

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 1, 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
Kimblin NeSmith, District 3
Ronterious "Ron" Green, District 5
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Holt called the meeting to order 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 asked to pull Item 7 and Item 11. Mr. Knowles asked to pull Item 9.

Chair Holt asked to add Item 5a-Citizens to Speak regarding the timer being used.

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

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

CONSENT

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

1. Ratification Memo
2. Approval of Minutes
 - April 6, 2021 Regular Meeting
3. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract-SHIP Program

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 and anticipate receiving a response within 48 hours.

Commissioner NeSmith read aloud the COVID-19 statement.

Alice Grandberry, 223 Whetherbine Way West, Tallahassee, FL appeared before the Board. She has 4.09 acres on Woodberry Road and has been denied the ability to build on that property because the property was classified as 1 per 5 acres. She was advised to speak with Ms. Bradley to make an appointment to speak with Mr. Dixon regarding same.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

4. Public Hearing-Quasi-Judicial-Harbin Road Cruz Soccer & Recreational Complex Special Exception Use (SEU 2021-02)

Mr. Knowles explained there was a timer placed at the podium that will be operated by the Chair and will allow citizens to speak for 3 minutes. He also said they have discussed and will be adding to their Policies and Procedures to “Decorum” a time limit on Commissioners speaking on items.

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for consideration of an application for a Special Exception Use for the Harbin Road Cruz Soccer and Recreational Complex.

Jill Jeglie Reeves, AICP, Senior Planner, appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. She gave a brief synopsis of the agenda item.

Daniel Cruz, 1960 West King Street, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He read aloud his statement regarding himself and soccer.

Chair Holt separated the Speaker Request forms into ones for and against the Special Exception Change.

William Martinez, 1960 West King Street, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Alicia Martinez, 1960 W. King Street, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Jonathon Garcia, 57 Dewey Johnson Way, Quincy, FL, appeared before the board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Yesenia Gonzolez, 85 Penny Kever Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Stanley Johnson, 898 Joe Adams Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Jaquelin Cruz, 5845 Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Bishop Willie C. Green, 296 Bradwell Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He spoke in favor of this item.

A citizen in the audience spoke up, asked for respect and said there were people talking in the Chamber behind peoples' back and could incite something. Chair asked that there be no talking in the Chambers and for the audience be respectful of the ones coming up.

Marlon Phillips, 179 Alday Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He said he has lived there 37 years, and spoke against this item.

Juan Hernandez, 221 E. Franklin Street, Quincy, FL was sworn in by Deputy Clerk and spoke against the soccer field.

Benancio Luna, 1401 Gilchrist Street, Quincy, FL, appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said it would be a huge problem and was not the place for a soccer field.

Alberto Arriaga, 979 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said it was a narrow road, was very dangerous, and was not built for that traffic.

Kevin Magana, 936 S. Cleveland Street, Quincy, FL, appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. He said there were two fields on MLK Blvd. that were not being used for softball and could easily be changed to fit for soccer.

Nancy Romero, 1020 S. Magnolia Drive, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item. She stated this was a residential area and asked what was the purpose of having a business in a residential area.

Yesenia Romero, 1020 S. Magnolia Drive, Quincy, FL (Nancy Romero translated for her and was sworn in and she translated for Yesenia) She stated she was not against them having soccer but it should be in an appropriate location. She asked if this area was residential, commercial or both. **Diane Quigley, AICP, Growth Development Director**, said it was zoned agricultural. She asked if it was a residential area, for them to find an appropriate place this could go. She added she was not saying the ones running the league would cause problems, but they could not control others that will be there.

Eduardo Monroy, 1396 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. He stated he was not totally against this item. But the point was, he was about to build a house and moved there to have peace with his family.

Chair Holt then stated she had a letter from Martha Arellano that was opposed to the soccer field.

Chris Arellano, 1531 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in opposition of the location of this item. He said he was not against what Mr. Cruz was attempting to do, but was against the location.

Arturo Magana, 936 S. Cleveland Street, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke against this item.

Cynthia Reese-Donaldson, 1066 Harbin Road, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in opposition to this item. She stated she just purchased property and built her house and wanted to be able to sit outside and enjoy her property.

Adam Gaffey, 350 Rozena Loop, Havana, FL appeared before the Board, was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of this item.

Erica Rojas, 1302 Carson Drive, Tallahassee, FL was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk and spoke in favor of the soccer field.

Chair Holt said they would now move to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Green thanked everyone that appeared tonight. He asked how many spoke in favor of and how many spoke against this item. He said he was torn about this, understood the impact of growth and opportunities and the impact it may have. On the flip-side of it, he also understood if he purchased property in a certain area to build a home and wanted peace. He said this would never be a win-win for everyone. He wished they could meet halfway and have options in making this work for everyone. He added that he heard what people said about there were other places this could have gone and asked if he had measured out all options before purchasing the property.

Danny Cruz re-appeared before the Board to answer questions the Board members had. He said he used to be on Salem Road and some people had mentioned he was “kicked out”. He said they were not kicked out, they decided to move to another location because it was a bigger area. He said they tried to find a location that would be suitable for the community but was unable to find it. He tried to make arrangements to have a youth league here and it never happened. He also said when they bought the land, there were no houses around. He added that the neighbors were welcome to exercise and ride their four-wheelers on the property.

Chair Holt said to Commissioner Green the number was 88.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was also a soccer player from Nigeria. He said Soccer was a religion to those that watch it. He commented he was for soccer but was also for community harmony. When he read the letter that came with the application, the request was this property should be approved because it would be used to provide vegetables for the community and would also be a recreational area for all soccer youth.

Mr. Cruz reappeared before the Board and said there would not be any partying going on. He added that he was responsible for his actions and an officer would be placed at the corners to make sure there was no traffic. One part would be used for agriculture and the other part for soccer. Commissioner Viegbesie said this has been said numerous times about considering different locations that had quick access to citizens. He asked why he was not working in collaboration with 5F Farms in Havana and what led to the “divorce”.

Mr. Cruz said from the games Commissioner Viegbesie spoke of, he was in charge. Due to how small it was, he considered there needed to be a better entrance. He said he looked for a better centrally located property.

Commissioner Viegbesie stated he had a question of Diane Quigley. She appeared before the Board and was sworn in by the Deputy Clerk. She stated this application was for soccer, they have not talked about special events such as is done at 5F Farms. She stated 5F Farms operates under the Florida Statute of agritourism; a working farm and was exempt and could promote weddings and other activities that was classified under that statute. She said there will be a traffic study done and they may have to put in turn lanes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked what if the applicant did not meet the traffic and road requirements?

Ms. Quigley said today was only to allow him to permit to do the soccer complex as a special use under the agriculture and was a land use approval. It will come back to the Board for review and approval.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he felt Mr. Cruz needed to sit down with the people and see what their concerns were.

Commissioner NeSmith said Commissioner Green and Commissioner Viegbesie did an excellent job in echoing what he wanted to say. He was trying to balance youth activities and economic growth.

Commissioner Hinson said he was curious about the CBOR meeting.

Chair Holt stepped out at 7:55 p.m.

Ms. Quigley reappeared and said the CBOR had been removed at the time the application came in and they were not required to hold one. She added if the Board would like them to hold one, they certainly could. Commissioner Hinson said it was almost too late since they were there for a public hearing. Mr. Knowles said they could direct them to hold one. He added they may need to have a special meeting in the future.

Chair Holt returned at 7:56 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson continued and asked the County Administrator what his rationale was in recommending this. Mr. Dixon said they met the requirements.

Chair Holt asked Mr. Cruz to come back to the podium. She said she wanted everyone to know she met with Mr. Cruz, his mother and brother. She asked if he had any concerns of what he would be asked to do. He said that was why he was here and they would comply with everything. He said they planned on having officers on the roads and stated the locations they would have LEO on the different roads.

Ms. Quigley reappeared and said they had talked about Ben Bostick Road as a second entrance.

Chair Holt said the items that Planning put in, if this was approved, what was the starting date. Mr. Cruz said he could not say for sure, maybe in a month. It was said he would need to come back for another review. Ms. Quigley said it could be 6 months or so.

Ms. Quigley reappeared and Planning suggested there be a traffic study and there may need to be a turn lane installed.

Erica Rojas reappeared before the Board (still under oath) and said she spoke with FDOT and was told by email they would have an answer in 2 months in 2018 if they needed any signs there for traffic. If they decided it was needed, it would be done in 2025.

Mr. Dixon said Ben Bostick was part of the road improvement plan.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Mr. Cruz if he had a chance to look at all 16 items requested by Planning and he responded yes and have already complied with a lot of it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the only concern he had, he wanted this activity to go on in harmony with the ones that lived there. He further stated he did not want to disrespect the decision of Planning and suggested the applicant have some “meeting of the minds” with the neighbors and their concerns be addressed to see if they could come to a resolution. He did not want this to go through without some type of amicable relationship. He also said he would not disrespect Planning and Zoning but would add other requirements to protect the neighbors.

Commissioner Green said and he concurred with Commissioner Viegbesie and one thing that stuck out to him, one comment made by Mr. Cruz was he would do “as much as possible” and he took it to mean that some things might not be possible for Mr. Cruz to do.

Mr. Cruz said his main thing was to make this happen.

Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at 8:09 p.m.

Mr. Cruz said he wanted to make sure that whatever they wanted, he would comply with. He added that Commissioner Viegbesie said he would go to the other facility. He passed out a sheet that showed 5F Farms have already started playing just adults and no youth. He was trying to understand the procedures he was having to go through. He asked why he had to go through all this and they were allowed to operate. How could he get to that point?

Mr. Dixon said that was a different process, was a different level and the two were not the same. In order to maintain and not have a lot of issues come back to the Board, Commissioner Viegbesie asked for a public meeting if they could and if the Board was amenable, to add Item Q to require a public meeting with the neighbors. He added he would have to return to the Board with a plan. He further stated giving him permission tonight did not give him anything other than the right to get a plan. They still had the right to reject it if it did not meet with their expectations.

Commissioner Viegbesie returned at 8:12 p.m.

Mr. Dixon said to add item Q that required the public meeting and felt that would attenuate the situation.

Chair Holt said they would have to vote when it comes back and there was time between now and then to have an opportunity for Mr. Cruz and the neighbors to meet to see if they could come to an agreement.

Commissioner Green said in all honesty, he felt realistically the neighbors were there and were voicing their concerns. He did not see, based on what he has heard from the comments, their minds would be changed.

Commissioner Hinson asked again, was there a reason the community meeting was not had?

Ms. Quigley re-appeared before the Board and said at the time, the CBOR was discussed and they talked about bringing the community meetings back and it was not a requirement at the time he submitted his application.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a copy of the minutes because he thought they voted on it. The Deputy Clerk told him she would get a copy of the minutes to the Commissioners.

Ms. Quigley said if this was denied, Mr. Cruz could start a working farm and file under the agritourism statute and do the same thing 5F Farm was doing. They suggested that he go the correct route.

Chair Holt stated under agritourism, he would not have to go through this process, he was allowed through the State to do this. If he wanted to go through this process, he can follow what the Board wanted him to do.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to be clear. He asked Mr. Cruz why he chose to go through this process as opposed to go through agritourism. Mr. Cruz said out of respect for everyone.

Commissioner NeSmith asked who gives them approval for agritourism.

Ms. Quigley reappeared before the Board and stated there was not necessarily approval. If they were a working farm and became ag-exempt and they decide to open the farm to activities, they would fall under the State statute and the County could not touch them. She added they informed Mr. Cruz if he wanted to do it right, he could apply through the County and it could never be taken away from him; however, if the Agritourism statute changed, it would be taken away from him.

Commissioner Viegbesie told Mr. Cruz that he was still going to make the recommendation and suggestion he did earlier. What he wanted was to circumvent this process, for him to understand he still had to be neighborly with the neighbors because if he did not live in harmony with his neighbors, life could be very uncomfortable.

Commissioner Hinson asked where was the information or documentation on how he could circumvent the process because they were supposed to go on what they reviewed.

Mr. Dixon explained he was not circumventing the process, it was a process that was already out there in State law.

Commissioner Hinson said Ms. Quigley stated he must be a working farm. Ms. Quigley reappeared and said that was correct, it must be a working farm and have an Ag exemption through the Property Appraiser's Office.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he qualified for that and she said not as of yet.

Mr. Knowles read aloud FL Statutes 570.85:

570.85 **Agritourism.** — (1) It is the intent of the Legislature to promote agritourism as a way to support bona fide agricultural production by providing a secondary stream of revenue and by educating the general public about the agricultural industry. It is also the intent of the Legislature to eliminate duplication of regulatory authority over agritourism as expressed in this section. Except as otherwise provided for in this section, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, a local government may not adopt an ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land under s. 193.461.

Chair Holt said if he had contacted the agritourism and met those qualifications, local government could not restrict above the State statute.

Commissioner NeSmith said he wanted to bring this matter to a close, move on to the motion not only with the recommendation from the Planning as well as the Administrator, but the Board add the caveat that they also require him to engage with citizens about their concerns so it could come forward to them during the site plan.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AS PRESENTED ALONG WITH ADDING "Q" TO REQUIRE A PUBLIC MEETING AND CHAIR HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Hinson said one reason he could not vote for this today, he requested they have community meetings and was hard to vote on something before that. He would like for them to have a community meeting.

Chair Holt wanted to make sure there was a motion and second for the approval with the addition for him to meet with neighbors. She also wanted to clarify that he did not have to go through this process if he went through with the agritourism option.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD CAST THEIR VOTE AND CHAIR HOLT STATED IT WAS A 3-2 VOTE AND MOTION PASSED.

Commissioner Viegbesie requested a roll call vote because it was hard to tell who voted which way. Chair Holt stated they had already voted. Commissioner Hinson asked how they knew who voted. Chair Holt said in their procedures, no vote was a yes vote.

Mr. Knowles said a non-vote was considered a yes vote under their Code. Commissioner Green said he also wanted to know who voted how.

CHAIR HOLT ASKED IF THEY WANTED TO RESTATE THE MOTION AND CALLED FOR A ROLL CALL VOTE.

COMMISSIONER GREEN	NO
COMMISSIONER HINSON	NO
COMMISSIONER NESMITH	YES
COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE	NO
CHAIR HOLT	YES

BOARD VOTED 2-3 MOTION DID NOT PASS.

Chair Holt stated to Mr. Cruz the reason she voted yes was because it required him to come back through the process and to meet with people in the community.

Commissioner Green said the reason he voted no, was he felt the majority of the community was present, heard their concerns, felt he was a commendable young man and hoped they could find a way to make it happen but wanted to make sure they were clear about the safety concerns of the citizens and was able to do it with the certainty he could make everything happen that needed to happen.

Chair Holt explained the motion failed 3-2.

Chair Holt called for a 10-minute recess at 8:34 p.m.

Chair Holt re-convened the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Mr. Dixon stated before moving on to the next item, he wanted to take the opportunity to introduce **Ms. Linda Blackshear, the new Director of Elder Affairs for Gadsden County**. He said she was the previous CEO at Riverchase.

5. Approval of Funding for Boys and Girls Clubs for FY20/21

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item, said it was for approval of funding for the Boys and Girls Club for FY20/21. He added it was included in the proposed budget and funds were there but was not re-addressed to be put in the Final Budget. He explained it was put into Reserves in the Final Budget.

Chair Holt said when looking at non-profits and funding, some were there and functioned and some did not function because of COVID. She asked how they were looking at them.

Mr. Dixon said there was a list of non-profits they had in the budget and will bring those back to them. For the Boys and Girls Club, there was a set amount in the budget. For the other non-profits, there was a general amount with those non-profits mentioned. Those issues will be brought before the Board on how and if to move forward.

Chair Holt asked if they were looking at functioning and non-functioning non-profits.

Mr. Dixon said for the Boys and Girls Club, they have to maintain facilities and staff whether there was one kid or 50 that show up. They found new ways to reach kids. He added that how it went forward was up to the body and what regulations, if any, they put on them. Staff felt the Boys and Girls Club was one that could come in and start running and deserved the funding that was already allocated for them.

Commissioner Viegbesie said the Administrator said all he was going to ask.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Hinson asked if he could bring information to the next meeting as to where they are located in Havana and in Chattahoochee.

Mr. Dixon also said these non-profits had to maintain their ability to function.

Commissioner Hinson said before they vote, thought they needed to see that the money went directly to kids in Gadsden County.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.

6. Approval to Apply for the State E-911 Maintenance Grant, Grant Acceptance & MSA for Grant 20-10-05

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated this was the grant used to maintain the E-911 call system and they have to apply for reimbursement of that obligation to the State of Florida.

Chair Holt asked how this worked along with what Motorola was providing. Mr. Dixon explained this was just the E-911 system and maintenance of that system. Chair Holt said they need to look at how it was working with that. Mr. Dixon said they were attempting to see how to piece all of those things together.

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

7. Approve of the Federally Funded Sub-Award and Grant Agreement Z2622 with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) for Hurricane Sally

Item Pulled

8. Approval of the Willacoochee Creek Bridge Repair-Professional Services

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and explained it was for approval of a task order with Dewberry Engineers for the design of Willacoochee Creek Bridge as funded by FDOT and had no fiscal impact on the County. The repairs are being done through the Florida Department of Transportation Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) in the amount of \$112,200.00.

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

9. COVID-19 Resolution Update (Proposed Mask Ordinance)

Pulled

10. Appointment to the CareerSource Capital Region

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and informed the Board it sought their approval to appoint Michael Temple as the Seat 2 Representative and the re-appointment of Scott Watson to Seat 3 of the CareerSource Capital Region Board.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TWO CANDIDATES AND COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Hinson said he was on the Board and if there was a commissioner that wished to be on the Board, he would remove himself and let someone else serve.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.

Commissioner Viegbesie said Commissioner Hinson has done a yeoman's job and if he wanted to step down, he would have no problem in nominating or appointing Commissioner NeSmith and Commissioner Green said he would be glad to be the second.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE FOR THE APPROVAL OF THIS ITEM.

11. Approval of the Synergy PACT Work Authorization (Hurricane Sally)

Item Pulled

12. Approval of Funding for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan Program

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of funding for the Gadsden County American Rescue Plan. He said they had the recommendations as well as the Task Order for Integrity and it included an additional \$500,000 direct funding to the Sheriff's office that they have requested. They went through, made the adjustments and have been in touch with the Circuit Judge from this District that requested County improvements in the County Judge's Courtroom as well as other instrumentation they will need in order to carry out new technology of zooming and teaming, etc. The goal of the request is for "telephone booths" to be placed at the jail so they will no longer have to be transported to the Courthouse and will do the initial proceedings from the Jail and the Judge can see we are being flexible and also have included some technology that will go into those situations. Other than those, the recommendations have been before them before. Their recommendation was that it be approved so they could continue with their timeline that began today of a soft opening of education so they could shoot for July 1st to begin to distribute the funds from the program.

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

Commissioner Green said it was brought to his attention earlier in reference to the language of the Church assistance Program and asked if it could be changed to religious groups and said for example Jehovah's Witness did not consider the Hall a church but may need some type of assistance.

Commissioner Hinson said the \$4.4 Million, went through the CARES Program and took them almost three months, had meetings after meetings and the Board came up with what they felt was best from their decisions; had people from the community that also shared information. Now they are saying they did not want community input but the Board has not made input yet. They have not had an open, decisive meeting to decide. He added they were talking about \$9 Million between this year and next and they refuse to have input from the citizens. He further stated he saw why constituents did not trust government. If they do not have workshops, they were not working for the community. He said if the community was not a part, they lose out. He said he did research himself and asked if they knew there was funding for churches; that residents could not figure out the paperwork; the residents were hurting. He said they needed to prioritize. He added they were abandoning themselves from residents of Gadsden County. He said out of the \$4.467 Million, they would be spending \$1.1 Million on engineering projects. They are going to put \$50,000 in marketing; the Gadsden County Rescue Administration would be getting \$446,700. He asked what would the community say, they were hurting and crying.

Commissioner NeSmith said he would make it quick. He said to Commissioner Hinson there was \$200,000 for their building. Commissioner NeSmith said he was looking in the attachments for the \$200,000 and asked if he missed a page. Mr. Dixon said there was money not only for that room, but how to reconfigure for COVID and to look at the entrance. He added it was the most unsecure facility in the County and they need to make the building more secure.

Commissioner NeSmith stated they received a draft copy of this plan at the last meeting.

Mr. Dixon said this was their fourth or fifth meeting on this.

Commissioner NeSmith asked Commissioner Hinson after he received his initial draft, if he had the opportunity to express his concerns to the Administrator.

Commissioner Hinson said there was \$200,000 to refurbish their building and there was a lot of information he knew nothing about but was going to vote on it.

Commissioner NeSmith asked once he originally received the draft of the plan from the Administrator and reviewed it, did he have the opportunity to sit with the Administrator to provide his input.

Commissioner Hinson said he read through everything and was why he was letting them know about the \$200,000, the answer was yes. He tried getting in contact with the Administrator but they both had scheduling conflicts and couldn't get together. He added he could not vote on something that would affect his constituents. He asked how they could vote on something they had not looked through, he looked through everything. He asked they have a workshop so they could break it down line by line. He said he knew which way they were going and it was ok. He added he could not short-change his constituents, it was unfair.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner NeSmith if he met with any of them outside of Chambers regarding that item and he stated no.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Viegbesie if he met with any of the Board members. Commissioner Viegbesie did not respond and Chair Holt said they were trying to clarify that they did not meet with anyone.

Chair Holt asked Commissioner Green and he stated no.

Chair Holt said she they needed to clarify those things. She said the reason she asked was they were televised and it was things people needed to know. She said with the security of the building; there was a bomb threat earlier (in the year) and everyone had to go outside and they needed a metal detector. She said she calls the Administrator and they get together on the items. She added what they needed to do, and they had a big argument about getting the Agenda ready and they finally got it where they were not receiving it on the Friday before the meeting or a Monday before the meeting so they have an opportunity to meet with the Administrator or Assistant Administrator. She said what they could decide on was what they wanted to do with that document. She said they should not make accusations against people but they could decide on what they wanted to do. This has been before them before.

Commissioner Hinson said for the record, if he could recall, they have not had too many workshops regarding this item. It has been brought to the Board the day of or the day before.

Bishop Willie Green, 296 Bradwell, Quincy, FL appeared before the Board. He said he cared very deeply about this item and found this plan very encouraging. He said he agreed with Commissioner Hinson they should be able to do more and hoped as they moved forward, they will include more citizen input. He had a meeting with the Administrator along with members of the NAACP Economic Development Council, who were also concerned with doing things to help and the process should be simplified. He added he was hopeful they would not find themselves in the same posture they found themselves in last time in losing quite a bit of money and part was the citizens did not understand the process, procedure and the application itself. He added that tonight, he knew everyone wanted as much as they could get and said everyone was impacted by the Church in one way or another.

Commissioner Viegbesie emphasized what Commissioner Green said on changing the language from Churches to religious community. He added if they did not spend it, they will not get it. He said he had a sit-down with the Administrator and when he pointed out the deficiencies with the building, he was shocked to learn the number of safety issues. He added if they do not spend what they get, they will not be able to get more.

Commissioner Green said he also had the opportunity to sit down with the Administrator in reference to what he wanted to see on this plan. He said he would like for him to explain the process as to other pots of money as it related to housing.

Mr. Dixon asked **Fredricka Hamilton, The Integrity Group**, to come forward.

Ms. Hamilton said in addition to this American Rescue Plan program, they have the churches and other religious organizations, the food card, non-profits, non-profit health, small businesses and there are other programs available being offered by other State agencies that are available to the general public. She said for example, first is the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. She explained this program would assist residents with past-due rent and past-due utilities. She

said it was specifically being run through the Department of Children and Families and residents could go online and register at OURFlorida.com; there is mortgage assistance through the Florida SHIP Program that will provide assistance to residents that are delinquent in mortgage payments; the Small Business Administration is providing loans to small businesses financially impacted by COVID-19 through the Economic Injury Disaster Loan; the Paycheck Protection Program also administered by the Small Business Administration; the Small Business Administration with the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, that has closed.

Mr. Dixon interjected and said that program came in and went out in a matter of weeks. He said he put staff in the field and they went to every restaurant they could find in the County and encouraged them to apply for the money. He added at the workshops they have planned, they expect to not only tell people about the programs, but to help them navigate to them. He said they have one goal-to get people the money.

Commissioner Green said she fulfilled his purpose in making citizens aware that there were other things to help with assistance.

Commissioner Hinson said this was the reason he thought they should have a meeting with Board members because ideas start flowing and things start happening. The School Board just sold Gretna School to the Town of Gretna. He said they were looking at closing the old Quincy High School. He was thinking part of that money should go to the areas. Those buildings could be made then into community centers.

Chair Holt asked Ms. Hamilton if she knew anything more about the PPP funding, she heard it ran out. She had not heard anything more on how the funds were moving. Chair Holt said people could also apply under the programs. She said the marketing plan of this was what she wanted to bring up. She added that she wanted to make sure they let everyone know to use this venue. She said to the Administrator they have a small amount of money and lot of people.

Mr. Dixon said they were using every media outlet available to them from websites to social media and they wanted people to get the money. They have tried to leave no stone unturned and if they did, it was unintentional.

Chair Holt said it would be a first come, first served basis.

Ms. Hamilton said they will also be doing mail applications.

Commissioner NeSmith said Commissioner Hinson brought something to his attention. He did have the opportunity to visit Havana Northside and did not know 1) where the school was located, and 2) was given a tour and not only had the opportunity to see the agricultural farming that was taking place and did not know the school was surrounded by what he considered a community that needed “a shot in the arm” of economic development. He said it has tremendous opportunities if they could receive some type of additional economic resources and was inclined to support Commissioner Hinson on workshopping this. He asked the Administrator if there were additional funding sources for non-profits outside of these donors. Mr. Dixon and Ms. Hamilton stated not that they were aware of.

Mr. Dixon said nothing stopped the County from looking for money for those particular kinds of opportunities.

Chair Holt said she did meet with the Commissioners in Gretna and told them the County would be willing to work with them.

Commissioner Hinson said he would love to see Havana Northside added and wanted to talk about it. He said his vision was to put \$600,000 to Gretna Elementary School, \$600,000 to the old Quincy High School and \$600,000 to Havana Northside. He said if this worked, by August kids could go in that gym and have a place to play. He added he would love for Commissioner NeSmith to rescind his motion and then have a workshop.

Commissioner Green asked when they needed to have this approved and Mr. Dixon stated now.

Mr. Dixon said if they wanted to change the program, they could do that but if they were going to maintain the program as presented in any way, form or fashion, this is when they needed to approve the program.

Commissioner Green asked now, there is no governmental...

Mr. Dixon said no.

Chair Holt said they could apply for funding but wanted them to consider, governments can apply for their own funding. Hopefully, they apply and the County applies and they have matching funds. Chair Holt said they have a motion and a second and they needed to address that.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what they would lose if they workshop this.

Mr. Dixon said it depended on what he meant by "lose". Commissioner NeSmith said the timeframe. Mr. Dixon stated only the timeframe they create.

CHAIR HOLT CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER NESMITH AND COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED. ITEM PASSED.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could change the workshop like they did last year?

Mr. Dixon said this would be a program that they will program into the system and what they will develop and they will run with and make those deposits to those separate programs unless they change it.

Commissioner Hinson said last year they agreed on something, voted on it and two weeks later Commissioner Viegbesie said he wanted to do something else and they made provisions and changed it. He said it was not set in stone.

Ms. Hamilton reappeared before the Board.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they could change this if they have a workshop. She said last year they changed to shift funds but not the program.

13. Approval of the Gadsden Youth Initiative Program and Funding

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for board approval of the Gadsden Youth and funding to assist with the program. He stated the program had been before them and was in the beginning stages. He said they seek the approval of \$60,000 from the CARES Act Relief fund residual to be added to this program from the \$90,000 that was already slated for the Summer program.

Commissioner Hinson said he was not trying to go against this but asked where the funding was coming from.

Mr. Dixon said the previous board approved it in the last budget.

Commissioner Hinson said last year's budget was for approval for kids between the ages of 14-18. He said he was not against the program but wanted to make sure young kids have a chance. He said they took that money away from 14-16-year old kids and gave it to 17-19-year-old kids. He added he was for the program and was not going to vote against it, but was it fair to take away what they approved last year from 14-16-year-old kids and give it to 17-18-year-old kids.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

14. Approval of Funding for the Gadsden County Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Residual Funds

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said this sought Board approval for expenditures of the CARES Act Residual Funds. He further explained this was in their Agenda and they have gone through issues regarding new positions, for Granicus to improve their computer system, licensing issues, etc. and in their packet was the layout of the expenditures for the programs:

- Building Management System (\$15,000)
- IT Enhancements/Licenses (\$25,000)
- COVID-19 Media Campaign (\$75,000)
- Granicus Website Services (87,000)

Also new positions they think will be necessary in the next few months to help them meet their capacity to get ready to not only apply for money, but to draw it down and monitor.

- Assistant to the County Administrator (\$65,000)
- Grants Coordinator (Contractual Services \$50,000)
- Grants Monitoring (\$50,000)
- Senior Housing Specialist/SHIP (\$45,000)
- Communications Tech/Motorola, etc. (\$58,000)
- Budget Technician/OMB (\$36,720)

Commissioner Viegbesie said this was something he was going to meet with the Administrator on but classes did not give him that opportunity. He asked what was the purpose for \$75,000 for the COVID-19 Media campaign.

Mr. Dixon said if something happens in the spring or fall related to COVID, they will have a pot of money set aside to deal with it and they can be ready for it.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about the position “Assistant to the County Administrator” for \$65,000. He said there was nothing saying it was a one-time grant or temporary and they have an Assistant County Administrator and Executive Assistant to the Administrator and will now have Assistant to the County Administrator for \$65,000.

Mr. Dixon said when it was put like that, it sounded like he was doing a “whole heap”.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this would be a recurring position...

Mr. Dixon said they were hoping they could work themselves into creating an opportunity and the revenue in terms of generating new programs to fund that position. He said that was one of the risks they were taking in order to staff up to meet the programs they knew were coming. He said they understood it was a one-time position and if funding did not come, they would lose the positions. He said it was his opinion if they waited until they received the money, they would miss multiple opportunities.

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the positions listed were already in their Organizational Chart and Mr. Dixon stated no, they would be added.

Commissioner Hinson said this was something they should workshop. He said last year the Board told constituents they would use the majority of the money on small business programs, residential assistance programs, etc. He said now not one penny would be spent on that and people were struggling. He further stated Commissioner NeSmith had mentioned having aides because there was so much going on. He said he now “feels” him because he has a rush of people coming to him every day. He said some of the funds could be used on Commissioners getting aides. He further stated under the American Rescue Plan, they could add aides for another couple of years. He said to get the funds from the General Fund, it might not look well in the community. He said this was the best time to get aides and everybody was stressed. He said they should workshop this so they could take care of all the constituents. He added they had to have a workshop. He then stated they had covered what he wanted to cover. He said it was not that pressing right now. He asked if Sales Tax took care of Public Works and Mr. Dixon said it was their main funding source. Commissioner Hinson asked if it took care of those things and Mr. Dixon said Capital Improvements. Commissioner Hinson asked if it would take care of Public Works vehicle repair and Mr. Dixon said no. He said they all need assistants, he could not wait two weeks to call someone back. They needed to get community input and talk about the \$1.3 Million and do what was for the best for the County.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he did not like talking about things he had already gotten the answers to but unfortunately, they were there. He said with the Gadsden Youth Initiative they approved \$60,000 and then he was seeing on the list the Gadsden Youth Initiative for \$60,000. He asked if that was \$120,000 total and also understood they were having the Chambers re-

designed and saw \$150,000 for the Commission Chambers Redesign and thought part of that was on the item they approved earlier. He asked if this was the amount on the \$1.3 that they looked at of the \$4.7 Million or was this a duplication.

Mr. Dixon said this part of the money was housed for the re-design, that was \$150,000, they were just discussing it under the rescue plan. The \$60,000 seen on the list was what they just approved; this was just a funding source.

Chair Holt said they need someone in Budget, they need a Grant Coordinator, they have too much money being moved in order to not have some help in those areas. She said they were short-handed in housing and they have to have those people in place. She added they needed help a couple of years ago. They did not have anyone on the County side monitoring contracts. These positions were needed years ago before COVID. The position with Budget was way overdue. She further stated with Grants monitoring, there was no way they could tell where the money was and they must have someone. They need to have someone on the Budget side, there was someone over in the Clerk's Office. She added if CDBG grants were not closed out properly, you would not be able to get any more grants. With Grant Coordination, the grant person was the one that went after the money, the Grant Coordinator in that position, could check on all the other things just named. She stated things such as this should have been taken care of a few years ago, especially when Hurricane Michael hit.

Commissioner Green said he understood the importance of each of the entities, but, it would have been nice to have the opportunity to discuss individually and with more detail of the when and how as opposed to having to look at it tonight to approve. A workshop would have been what several of them would have wanted.

Commissioner Viegbesie said there was no doubt they needed those positions to be able to effectively operate as a government. Looking at the numbers, it was a \$304,720.00 recurring operation and if the benefits and everything else was added, they were talking about close to \$500,000.00 they would have to add to the operating budget to enhance the effective operation of the County. He said he did think it was needed and should not be one-time funded and the Administrator should look into working this into his Personnel Operation Request during the budget workshop. He added they should talk about how and what each position would be doing with regards to the operation of the County.

Commissioner NeSmith said he concurred with the other commissioners and obviously they needed to enhance their plan, but preferred there was a workshop so they could get clarity.

Chair Holt said she agreed there was clarity needed. She asked the Administrator when could they workshop the items.

Mr. Dixon said at their leisure and said if it would be that they approve the spending of the \$60,000 for the Youth Initiative, but it had been approved, but to approve it from this account.

COMMISSIONER NESMITH SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON SAID SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE YOUTH INITIATIVE.

Chair Holt asked about the \$150,000 for the building.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.

Mr. Dixon said they had not approved the Chamber. Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought it was in the...

Mr. Dixon stated no.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he thought it was in the Rescue Plan and Mr. Dixon said no.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE WITHDREW HIS MOTION AND COMMISSIONER NESMITH WITHDREW HIS SECOND.

Chair Holt asked about the workshop and Commissioner Hinson said next Tuesday would be good. They discussed different dates and times for the workshop and could not decide.

Mr. Dixon said they needed a motion to table.

COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE SAID SO MOVED AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE TO TABLE.

15. 2021 Summer Youth Program

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was a proposal from Commissioner Hinson regarding the Summer Youth Program. He stated it was seeking \$150,000 for the employment of 125 youth for the 2021 Summer. He explained this would pay up to twenty (20) hours per week for up to six (6) weeks at a rate of \$8.56/hour (minimum wage). The amount added up to approximately \$1027.00/youth. Additionally, the request included \$18,000.00 for the hiring of monitors to assist with the management of the youth throughout the County and to ensure compliance with the program rules.

Commissioner Hinson said it also included at least 10 students with special needs. He added that the money could come from the Rescue funds or the CARES Act.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND MOTION DIED FOR LACK OF SECOND.

CLERK OF COURT

16. Updates

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

17. Updates

COUNTY ATTORNEY

18. Updates

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

19. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Eric Hinson, District 1

Commissioner Hinson thanked the citizens of the County for being responsible. He said he was seeing a lot of people still wearing their mask.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, District 3

Commissioner NeSmith thanked the Administrator for keeping District 3 as clean as they were.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green thanked Mr. Lee and the Administrator as it related to keeping the County clean. He gave special thanks to two organizations that showed up 1) Born to be a Man and 2) The Tau Psi Zeta Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. He also asked for a Proclamation for them for their service to the community.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION FOR A PROCLAMATION FOR THE TAU PSI ZETA CHAPTER OF THE ZETA PHI BETA SORORITY AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2

Commissioner Viegbesie said he received a text from a citizen about transportation. He said he would convert it to an email and send to the Administrator.

He added they need to elect a delegate to NACo because they were requesting a voting delegate from each body.

Mr. Dixon said they were arranging a meeting with all the cities, the School Board and the Chair for Friday to try and maintain the rules.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Chair Holt said last week they she met with 30 minority farmers regarding USDA funding and asked that the farmers contact USDA for more information.

Receipt and File

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
June 1, 2021 – Regular Meeting

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:58 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk