

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FL ON JANUARY 3, 2023, 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
Crystal Jimenez, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair NeSmith called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m., Commissioner Green gave the Invocation and the Chair then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at 6:04 p.m.

AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Dixon said he had three amendments to the agenda and asked to pull items 10, 11 and 12.

Commissioner Holt said she had no problem in pulling item 10, but asked if it could be addressed at the workshop on Thursday for a vote.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO KEEP ITEM 10 AND PULL ITEMS 11 AND 12 AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES

- 1. Recognition of Past Commissioner, Anthony O. Viegbesie, Ph.D., for his years of service to the Gadsden County Citizens as County Commissioner, District 2**

Chair NeSmith asked Dr. Viegbesie to come forward and said a few words on behalf of his service to the County and his retirement. He read aloud the plaque and then presented it to the former Commissioner Viegbesie. Dr. Viegbesie said a few words of appreciation.

CONSENT

Mr. Dixon introduced the Consent Agenda and said Commissioner Simpkins had asked to pull the Minutes as she had a question.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED.

2. **Ratification Memo**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **December 6, 2022 Regular Meeting**
4. **Approval of SHIP/First Time Homebuyer Program Liens and Contracts**
5. **Public Officials Bond Review**
6. **Approval of the Florida Department of Health, Gadsden County Emergency Services Matching Grant**
7. **Approval to Ratify the CDBG-CV-22CV-S09 Agreement for the Dr. William S. Stevens High School Project**

ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

3. **Approval of Minutes**
 - **December 6, 2022 Regular Meeting**

Mr. Dixon explained the Minutes was being pulled because Commissioner Simpkins' name was left off the top of the Minutes as being in attendance and she was present. The Deputy Clerk explained it was an oversight and would be corrected.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER GREEN HAD A COMMENT.

Commissioner Green asked for some enlightenment on Item 7 regarding the Stevens School project.

CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE ON THE MOTION AND THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CORRECTED MINUTES.

Mr. Dixon stated this CDBG-CV-22 CV -S09 was the acceptance of the award of \$1.6 million to redo Stevens School.

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Anyone wishing to speak on agenda items or non-agenda items should schedule or notify the County Administrator's Office before attending the meeting and will be asked to follow the Gadsden County Public Meetings Citizens Access Guidelines. Also, public comment for Commission meetings can be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov until noon on January 3, 2022. 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.

Commissioner Hinson read aloud the above statement.

Bishop Willie Green, 296 Bradwell Rd, Quincy, General –

Bishop Green appeared before the Board and said this was first meeting of the new year. He applauded them for a successful year and making it better for the citizens of the County. He urged them to continue to provide needed infrastructure.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

8. Approval of Purchase Agreement for the Purchase of the Property Located at Gadsden County Parcel ID# 3-24-2N-4W-0000-00330-0100

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was asking for Board approval to purchase property located at Gadsden County Parcel ID# 3-24-2N-4W-0000-00330-0100.

Chair NeSmith asked if there were any comments from the public.

Bishop Green appeared and asked the location of the 52 acres. Mr. Dixon said it was along the front side of Pat Thomas Parkway, starting at the body shop down to the IFAS Station over to Hogan Lane.

Bishop Green said this fell in line with his earlier statement and encouraged them to approve.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Hinson asked the attorney if there was still a lease with the body shop and he stated yes, two years left with a 5-year option to renew. Commissioner Hinson said there was 52 acres of land, 50.5 acres was agricultural and 1.5 was commercial. It was stated there was 51.21 acres of vacant land and 1 acre of improved. Commissioner Hinson said his heartburn was putting affordable housing across from the State prison and the County jail.

Commissioner Green said there was housing and a shelter around the Federal prison in Tallahassee.

Commissioner Simpkins asked they look at page 36 of the current appraisal. She had previously asked if the property had been listed for sale and was told no but according to the appraisal the property had been listed for sale. She said it shows 51.23 acres at \$512,300. She read from the appraisal report "As a result, we conclude to entice a single buyer interested in the subject vacant land, to by both parcels would require the discount on the retail price of automobile body shop of approximately 10% to 20%. The opinion of market value for automobile body shop was \$240,000." She said this was actually less than the previous appraisal as it had \$365,000. She said they should have gotten the discount because they will not be using that body shop and when they are looking at purchasing the property they should have taken that into consideration. She said the value range was between \$712,000 to \$815,000 and asked if they ever went back and try to negotiate a price other than the \$750,000. She said the first appraisal was completed by the sellers of the property.

Mr. Dixon said the first appraisal was completed and paid for by the Board. He said the value range recognizes the discounted price and \$750,000 is close to what they recommended as the discount price. When they went back to the owner, they were firm about their price.

Commissioner Simpkins asked who handled the negotiations on the contract, the attorney? Mr. Knowles said yes on the contract but not on the negotiation of the price. She asked for plans for the body shop. Mr. Dixon said they have already had phase one of the environmental study done and their plan is to begin to look at the property and find the money to improve it.

Commissioner Holt said people could not believe the County got that property for that price. The County can change the zoning and land use. She said it was a good price, she had checked it before and checked with two brokers.

CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 3-2 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS OPPOSED.

GENERAL BUSINESS

9. Approval of Resolution 2023-001 Grant Budget Amendment for FY 2023

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for board approval of Resolution 2023-001 and for authorization for the Assistant County Administrator and Finance Director to complete and execute all budget amendments necessary to maintain a balanced budget for fiscal year 2023 BOCC budget.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS.

Commissioner Hinson had a question on page 4 of 33. Regarding Budget amendment 23-020, ARPA, he asked why they were not holding conversations and workshops on monies for the commissioners to use in their district.

Mr. Dixon said this was to set up the budget line to accept money into their coffers.

Commissioner Hinson said before he voted on this, he wanted a workshop.

Commissioner Holt said she was ready to vote but they need an account set up to accept money.

Commissioner Hinson said he needed clarity, they were talking about \$4.5 million they just received; \$1.2 CARES Act money; \$1.7 and have another \$2.8 million in ARPA. With that amount of money, you would think they were moving close to \$10,000,000. Mr. Dixon explained this was just to accept the new money that was coming, the other money was already in their budget. Commissioner Hinson said the new money is \$4.5 million and the agenda items says \$6.1 Million and that meant there was other money out there they did not use and the numbers did not add up. Mr. Dixon said that was additional money, not only the \$4.4 but they (inaudible) that increased the amount of money that they received and when they got in the workshop, they would be able to explain it in more detail. Commissioner Hinson said he would like a workshop before voting on this because he needed clarity now.

Mr. Knowles said this was to set-up the budget for the grant.

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

10. Approval of the Contract with Al Lawson and Associates for Lobbying Services

Mr. Dixon introduced the above referenced item and said it was for board approval of the agreement for Gadsden County Legislative Advocacy and Public Relations service with Al Lawson and associates.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Simpkins said when looking at the contract for Lawson and Associates, what was the return on investment from last year since they were upping the amount from \$25,000 to \$60,000, she was not sure what they received from last year.

Chair NeSmith said he knew some Commissioners would want to know 1) what was the return on the original contract last year; and 2) what were their legislative items they were requesting them to achieve this year? He thought the best way was to have them appear before the board.

Mr. Dixon said they achieved \$30-40 Million in projects; the majority locally. They have done an exceptional job, have presented some stuff and looking to present more. He said on January 19th they would have the representatives here, local and federal as well as their lobbyist.

Commissioner Simpkins said when she had a conversation with the Administrator and was questioning the contract and it said the item would be tabled in order to furnish additional information. She said with looking at the contract, it stated the report would be provided. She wanted to know what had been provided and received from this firm.

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

~~11. Approval of the Contract with Barkley Consulting Engineers, Inc. for Professional Consulting Services Architectural Services~~

Item Pulled

~~12. Approval of the Contract with Clemons, Rutherford, & Associates, Inc. for Professional Consulting Services Architectural Services~~

Item Pulled

13. Approval to Purchase of Five Ambulances

Mr. Dixon introduced the above agenda item and said the chassis was wearing out on some of the ambulances.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER GREEN HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Green asked where would they house the unused units and Mr. Dixon said he was not sure right now.

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

14. Fairbanks Ferry Road (SCOP) Supplemental Agreement

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of the Fairbanks Ferry Supplemental Agreement in the amount of \$1,942,880. The agreement is being increased by \$243,883 to support the design, costs of construction and CEI.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE MOTION AND COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE THE SECOND WITH A QUESTION.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they were going straight from Highway 12 to Concord.

Jeremiah Lee, Public Works Director, appeared before the Board and explained. (There was no microphone at the podium for the Clerk's Office and could not hear Mr. Lee's response.)

CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

15. Approval to Move Funds from Reserve for Contingency for the Bicentennial Celebration of Gadsden County

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to move funds from Reserve for Contingency for the Bicentennial Celebration of Gadsden County and in 2023 Gadsden County will turn 200 years old. He said initial planning had begun with a select group of county employees and event advisers and the group is considering how many celebratory events will be held and where they will take place. He asked they approve moving money for this.

Commissioner Hinson asked if other cities were contacted and Mr. Dixon said there was a meeting scheduled tomorrow with them.

Commissioner Green said a workshop was needed very soon.

Commissioner Holt said she was on the Tourist Development Council (TDC) and they have different events during the year, especially the fall.

Commissioner Simpkins agreed with the celebration but did not see \$200,000 needed for a budget. She said they did need to bring events in but wanted to make sure they were being fiscally responsible with citizens' tax dollars. She added before they agreed to move money over, there was a need to workshop this matter.

Mr. Dixon said he anticipated bringing this back and did not anticipate spending any money. He said this was a procedural matter and has to go before the body and was time consuming. They were getting this in a budget line item to move over so when they come back, they could easily move the money.

Commissioner Simpkins said this item states to move funds from Reserve for Contingency and the funds may not be spent at that time prior to coming to the Board, however the funds have now been moved from the Reserve into Contingency where the funds could be spent on the Bicentennial Celebration and felt this needed to be workshopped. If the money is there, there

was a possibility they will spend the \$200,000. It may not be spent before they come back but felt they still had time to workshop this matter.

Commissioner Green asked if they could ask for a lesser amount and if they saw a need for more, address it then.

Chair NeSmith said additional information was needed from the municipalities. Mr. Dixon said he would ask.

Commissioner Holt said the key word was “up to”. She said to contact the cities tomorrow and send an invitation of the information to them. if they do not move quickly, they will miss the springtime and summertime.

Commissioner Hinson asked who sat on the TDC board and Commissioner Holt said she did. Commissioner Hinson asked how much money was in the TDC account. He said TDC should be spearheading this as they receive funding through the bed tax. He said funding was there and they need to know what they are doing first.

Commissioner Holt said when they have an appointed board, they were not necessarily accountable to the people. This board was accountable to the people.

Mr. Knowles read about appointments to the TDC Board.

Commissioner Green made an amendment to the motion to make sure it was clear no money was to be spent without board approval. Commissioner Holt said she would accept that but this had to come back to the Board anyway.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE CONTINGENT ON IT COMING BACK BEFORE ANY MONIES WERE SPENT AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND.

Commissioner Simpkins said if they move this over, there is a certain amount that the County Administrator could spend without coming before the board. Commissioner Simpkins asked if it were possible for Mr. Dixon to spend without bringing it back to the Board and was told yes. She said they were asking for it to come back before the Board but it did not have to.

Chair NeSmith explained what he was hearing in the motion was they were requiring the County Administrator to bring this back before them; he could not spend the money because it was a part of the motion.

Commissioner Holt said it was because she said “contingent upon”.

Mr. Knowles clarified as the motion stood, no monies would be spent except by board approval.

Commissioner Simpkins said she wanted to be clear because there were companies listed and asked if the motion was saying all contracts were to come back to the Board before any money was spent.

Commissioner Hinson said there was a problem; there were companies listed and if they approve the contract everything listed would be approved also.

Mr. Dixon said the names listed in the Fiscal Impact was a mistake and should have been taken out.

Mr. Dixon asked if they would clarify the motion to exclude the vendors listed.

Commissioner Holt said approving Option 1 which was to approve to move funds from Reserve for Contingency for the Bicentennial Celebration of Gadsden County and that was it. She added she could withdraw her motion and restate they were not voting to pay any one until it came back before the Board.

COMMISSIONER HOLT WITHDREW HER MOTION AND COMMISSIONER GREEN WITHDREW HIS SECOND.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION WITHOUT THE NAMES OF ANY COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION AND BRING BACK BEFORE THE BOARD BEFORE SPENDING ANY MONEY AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE. COMMISSIONER HINSON OPPOSED.

16. Approval for Gadsden County Emergency Services to Apply for the SAFER Grant

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for approval for the Gadsden County Emergency Services to apply for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER GREEN HAD A QUESTION.

Commissioner Green asked the original fiscal impact on the grant.

Chief Hood, EMS Chief, appeared before the Board and said there was no fiscal impact; this was based on how many positions they apply for. They were asking to apply for 12 positions. He said the amount will decrease every year by 25%.

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

CLERK OF COURT

17. Updates

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

18. Updates

Mr. Dixon said the County participated with the City of Quincy in providing cold weather shelters.

He said they will be receiving calendars for the next few months regarding workshops and hope they commit to meeting a couple of Saturdays and daily meetings to accomplish their requests.

He said they had an employee function that was spot on.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

19. Updates

Mr. Knowles said he was requesting a shade meeting and Executive Session to discuss litigation and settlement before the next regular meeting and Insurance counsel has requested to approve the settlement.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR AN EXECUTIVE MEETING BEFORE THE NEXT SCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD APPROVED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

20. Report and Discussion of Public Issues

Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins wanted to thank the County for their help with the New Year's brunch hosted by Radiant Life Changers, Inc.

She said she knew before she came on there was discussion about workshops relating to ordinances and asked when they would be scheduling workshops for that. She added in order to cut down their time in the meeting she asked about agenda workshops.

She said the deadline for legislative agenda is February 14th and knew there was a lot on the plate but they need to make sure they were looking at their calendars and had the information in time so everything would not be an emergency.

She said it was amazing Bishop Green came and spoke about the need to serve their most vulnerable populations. Before coming to the meeting, she was having a discussion with a constituent about youth crimes and need to have programming in local communities. They need to look at what they can do to save their youth.

She said they had received an email from the Clerk regarding the workstation for the Clerk. Chair NeSmith said he was in discussions with the Administrator regarding making better arrangements for them.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt asked how the work on the clinic in Chattahoochee was coming and Mr. Dixon said the work was done and was ready. He said the provider sent information asking them to look at a program that partners with them and using some of the ½ sales tax. He said they were reviewing it and will bring it before the Board possibly at the next meeting and they will have to decide at what level and debt they will participate for the delivery of services.

She said when Hurricane Michael came, people in Chattahoochee were trapped. They need to look at using the ½ cent tax to help with health care services.

She added that they needed to look at a way to bring funding in for the different projects they mention.

The last item she brought up concerned auctions held at the Courthouse and that meant there were families losing property. She said they need to talk to people and advertise to let them know they need to be buying properties that are in their family. They are not aware of this and they need to do a better job of marketing and let them know that people outside the county are buying up the properties. She said some people have been restricted from buying simply because of the rush.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 8:47 and returned at 8:50.

Mr. Dixon introduced Ms. Becky Maas, new Director of Human Resources and she appeared before the Board and spoke a few words.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green shared there had been new hires and wanted to make sure everyone was properly introduced.

Mr. Dixon said Charles Hayes was in the audience and was also a new hire. He appeared before the Board and introduced himself. He is the County Operations Coordinator.

Ms. Agnes Denson was then introduced and appeared before the Board. Ms. Denson is the new Project Manager with Public Works.

Commissioner Green said earlier they were discussing community centers and hoped there would be an update regarding the Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Dixon said they have been meeting with them weekly and was waiting for their Board to meet and make some decisions. The question was, were they ready to start the project in purchasing the property or wait until they raised all the money. He said the county has encouraged and pushed them to start the project because it was needed in the community today.

Commissioner Green asked if any thought had been given to the Social Security access. Mr. Dixon said they were looking to see if they could be added as a part of senior services.

Commissioner Green thanked Dr. Tracey Stallworth and Kingdom Glory Worship Assembly for their assistance in the cleaning supplies giveaway and help in the Lockwood Family Support Drive.

He said there will be a Martin Luther King celebration that will take place by the National Hook-Up of Black Women on January 16th at the Recreation Center and will start at 7:45 a.m.

He said there was another burn out in the Coonbottom area and he was going to look into partnering with Commissioner Hinson to see about assistance for the family.

He. asked for a proclamation or recognition for three people that have served this community.

COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE SHANDA WRIGHT, CHRISTY SHORTER AND TYRONE DAVIS AND CHAIR NESMITH MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair District 1

Commissioner Hinson said he spoke to Ms. Reva Richardson, her house burned down and has been trying to find services to assist her. He was told there has been a GoFundMe page started.

He said he had great news, the old Havana Northside high school was receiving State and Federal funding at almost \$2 Million; Midway Septic to sewer project to receive around \$4,000,000; Neighborhood Health Medical Center to receive \$1.6 million; and \$1.2 million for a teen multipurpose center in Havana.

Commissioner Green stepped out at 9:00 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 9:04 p.m.

Commissioner Green returned at 9:05 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 9:06 p.m.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District

Chair NeSmith congratulated Commissioner Simpkins for the success of the celebration and for sponsoring the event at St. Hebron Park and.

He said Hardaway Highway needs attention because there was a lot of trash on the highway.

He reminded the Commissioners of the Senior Citizens Funding workshop in Commission Chambers scheduled for Thursday at 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Holt asked about the garbage on the highway, was it what people has put out or what was thrown out and he stated it looked like what was thrown out.

Commissioner Hinson asked if they had a “weatherization” program in the County to help fix old windows etc. Mr. Dixon said it used to be called Capital Area Community Action and it was a grant-based program. He also asked for an itemized list regarding the ship program in his district.

He stated for the next meeting for them to be thinking about the different boards they were willing to serve on.

Chair NeSmith made a motion to rename the Greenshade-Dogtown Fire station after Dr. Viegbesie. Commissioner Simpkins asked to hold off on that and give her a chance to speak to persons in the community.

Commissioner Green said he thought that was the general business of the board.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
January 3, 2023-Regular Meeting

Greenlight moment: Commissioner Green said: "In order to be successful in the new year, stay focused, develop a positive attitude and the passionate, not just with your dreams but helping others fulfill their dreams."

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:26 P.M.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

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

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk