back and find common ground to get this done.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they need to schedule a retreat to discuss paved roads that affect the districts. Chair Taylor and Commissioner Hinson agreed with him.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
September 18, 2017 – Budget Hearing

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THEM, CHAIR TAYLOR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 6:45 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

BRENDA HOLT, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk