

**AT A BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JULY 18, 2019 AT 4:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:**       **Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, Chair, District 2**  
                  **Sherrie Taylor, Vice Chair, District 5-absent**  
                  **Eric Hinson, District 2-arrived late**  
                  **Gene Morgan, District 3-absent**  
                  **Brenda Holt, District 4**  
                  **Arthur Lawson, Interim County Administrator**  
                  **David Weiss, County Attorney**  
                  **Nicholas Thomas, Clerk**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Viegbesie called the Budget workshop to order at 4:04 p.m.

**Shirley Knight, Supervisor of Elections**, gave the Invocation and the Chair Viegbesie led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**Citizens Requesting to be Heard**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**1. Introduction and Summary Highlights**

Mr. Lawson said this was the third workshop and would update the Board where they were at in the budget process. He said the next meeting would not be a workshop but a special meeting and would like to gather as much information as possible.

**Recap of General Fund balance.**

Mr. Price showed the draft budget for the upcoming fiscal year and said the revenue was a little flat. He said he thought the Gas Tax and Sales Tax would be up a little more but really did not move much. He said Personnel this year were the big thing and there were new positions in the budget that were up for consideration and they enhanced a few.

He said the projects this year were: Cell towers; the Dispatch center; Greenshade Fire Department; moving EMS; and Stevens School.

He said Public Works has asked for equipment and that they needed the most was two motor graders w/ slopers; one backhoe loader; and double drum compactor

He gave a list of required expenditures that was listed in the hand-out as was the list of not required expenditures.

**2. Constitutional Officers FY20 Budget Request**

**Clerk of Court**

Commissioner Holt asked about the increase in the Clerk's budget. Mr. Thomas explained the amount in 2019 was the same for the past 3 years for IT. There was a need for new equipment, to cover health insurance, FRS increase, updating equipment, maintenance increase, been ongoing problem with budget in IT, had two people and Board covered approximately 73% for second person and they have continued to ask the Board to cover the whole amount. He quoted F.S. 29.008. He said the Finance Department 2019 budget was the same as the 2018 budget and he has had to absorb costs. He said included in the request was for basic things and also was an estimated pay-out for the Finance Director's retirement which was anticipated next summer.

Chair Viegbesie said if he recalled when he met with the auditor, he mentioned a debt deficiency from the Office of Clerk, they mentioned he did not have someone in the Accounts Receivable and did this account for that person. The Clerk said he had to absorb costs and he left a position vacant for number of months to make the budget balance. He said he recently filled that position, but he was going to maintain that and needed to cover the costs mentioned. Commissioner Holt asked if it was a new position and the Clerk stated no, it was one someone left and was left vacant and was filled few months ago. Commissioner Holt asked how much that position was and the Clerk responded.

*Commissioner Hinson arrived at 4:20 p.m.*

**Property Appraiser**

Reginald Cunningham, Property Appraiser, appeared before the Board. He said the only increase they would see is an overlapping position as Mr. Mayo would be leaving in approximately 1 ½ years and this would give them time to hire and train his replacement.

**Sheriff's Department**

Katherine Pondexter appeared before the Board. She presented documentation to the Board. She explained that statutorily they have to establish a Court Services Department. She said they have reduced the Law Enforcement budget to establish Court Services. She explained when the Bailiff unit was out of Court they usually serve as a Resource Officer or go on road or on the SWAT Team. She said because of that they were requesting additional vehicles for them and mobile data computers so they could perform jobs when they were on the road.

Chair Viegbesie asked what they were doing to increase retention and she said the Sheriff was in the process of doing a salary study.

Commissioner Holt felt they should sit down at the table and talk this over.

Capt. Bobby Collins appeared before the Board. Commissioner Holt said she was concerned about the program. He said part of the screening process included psychological screening, along with other necessary trainings.

**Supervisor of Elections**

**Shirley Knight, Supervisor of Elections**, appeared before the Board. She said she had received a grant for upgrade last year and now has to maintain contracts, licenses, and renewal fees and was where most of the increases came in.

She explained travel was an increase as they were required to be trained for cyber security and have to attend workshops and attend training; postage has increased; she said there was an increase in machinery because it was an ongoing process of upgrading equipment, services and for election day they have to upgrade communication. She said 32 counties were involved in a lawsuit regarding having to produce Spanish speaking ballots, envelopes, precinct signs, sample ballots, websites, pamphlets, Notice of Elections and while this County was not one of the involved counties, but would be pulled into the lawsuit. She said they also have to maintain the website and make sure it was ADA compliant. She said there were two elections coming up in this budget cycle.

Commissioner Holt said she knew her office was ADA compliant, but knew Gretna was being sued.

There was discussion regarding paper vs. touchscreen ballots.

### **Tax Collector**

**Dale Summerford, Tax Collector**, appeared before the Board. His budget is funded from fees and services they provide on a regular basis. After the end of the fiscal year 2018, he has to project the number of driver's licenses and tags they would be renewing, people that will be delinquent on their taxes, people that will fail their driving test, how many drivers' licenses will be suspended etc. He said for 2018 they returned approximately \$42,000. In the past the Board but in roughly \$40,000 as a contingency and this past year it was \$45,000. He said at the end of 2018 he returned all of the \$45,000 back to the Board and this year for the end of 2019 he would not be drawing it and he would be Mr. Lawson and Mr. Price they could cut the \$45,000 down to \$25,000 and hopefully that would help. He said overall his budget was around \$850,000 and the bulk of that was \$445,000 was from collecting the tax role and the other was from fees from State services that he provided.

Chair Viegbesie asked Mr. Summerford how automated was his operation was and how was that reflected in his budget. He responded 75% of his work was collecting for the State of Florida and the other was collecting property taxes. He said being an agent for the State; he was at the mercy of the State and with the way they continue to cut things there affects a couple of the agencies he represents, primarily the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. He said all the equipment that was used in his office belongs to the State of Florida and the server also belonged to the State of Florida. He said he had concerns that in the future he would have to update some of the PC's and the software. He said he did have concerns about the ADA issue.

Commissioner Holt asked how the hurricane affected property owners. Mr. Summerford said one thing they did shortly after the storm was to include a flyer in the tax bill if anyone received damage to let the Property Appraiser know and there had been a decent response. Mr. Cunningham said once they called the office or his guys went out and saw the damage and the tarps still on top of the houses, they readjusted the value but it was just a short-term for that particular year. He said they did receive new growth that would offset the discounts that were given to the citizens but they would have to call and they would have to see it. He said if they made the repairs prior to January they would not get a discount but afterwards they would.

Commissioner Holt said that meant Planning and Zoning needed to be working with them and Mr. Cunningham said they were, when permits were issued they automatically received the information.

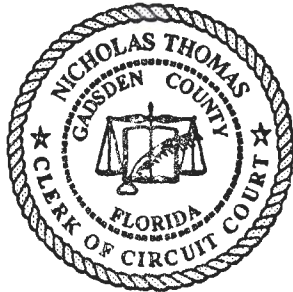
Gadsden County Board of County Commission  
July 18, 2019-Budget Workshop

Mr. Summerford said he felt good about, he has been in meetings with the new Director of DOR and they approve tax role, and they were continuing with what has happened and they were blessed in this County compared to some west of here where they lost 40 to 50% of their tax role.

**3. Board of County Commissioners Priorities and Directions**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR VIEGBESIE DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 5:08 P.M.



GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

  
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ANTHONY VIEGBESIE, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk