

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

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

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Dixon said he would like to add a Proclamation for National Association of Women in Construction, pull Item 12-St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use and add Item 13a-Debris Removal contract.

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**National Association of Women in Construction**

Chair Holt presented a Proclamation to Kerwyn Wilson, President of the Tallahassee Chapter in honor of the National Association of Women in Construction and she spoke a few words.

**CONSENT**

Commissioner NeSmith disclosed he was a member of the organization Men of Gadsden, Inc. associated with Item 5.

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

- 1.     Ratification Memo**
  
- 2.     Approval of Minutes**
  - **September 11, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **October 2, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 4, 2020- Emergency Meeting**
  - **December 15, 2020-Workshop**
  - **December 22, 2020-Emergency Meeting**
  - **February 2, 2021-Regular Meeting**

3. **Approval of the West Florida Livestock Show**
4. **Approval of a Resolution in Recognition of Red Cross Month**
5. **Approval for Adopt-A-Road Agreement with Men of Gadsden, Inc. for Barack Obama Blvd.**
6. **Approval of a Proclamation of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Florida's North Florida Research and Education Center**

#### **ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

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

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

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

Chair Holt read aloud the COVID statement.

**Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL** - Miscellaneous – appeared before the Board. He said he wanted to speak on behalf of M.G.C.B. Inc. that he represented as well as other citizens that have called him about concerns relative to the broadband issue. He knew it had been a challenging time for everybody and has received calls from upset citizens. He said he was here tonight to ask them to work through whatever the issues were to resolve the issue in best way that was most favorable to meeting the needs of the citizens. He said he had read the contracts, at least four or five previous or revised versions of the contracts-and read the minutes from meetings discussing the contracts and the formation of them. He felt it was a good idea for commissioners to review minutes of previous meetings to ensure they do not make statements or take positions that were totally contradictory to their previous positions without reasonable cause. He said he was convinced that with patience, perseverance and prayer, the dispute could be settled to the best interests of the citizens. He asked them to keep in mind they represent many citizens who may seem to be voiceless and quietly suffering under the disadvantages imposed upon them through no fault of their own was often the least, last, the left out and looked over and asked they continue to work hard for the people they serve. He asked them to be patient as this issue was worked out and resolved.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

7. **Approval of the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID**

Mr. Dixon introduced above item and said it was for the approval to add the Safe and Healthy Regional COVID-19 Public Service Campaign/Helping the Big Bend Get Past COVID to the current CARES Act spending plan.

He stated to date, the County had its partner, the Gadsden County Health Council (GCHC) have already successfully invested \$65,000 in COVID-19 targeted campaigning and this would be a continuation of the funds for the inclusion of the vaccination component of this already effective campaign. He added they were asking the County to become part of a unified message and was asking for \$25,000 and for the Board to approve Option 1.

**Ron Sachs** appeared before the Board. Mr. Sachs thanked the Board for the opportunity to appear before them tonight and spoke on the campaign.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested he considered a number of members of the religious community and pastors to help reach out to their members concerning this and to encourage them to take the vaccine.

Commissioner Hinson said he did not know Mr. Sachs personally, but his issue was he tried to go into the hardest communities in the County. He felt they needed to start reinvesting back into this community.

Commissioner Green said for clarity, this did not cover just Gadsden County and Mr. Sachs said correct.

Mr. Sachs said he was very sensitive to Commissioner Hinson's comments but this media market was very cost effective.

Commissioner Green said he did understand where Commissioner Hinson was coming from. He also had a question about the funding source and understood it could come from the general fund or CARES Act funding and felt they should utilize the CARES funding.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only request was the voices and faces in the religious community be used and hoped Mr. Sachs would consider using the Church leadership from Gadsden County to help people feel more comfortable about the safety of the vaccine.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if this was a continuation and Mr. Sachs said yes. They received money for COVID is Real campaign of \$65,000. This was a new campaign.

Mr. Dixon said the County did not have a tv or radio market and they felt this was the best way to reach and educate people.

Chair Holt said they knew what the population looked like and there was a need to invest something and they have to take the initiative to look after the people in the countryside. She agreed with Commissioner Hinson's comment of the need of local people to be a voice.

Commissioner Viegbesie said \$25,000 to be a part of this regional plan and meant they were moving towards a regional collaboration and at the right time he would make a motion to approve.

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

Commissioner Green asked the longevity of the marketing plan. Mr. Sachs said the campaign was expected to go through the middle of the summer and felt some of the funders would consider expanding it. He said a lot would rely on their ability to negotiate bonus values, additional air time and space with media organizations, etc.

Commissioner Hinson said again, this was very strategic and he had no doubt of the marketing skills. He said he would not stop because they were helping somebody and they need to come up with a plan.

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

**8. Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was presented for direction or action regarding Gadsden County's Legislative Advocacy Services and Public Relation Services.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Mr. Dixon continued and said they were looking to extend the contract for Lawson & Associates and currently the County did not have a lobbyist.

Commissioner Hinson had a question. He stated they set aside \$40,000, he was talking to a consultant and told them of the need for more resources.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the County had a lobbying firm and was told the County HAD a lobbying firm with Lawson and Associates. He asked if there had been reports and Chair Holt said not to the Board but to her because she called them every week.

Commissioner Green he was going to ask their accomplishments from the previous lobbyists they had and how has the County benefited from and what they were going by. He said if they had nothing to go by or anything from the services where the County had benefited, his option would be for Option 2 but would like to be given the opportunity to know what the firm has accomplished that benefited the County.

Chair Holt said this has been a very unusual last three years; they have been in and out with cities, putting monies together going after a list of items they wanted and there was confusion as to the list. She said the lobbyist met to settle it and then it was the Senator at that time told her what the problems were with that and some fell back on the County. That was two years ago and last year the problem came in that some things the cities wanted to pull out, the County stayed and Commissioner Taylor suggested they go ahead with the same list of agenda items they had the year before. Somehow that did not make it to the Delegation or the Delegation said there was a concern. The Lobbyist told Chair Holt that everyone had to be on the same page. She said everything would start the next week and there was not a lot of time. She added that the cities decided they did not want to work on a compiled list this year because of all the confusion in the past.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in politics, you've got to play if you want to win and no-one here has skillsets to play the game of lobbying. He said the position Commissioner Green has taken was what he had written in his notes. The process to follow should be the County Procurement process but now they did not have the time. Session has already started today. The current provider is Lawson & Associates, and they all knew that his height was not just physiological and he has connections. He added that \$25,000 was actually a "pro-bono" fee and he was going to vote in support of retaining them for this year.

Commissioner Green said it made sense to move forward for the sake of time but sked when this item could this be placed back on the Agenda so that if they did not see the productivity they were expecting from the lobbyist services. He said they could add this to the agenda in the upcoming months to talk about lobbying for the next year.

Commissioner Hinson said this disturbed him a little...Chair asked for him to let them vote on this. He asked for some respect. They just approved \$25,000 and few months ago gave them \$65,000. He said they needed to change their mindset.

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

Commissioner Viegbesie asked for point of clarity, Commissioner Green made the comment a few minutes ago and asked if he would consider adding the beginning of the development of the Legislative Agenda for next session, even if they had to add workshops to develop to work on the Legislative Agenda for the next session.

Chair Holt asked when they would start budget and that would determine the kind of lobbyists they would get. Mr. Dixon said they would start as soon as possible and would try to start in late April. He also said they would make sure they get reports from the lobbyists on a regular basis. He said they would be active, be progressive and assertive as they possibly could be. Chair Holt added they would always tell you to have things ready in July the year before.

**9. Approval for Gadsden Road Inventory Professional Engineering Services Task Order**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the task order for Dewberry as the engineer to provide professional services for the Gadsden Road Inventory Project for Gadsden County.

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

**10. District 5 Striping Project Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval o award the District 5 Striping 5 Project to Emerald Coast Striping in the amount of \$71,064.00.

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

**11. Quincy Senior Services Roof Replacement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented for the Simon Scott Senior Services Building Roof replacement contract.

Commissioner Viegbesie had a question and asked if there would be a guarantee of no change order of this item in the future.

Mr. Knowles said there is an amendment clause that requires written approval if they go over a certain amount.

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

Commissioner Hinson had a comment and asked what type of roof was approved? He added that certain types of materials made it hard to get service on cellphones.

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

**12. St. Hebron Walk and Bike for Life Trail Notice of Limitations of Use**  
**ITEM PULLED**

**13. Approval of FDOT Grant Resolution**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval of Resolution Number 2021-011 and for authorization for staff to submit the 2021 FDOT SCRAP, SCOP and CIGP applications.

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

**13a Approval for Debris Removal**

Mr. Knowles introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the disaster debris contract for debris removal.

Chair Holt asked for fiscal impact and Mr. Knowles there was no fiscal impact said this was two new contractors

Chair Holt asked if any of the contractors had a history and they need to have one under contract. She asked for some information on the contractors.

Mr. Dixon said the Asst. Administrator comes from "hurricane alley".

**Georgette Daniels, Asst. County Administrator**, appeared before Board. And stated that Miami used Ashbritt. After Hurricane Irma, the State and Homeland Security put measures in place to prevent price gouging.

Commissioner Hinson asked if this was added today. Mr. Knowles said no, he tried to add this to the last agenda and the meeting was canceled. Commissioner Hinson said this was already approved and was bringing the contract back for ratification. Commissioner Hinson said after Hurricane Michael, very few locals got contracts. He added that it sounded like an easy motion but did impact our community and lot of people lost money in 2018. He said they needed to look into this before voting on this.

Chair Holt said they added a clause to the contract for minority carve-out.

Commissioner Viegbesie said they were retaining a service provider. If they wait until a hurricane comes, they may not be able to be competitive. Fortunately, when Hurricane Michael hit, they had a contractor under contract. He added he did not believe local sub-contractors would have heavy equipment to move trees, etc. He also said he had no problem with tabling this item so it could be read thoroughly so no-one had heartburn.

Commissioner Green asked if this item had been bid and was going to concur for local workers. He also stated he was going to ask if they could look at this at the next meeting.

Mr. Knowles said on page 13 was language utilizing and hiring local workers.

Chair Holt said she had no problem waiting until the next meeting and discussing this.

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

#### **CLERK OF COURT**

#### **14. Updates**

#### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

#### **15. Updates**

Mr. Dixon gave upcoming dates for the calendar:

Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00 p.m. was the public meeting for the CDBG Program;  
Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30 is Pre-BOCC Meeting and Gadsden Development Council;  
Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> is the Legislative Day at the Capitol

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this was the FAC Legislative Day and Mr. Dixon said yes. Commissioner Viegbesie informed them he had registered but was doing his virtual.

He added Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> was a tentative date from 4:00 -8:00 p.m. for the follow-up for the retreat that was held earlier.

Chair Holt said the Board needed to come up with ideas on the funding they were looking to get.

Mr. Dixon then said for clarity, they kept talking about the \$65,000 from the Board (for the COVID public service campaign), the first \$40,000 came from the Gadsden County Health Council.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

#### **16 Updates**

Mr. Knowles thanked everyone for the well wishes on the birth of their daughter.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

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

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

Commissioner Hinson said he had phone calls about the Senior Citizens funding and they said they were having issues about receiving their funding and he thought the Board had approved funding for all of them. Mr. Dixon said he would check it out.

He said he also talked with Representative Al Lawson today and was told the Board needed to look into finding one major project they could come together for.

#### **CARES Act**

He said they need to put a date tonight and have a workshop. He said he knew all the money has not come in yet but at least they could look at how to distribute it.

He said the reason he was so passionate about the project, in 2018 they were giving subcontractors \$7,000/day to pick up debris and a lot of people lost a lot of money because they never got the opportunity.

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

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Board for an awesome retreat they had on Saturday and he was looking forward to feedback.

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

Commissioner Green said, as Commissioner NeSmith had stated, the week-end went well and he was excited about the 23<sup>rd</sup> for the continuation of what they started.

He added they had a good board and was very excited about working with the Board.

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

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was going to mention when the Administrator was making his comments. They need to plan in advance and asked that Mr. Dixon request that the County be able to submit on time a request to be included in the FAC Calendar.

He stated he also wanted to add marketing pictures from the County. He said he would like to have a picture of the County on his virtual Zoom rather than anything else in the background and wanted to use something that would highlight Gadsden County.

#### **COVID-19 Vaccine Initiative**

He said he was glad they were working on this. The School Board has a motor home that was currently sitting somewhere and did not understand why they could not reach out to the school district to collaborate with them in using the motor home and work with the Health Council and the Churches to reach different areas of the County to furnish vaccinations to eligible citizens.



**Library**

He was contacted by a citizen about participation in library reciprocity, meaning if someone had a library card from Gadsden County, there was a reciprocity of agreement or arrangement that most libraries have that your card would be accepted for use in their county and their card would be accepted for use in our libraries. He asked if that could be explored.

He said they needed to work toward renewable energy with their fleets. He added that in their budgetary process, they needed to look into renewable energy to get away from gas.

**Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Chair Holt said they needed to do research before they come back to the next meeting.

Mr. Dixon said when he does not give dates certain, it was not because he did not understand, they did not have that kind of staff that can do that job.

Chair Holt said when they give staff the opportunity to do research, they need to do their research as well.

She said she was still trying to figure out how to do a clean-up campaign. Mr. Dixon said they would be bringing them a copy of a plan.

She said they needed to plan a trip to look at some projects, maybe a virtual trip, but needed to plan on looking at some of the things they keep talking about.

She then stated when the cities are annexing, they need to annex the roads as well.

Commissioner Viegbesie suggested for Mr. Dixon and the Public Works Director to look at when resurfacing the roads, was there somewhere where the millings are stored?

**Curtis Young, Interim Public Works Director**, appeared before the Board. He said they have done that in the past and when they could, they give the County millings and they could be reused. He explained there were two pits they can store the millings at. Mr. Young said it also depended on if the road was milled.

Chair Holt said it may also depend on what their bid was too. There are times the State keeps the millings.

**Receipt and File**

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 2, 2021 – Regular Meeting

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:55 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**