

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 12TH, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.,
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District 3**
 Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1
 Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2
 Brenda Holt, District 4
 Ronterious “Ron” Green, District 5
 Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
 Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk
 Adriana Quijada, Secretary to the Boards

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman NeSmith welcomed everyone. Commissioner Simpkins provided invocation. Chairman NeSmith then led to the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. Flag.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chairman NeSmith welcomed and thanked everyone for being there. He stated they would discuss preparation for the 200-year anniversary celebrations. It was their opportunity to discuss this. He stated he had insights on this.

2. Overview

Mr. Dixon stated they will seek direction today on how to move going forward for the Bicentennial project plan. He stated it would be community based and community focused.

3. Discussion and Direction of Bicentennial Celebration

Mr. Dixon mentioned the budget that was set up. In the budget was \$200,000.

He stated community engagement was important to them and getting folks to look at Gadsden County again. Mr. Dixon said Gadsden County will turn 200 on June 24th. He stated Gadsden County used to be from GA boarder to the coast. He stated they tried to put together a ‘hodgepodge’ of things and opportunities they could take. Mr. Dixon stated they looked at stakeholders present. They were looking for guidance, no decisions had been made other than giving the timeline. This meeting was to get the Commissioners ideas and input on how to move things forward.

Chairman NeSmith stated he had ideas to get started. He asked Mr. Dixon if there was a theme; Mr. Dixon stated no.

Commissioner Green stated they needed a theme. It should be something to utilize during the Christmas parade to have on floats.

Commissioner Holt stated she was interested in including different groups in the area. She mentioned the year 1824 and the history. She stated they should include something from each genre and for it to be multicultural. Her idea for a theme was for it to be multicultural.

Commissioner Green asked Chairman NeSmith to give them until the meeting on Tuesday to suggest a theme. Chairman Nesmith stated sure.

Commissioner Holt suggested “Gadsden County Melting Pot” as the theme. It should be something that was inclusive.

Chairman NeSmith stated they could bring this up again on Tuesday.

Commissioner Green stated they had already approved up to \$200,00 but that did not mean they had to spend it all. He stated it was not a part of the discussion as far as approval wise, because it was already approved.

Chairman NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon if they included Coca-Cola with the stakeholders. Mr. Dixon stated no. He wanted to make sure they include them.

Chairman NeSmith mentioned page 16 of 16. He stated he read into the private entity, which was why he thought of Coca-Cola to provide some financial assistance in local activities. He mentioned events going on in other cities, and was thinking to collaborate with the municipalities to celebrate. He stated it was a Gadsden County celebration.

Commissioner Holt stated they voted to give them \$25,000. That should be partnering with them already. They needed to make sure they include that in there.

Mr. Dixon stated a lot of it was about the look. He stated they pre-ordered flags to raise around Gadsden County.

Commissioner Holt stated May Day is next month, so they need to meet and see what they could include from the County. If that would be their Bicentennial event, they need to include history. They need to know what it was they were looking for from them to partner.

Chairman NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon if they had any preliminary discussions with the city of Gretna regarding this event. Mr. Dixon stated no, but they had no problems when they talked to them.

Commissioner Simpkins stated the Gretna event could be an intro to the Bicentennial. That event is already taking place, they would need to come up with a theme. She stated they could be introducing the Bicentennial event there. She spoke with the town manager from Havana and they were waiting on the Commissioners to get back with them. They wanted to participate, but they were waiting to come the table. She stated since they had the museum over there, they had a video that was able to go through history to bring the community together and showing the film.

Chairman NeSmith asked Mr. Dixon to follow up on that.

Commissioner Green stated Escambia County also celebrated 200 years; they could look for things from them to see their branding. He stated that he would love to see some quality gospel artists. If they could maybe find artists and utilize some local gospel artists.

Commissioner Simpkins stated the 'Barbecue and Blues' was suggested. The idea was bringing in organizations or municipalities to be a part of it. She stated she believed it occurred in October. It did not have to be during that time.

Commissioner Holt stated she keeps mentioning history, because other than that, it would just be activities. People here know a lot of history, but did not have anyone to record their stories. That is part of the Bicentennial. She stated from the Apalachicola River to the Suwannee River was Gadsden County. It was a whole territory; Leon County was in Gadsden County. So, they needed to look at how they could combine those histories and pull them together.

Chairman NeSmith asked if there was a way to integrate the films together.

Commissioner Holt stated it could be combined, they just needed to see what their schedule looked like.

Chairman NeSmith asked if there is a book of the history of Gadsden County

Commissioner Holt said there were several. She stated Dr. Rivers and Dr. Cox had one. Barnes and Nobles also had a book with the history of Gadsden County.

Commissioner Green asked if they knew who were the first families in Gadsden County.

Commissioner Holt said she was not sure. They need to leave a footprint and is inclusive. In 1826, she would not have been a commissioner. They needed to be a white male and own slaves and property to be a commissioner. Not necessarily a good or bad thing, it was just a part of the history. They need to display the rich history that they have.

Commissioner Simpkins stated that is where it would be important, to include everyone. If someone in the Church could have input on this and be a part of the planning, they could contact her. She did not want to celebrate some of the history; it happened but she did not actually want to celebrate it. They could take segments of the history and each event, and focus on specific things. She stated a play would be awesome. Mr. Dixon mentioned the Leaf Theatre. They could incorporate their history through these events and activities. They needed to look at what part of the history did they want to show for Gretna.

Commissioner Green stated they could have a storyteller that would focus on an era. With 5 commissioners, each one could nominate someone to be the storyteller or responsible for giving that segment of history. He stated they need to have Gospel music history. He stated he was excited about a potential play happening.

Chairman NeSmith asked if they had found representatives from their district for their advisory committee to bring some history and ideas.

Commissioner Green asked how many people were they responsible for bringing. He stated each commissioner could have 2. Each district could have representation. They would ask them if they could attend a meeting to hear the vision for the Bicentennial.

Commissioner Holt stated it was a great idea.

Chairman NeSmith asked who will coordinate to get the 2 people together.

Commissioner Green stated jokingly that was what they had the Administrator for. Commissioner Green stated they had aids and they could take on that responsibility. They could report back to them. Commissioner Green stated they would report to the Administrator beforehand.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 5:47PM.

Commissioner Holt asked the Attorney what would it look like when they appoint someone. When they appoint someone, they needed to be held by the same rules and regulations. She stated the Aids could be one of the 2 people. She stated there was a guy in Greensboro who had outfits for historical events.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped in at 5:50PM.

Chairman NeSmith asked Commissioner Green when they should have the 2 names ready and to who will they report it to.

Commissioner Green stated they could have the 2 names ready by Tuesday to submit to the Administrator to be a part of the committee. He stated he liked the idea of selecting two and having the Aid facilitate. They would do the recommendations.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she saw a charity gala coordination for a Bicentennial in a different county. She thinks a charity gala could be able to use for funding of non-profits.

Commissioner Green stated it would give them an opportunity to work during the event. They would not just be receiving a handout, but would be able to help out the County.

Commissioner Holt stated they should not be funding non-profits because they had the ability to raise their own money and apply for Grants. What they do had to be county wide. She thought it was a great idea to have them raise their own money. She mentioned an end of the year Gala, so the non-profits had until then to raise funds.

Commissioner Hinson stepped in at 5:55PM.

Chairman NeSmith stated it was wonderful for the community to get involved as the population is increasing. He stated the Gala can grow and can fund non-profits from that fund as those organizations become independent and have stability.

Chairman NeSmith brought Commissioner Hinson up to speed. He stated the May Day event in Gretna would be like a launch for the Bicentennial.

Commissioner Green stated they needed to make sure there is a line of communication.

Chairman NeSmith stated to Mr. Dixon that he needed to have a discussion with the City of Gretna to discuss possibly having the launch. He asked for a report by Tuesday.

Chairman NeSmith asked if the City of Gretna is receptive, what would they like to happen at the launch.

Commissioner Green stated a piece of history of the City of Gretna. They want to encourage the people to look out for what they have coming up for events.

Commissioner Holt mentioned a treasure hunt they were working on. She mentioned a banner that maybe has the theme, and they could buy 6 for all towns. A piece of history could maybe be blown up on a board. She stated these were all just suggestions.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 6:01PM.

Chairman NeSmith brought Commissioner Hinson up to speed regarding the advisory committee.

Chairman NeSmith asked what would come after the launch.

Commissioner Simpkins stated July may be the next event.

Commissioner Holt mentioned Juneteenth. She said they need a calendar and put these things on there.

Mr. Dixon stated for them to reach out to stakeholders and find important dates.

Commissioner Simpkins stated as far as choosing dates, that is where they allow the advisory committee to come in and give them that task to see what is taking place.

Attorney Knowles asked how they would set up the advisory committee. He stated they were not delegating authority to committee; they would just be fact finding. If they are just fact finding, he suggested that they should still come to the public meetings. If they wanted them to meet, they could maybe add it as an agenda item to discuss instead of meeting separately. He asked how did they plan on structuring that.

Commissioner Holt stated that was the reason why she asked that question earlier. Once they appoint a committee, they need to do advertising. They need to have access to what the Sunshine Law is.

Attorney Knowles asked how would they compose it so he could give better advise.

Mr. Dixon asked if the Board is appointed by the Administrator, then those rules would not apply.

Attorney Knowles stated he would need to look into that. He thinks Mr. Dixon is right, he was just more concerned since the Commissioners were bringing in 2 people, but they're not making decisions just bringing in facts. That was what he was asking, what are these 2 people that they are bringing in going to do.

Commissioner Holt stated she wanted them to be fact finding. She suggested one of the Aids could be one of the people. She stated the reason she asked Attorney Knowles the question was because they were in a public meeting and needed to make sure they had a legal opinion.

Chairman NeSmith asked Attorney Knowles if they each send their Aid to the meeting for input. For example, if one of Commissioner Hinson's representatives would like to have an event in Midway, the Aid would then report back to the Board. Where would that fall? The person is gathering information and is reporting it to Commissioner Hinson's Aid. Commissioner Hinson's Aid reports it to Commissioner Hinson and he presents it to the Board. What is that called?

Attorney Knowles stated the key thing was Delegation of Authority. It was not something they necessarily need to advertise in the newspaper.

Chairman NeSmith stated he wanted to make things clear as they are wrapping this up. They have a potential launch event that would be May Day in Gretna, pending the Administrator communicating with the leadership in the City of Gretna. Between now and Tuesday, Mr. Dixon would bring information on that communication. He stated also on Tuesday they will bring 2 names for the advisory committee. Also, they would bring recommendations for themes for Bicentennial. Once the Administrator receives their recommendation, allow Mr. Dixon to communicate with those persons for further meetings.

Commissioner Holt stated they need a calendar of stuff going on. Also, she stated she had people ask her questions about just having one event for the Bicentennial. People wanted to see what their County is doing.

Commissioner Hinson stated this was a perfect opportunity for the Board to execute public-private partnership. He stated they had very few members of staff, less employees to do certain things. He stated they should have just funded the program to the non-profit organization and they in turn would do the research. He stated research would be impossible in 2 weeks. The right way would have been having a non-profit organization to take care of this, it would have been done correctly. BOCC would have given them funding to bring all the research together.

Commissioner Holt stated they were doing a good job; no need to justify.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD (3-Minute Limit)

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners welcomes and encourages public participation at all meetings of the Board. Citizens are free to speak for up to three (3) minutes on non-agenda items. Public comments and participation are also encouraged for items on the agenda. Additionally, if you are unable to attend a meeting in person, comments from the Public can also be submitted via

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email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on the date of the meeting. Comments submitted after the deadline, but prior to the meeting, will be added to the official record, but the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review comments prior to the meeting. Citizens are further encouraged to participate via Zoom using the credentials on the County's website. The Board's meetings are also broadcast live on the Board's Facebook page.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 6:19 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

**KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair Board of County
Commissioners**

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk