

IN A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON JUNE 15, 2021 AT 4:30 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

Mr. Knowles welcomed everyone to the workshop; asked for a moment of silence and then led in Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

He then called the workshop to Order at 4:34 p.m.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)

Due to COVID-19 and the efforts of the 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.

The Board of County Commissioners would like to thank everyone for their patience and flexibility during this time.

He read aloud the COVID statement.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. The CARES Act Residual Funds

2. Rules of Procedure for Meetings of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

He stated he was asked to finish the review of the Rules of Decorum of Procedure.

They discussed the election and removal of the Chair. It was stated the Chair was to be elected by an affirmative vote of the majority of the Board during the second regular meeting in November and the Chair could only be removed by an affirmative vote of a supermajority/majority of the Board.

He then spoke of Commissioners speaking. He said when two or more seek recognition by the Chair, the Chair shall name who is to speak first. No Commissioner shall be interrupted by another without the consent of the Commissioner that has the floor, except by rising to a question of order. He also said the Chair may also recognize himself or herself but may not

speak on an item unless he/she has explicitly recognized himself/herself to speak on a particular item.

He then said another suggested addition was that Commissioners shall limit their comments to a maximum of _____ minutes per item and may only be recognized for additional time by affirmative vote of the majority of the Board to extend debate. In no event shall debate on an agenda item that is not a public hearing extend for more than _____ minutes.

Commissioner Viegbesie commented on the time limit for Commissioners to speak. He said as long as they were on point, they should be able to complete their thoughts and not be limited in time.

Chair Holt said the problem was not with the public, it was with commissioners that repeat themselves over and over.

Mr. Knowles said a Commissioner could call the question and once they get an affirmative vote, they take the vote.

Chair Holt said they need to make decisions as to how they wanted to handle.

Commissioner Viegbesie said that was the point of what he was saying. If a commissioner was on point and still presenting, they should be allowed to finish. Once they start repeating themselves over and over, they need to bring it to a head.

Chair Holt asked how to end.

Commissioner Green asked if it was possible for them to use a timer? They did start using one last week.

Mr. Knowles said he and the Chair talked yesterday and Commissioner Viegbesie said FAC's best practice was to not limit commissioners to a specific time period. Chair and he said did not want something to drag on for 10-15 minutes when it could have been said in 5 minutes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked when a Commissioner was making a point and have not gotten to the point best practice is to not interrupt the commissioner in the middle of the statement.

Commissioner Hinson had some comments, but because the commissioners were sitting in the audience and not at the dais, the Deputy Clerk was unable to understand what was being said.

Mr. Knowles said under FAC's best practices, the Chair should not make a motion without passing the gavel.

Commissioner Viegbesie wanted them to be aware when a matter is called to question, that has to be voted on.

Mr. Knowles said with this scenario, was there limit to calling the question and was told no.

Commissioner Hinson said the Chair was the driver to the ship because they had the gavel in hand. He had more comments that was hard to understand what was being said.

Mr. Knowles said the Chair needed to recognize himself or herself like any other commissioner.

Commissioner Green said was going to piggyback on what Commissioner Hinson said.

Commissioner Hinson said the Chair should close the meeting.

3. Review and Discuss the June 15, 2021 Regular BOCC Meeting Agenda

Mr. Dixon said the first issue to discuss was the CARES Residual funding. He said this was the remainder of CARES Act I money that totaled \$1.3 Million. Staff was requesting \$1.2 Million and asked for a certain number of items to be funded. The list is as follows:

Programs

• Building Management System	\$ 15,000.00
• IT Enhancements/Licenses	25,000.00
• COVID-19 Media Campaign	75,000.00
• GRANICUS Website Services	87,000.00

New Positions

• Assistant to the County Administrator	\$ 65,000.00
• Grants Coordination (Contractual Services)	50,000.00
• Grants Monitoring	50,000.00
• Senior Housing Specialist/SHIP	45,000.00
• Communications Tech/Motorola, etc.	58,000.00
• Budget Technician/OMB	36,720.00

Projects

• Gadsden Youth Initiative	\$ 60,000.00
• Renovation of Public Works Vehicle Repair Area	200,000.00
• Renovation of Public Works Common Area	100,000.00
• Commission Chambers Redesign	150,000.00
• Architecture/Engineering for Shovel Ready Projects	200,000.00

Total **\$1,216,720.00**

He stated they were going to look at Granicus as a sole source contract. He said they were showing the meetings on Facebook and it had limitations. He said it was sole source because their system matched what they offered.

Commissioner Green asked if the \$87,000 was annual. Mr. Dixon said it was a one-time upgrade and asked what annual was. Ms. Leslie Steele, PIO, said after the payment of the initial fee, it would be \$32,000/year. She asked they keep in mind that each individual department will have their own customized website.

Commissioner NeSmith asked what was the current staffing in IT. Mr. Dixon said they had three people. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were looking at enhancing staff so they could do more in-house. Mr. Dixon said their intent was to bring as much in-house as possible in every department. Commissioner NeSmith asked if they were locked into a renewal every year for a certain length of time and if not, would they be able to operate...Ms. Steele said the contract would be for five years. She said they would never be able to afford the software to do the Agenda Management system. With the type of software, they will immediately record the meetings and break down the Minutes. She gave an example and stated if someone wanted to look at Agenda Item 1, they would be able to go to the County's website and look at the recording of Agenda Item 1. The reason they were sole sourced was they were the only ones in the country that has this software. It is their software. Commissioner NeSmith said they have a monopoly on it. Mr. Dixon said it was like Windows.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he was in support of (inaudible-with the Commissioners sitting in the audience and the lack of microphones there, it made it hard to transcribe what was said).

Commissioner NeSmith asked if the annual upgrade was contingent on the initial contract and if they signed the initial contract, they had to also sign the annual maintenance for five years? Mr. Dixon said it was like the Motorola contract. If they bought that and did not get the maintenance contract, they would be in a world of trouble.

Mr. Dixon said they have asked for a couple of new positions; the first being Assistant to the County Administrator and the primary purpose was to help with the facilitation and implementation of Board priorities and policies. The position would be responsible for coordination of complex development projects, government activities and projects including report writing, data analysis and research. He said they did not have contract review ability from the administrative standpoint. Commissioner NeSmith asked if that would be part of that person's responsibility and he said absolutely.

Commissioner Viegbesie said in looking at this, they were looking at \$304,720 and talking about this money coming out of the CARES Act. This would be a one-time source of funding and asked if they were expecting him to add that amount to his recurring personnel operating budget.

Mr. Dixon said that was a presentation and he was correct. They believed, certainly on the grant end that they could not get grants unless they had grant people and would require an investment. He said they already purchased a \$3 Million Motorola radio set and have no-one to manage.

Chair Holt said they were in desperate need of the positions.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he personally saw nothing wrong with the request, the only thing he would suggest was they have an Assistant County Administrator and an Executive Assistant to the County Administrator. Reading the description of the Assistant to the County Administrator seemed to be a duplication because he was seeing what he thought was already in the description for the Executive Assistant to the County Administrator now. He asked why the specifically need that, he felt it needed to be a different title and description. Mr. Dixon said it really should be a Special Projects Coordinator except there was already a title like that but did not perform that function. A re-title would be appropriate. The Assistant County

Administrator was doing money and they needed her to do that. The need the budget to line up and they were not able to break away from that and cannot do so until the had a handle on that. He said they have asked for a Budget Tech as well, they were sorely understaffed on the budget side of the ball. He said there was 100 vehicles they could not account for and they were on the insurance for years. He said it was costing them hundreds of thousands of dollars and may not exist. He said that was what happens when they shrink down staff.

Chair Holt said he was saying exactly what they have been saying over the years.

Mr. Dixon said it pained him to have to ask for that many positions. He said with SHIP, the only professional Housing person they had was Ms. Sonya Burns. He said they could not imagine how hard it was to spend \$2 Million dollars. He said they do not have staff in-house currently to spend the money they already have.

Commissioner NeSmith asked about the renaming of the first position and Mr. Dixon said they would change it. Commissioner NeSmith asked if he still wished for them to vote on it and he said yes. He said if they told him a new name, he would write it down. He said if Mr. Dixon saw it as a special project type person, the current person...Mr. Dixon said they would re-title that or they knew they needed to re-title that position. Commissioner NeSmith asked if that would create a new position and Mr. Dixon stated no.

Commissioner Green said regardless of the title of the position, the things listed in those positions are what was needed and Mr. Dixon stated yes.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked about Operations Activities Coordinator and said they would need someone to coordinate the operations of the County and they had too many assistants. Mr. Dixon said he agreed.

Commissioner NeSmith asked to ask Ms. Burns a question and asked if she had ever had a full staff. She said several years ago that department actually was a six-person staff. He asked how much money did they had for allocation \$525,000 with a six-person staff and would do interlocal agreements with municipalities for \$50,000. After 2006, the allocation went down to \$350,000 and was what they currently receive now. Mr. Dixon said there was a time when Ms. Burns was the lowest person on the totem pole and the person he worked with was a former mortgage lender who ran the same program and they were doing as many new homes as rehabs.

Renovation of Public Works Vehicle Repair area

Mr. Dixon said he was unsure if the Commissioners had been to that area, if they haven't, asked them to go and see what they were working with and the shortcomings they physically had that they cannot get away from each other. There has been no investment since it was built other than putting a top on it. They have not maintained what they own. They would like the opportunity to improve.

Commission Chambers

He said they talked about not only making the room COVID ready, but redoing the front and addressing security issues. He said they also wanted to look at redoing some fencing outside for safety purposes.

Commissioner Green said he was glad they were addressing that because when he came on Sunday, he noticed liquor cups and bottles in the area. He knew they will be hanging out in the parking lot and looked to see if there were security cameras around the building and Mr. Dixon said there was not. Mr. Dixon said generally on the weekend, they have police cars blocking the parking lot. He added security was a concern. He said they knew money was coming down for architecture and engineering, but they were not ready to accept it. The money coming down was asking for shovel-ready programs and that was 90-120 days they wanted it to be ready. He hoped through the summer to be able to get the budget in order while the Commissioners were at conference and to put it in a position where they could make long-term decisions.

Commissioner Hinson thanked Mr. Dixon for presenting this to them. He added it was only fair to the constituents to have a workshop on what they want in the County. He said they were now telling homeless people they were no longer important to the County because the Board had agreed to put aside \$100,000 for the homeless program. The Board also agreed they would use a majority of the funding for the residential and small business program and none of that was addressed in the \$1.3 Million. He further stated the Board clearly said the majority of the funding would go to small business and residential assistance program and he did not see that. He said they needed to make sure they addressed the issues at hand. He added this was his position and was why he could not support it. The Board needed to have meetings themselves and have public meetings so citizens could air their concerns. He said they have not yet had one meeting about the CARES Act funding.

Mr. Dixon said to give perspective, this was \$1.3 Million that was left over from the CARES Act; there was roughly \$8 Million dollars and \$6.7 Million was given to various programs to citizens. He had stated in no uncertain terms the biggest problem was that was the County did not do anything within the County to protect itself. They have given the Sheriff and others more money than the County had in terms of things the County needed in order to protect itself.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, THE WORKSHOP WAS DECLARED ADJOURNED AT 5:54 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

RONTERIOUS GREEN, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk