

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON MARCH 21, 2023 AT 6:00 PM,  
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 Green, District 5**  
                          **Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator**  
                          **Clayton Knowles, County Attorney**  
                          **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**  
                          **Adriana Quijada, Clerk Secretary**

**Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair NeSmith welcomed everyone and asked them to silence their devices, asked Commissioner Green to give the Invocation and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

**Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Dixon asked to pull Items 6 and 16 and Commissioner Hinson asked why Items 4 and 5 were not under General Business. Mr. Knowles said if he would like to pull them for discussion he could, but it did not matter if they were on the Consent Agenda or General Business. Mr. Dixon asked to add Item 16a-Approval of Donations for the Black History Month Celebration and Mr. Knowles asked to add Item 6b-Approval of Settlement Offer.

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

- 1.     Ratification Memo**
  
- 2.     BOCC Meeting/Workshop Minutes:**
  - a.    February 1, 2023 Workshop**
  - b.    February 7, 2023 BOCC Meeting**
  - c.    February 8, 2023 Workshop**
  - d.    February 21, 2023 BOCC Meeting**

3. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts-SHIP
4. Ratification of Approval to Confirm the Director of Human Resources
5. Ratification of Approval to Confirm the Director of Elderly Affairs
6. Approval of Lease Agreements for Tenants located at the Recently Purchased Property (2426 Pat Thomas Parkway, Quincy, FL)  
Item pulled

#### ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION

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

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 email to [CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov](mailto: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.

Chair NeSmith read aloud the above statement.

#### **Timmy Dyke, 244 NE Barley Ct., Lee, FL-Ability 1<sup>st</sup> Wheel Chair ramp program**

Mr. Dyke appeared before the Board and spoke on behalf of Ability 1<sup>st</sup> Wheel Chair ramps. He has money to spend in Gadsden County and asked for volunteers to help build ramps within the County. He hoped to make strides in Gadsden and Wakulla County.

Commissioner Green said he has directed people to him and this was a way for people to give back to the community.

Commissioner Hinson said he would contact One Gadsden Foundation to get help from them regarding this matter.

#### **Bibi Ramos, 525 N MLK Jr., Blvd., Tallahassee, FL – NWF Health Network**

Ms. Ramos appeared before the Board on behalf of NWF Network and explained what they did. The Commissioners were interested in having her come back for a workshop on this matter at a later date.

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**7. Attapulgus Highway-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to award the construction of the Attapulgus Highway resurfacing project to CW Roberts, Inc. in the amount of \$3,476,959.90. There is no fiscal impact to the County as this is a FDOT SCOP project.

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

**8. Attapulgus Highway Supplemental Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and stated it was for Board approval of the Attapulgus Supplemental Agreement in the amount of \$3,836,791.00. There is no fiscal impact to the County as this is a FDOT SCOP project.

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

Commissioner Hinson said they had bid something out before and it was never completed. Mr. Dixon asked what company did that and Commissioner Hinson said it was CW Roberts. Mr. Dixon stated he would look into that matter.

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

**9. Attapulgus Highway-CEI Agreement**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to the negotiated rates and agreement for the CEI-AE Engineering, Inc. in amount of \$3,836,791.00. This project was a funded by FDOT and posed no fiscal impact to the County.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER GREEN ASKED TO ALSO NOTE THERE WAS NO FISCAL IMPACT TO THE COUNTY. CHAIR NESMITH CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS MATTER.**

**10. Iron Bridge Road Safety Improvement-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to award the construction of the Iron Bridge Road Safety Improvement (LAP) construction of the CR 153 Iron Bridge Road Guardrail project to Capital Asphalt in the amount of \$581,934.80.

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

Commissioner Hinson asked if the Administrator could give the citizens a brief synopsis. Mr. Dixon said this would include upgraded guardrail and shoulders. This is a LAP agreement funded through FDOT in the amount of \$655,311 and would be no fiscal impact to the County.

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

**11. Ralph Strong Road Sidewalk Project-Bid Award**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to award the construction of the Ralph Strong Road (LAP) Sidewalk project in the amount of \$887,200.32 to Hale Contracting, Inc. and would be no fiscal impact to the County.

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

**12. Approval of Resolution 2023-007 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2023**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of budget amendments and Resolution 2023-007 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 budget.

Commissioner Simpkins asked about Fund 194 and Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board and said this was ARPA funds and was another pot of money that the County was awarded as well as the \$4 Million of ARPA funds and it was a Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund that the County was allocated \$50,000 for last fiscal year and this fiscal year. The money came in at the same time as the ARPA money and was all Federal money and was related to the Corona Virus pandemic. The \$50,000 was placed in with ARPA funds and this amendment would take it out because there were different reporting requirements. It initially was placed in the wrong fund and this is taking out the \$50,000 received from last year and was putting the money in the General Fund because it could be used as general dollars and was putting the \$50,000 received for last year as well as another \$50,000 for a total of \$100,000 and taking it out of ARPA funds and placing it into the General Fund to be used as General Fund dollars.

Commissioner Holt said she understood the new Commissioner's questions because it was not explained well on the description.

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

**13. Creation of the Gadsden County Elder Affairs Department**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval to create the Gadsden County Elderly Affairs Department to be managed by the Director and to take over all Senior Services throughout the County. He said prior to now, there was an Elder Affairs person that was housed in the Manager's Office. As they move forward with the process and look at the configurations, they know they are now in need of a Department. They feel it necessary to create the Elderly Affairs Department and move the majority of those people under the County in a Grant situation. It would give the best handle and opportunity. (He then passed around the Budget to all Commissioners and Deputy Clerk). The majority of the funding under this situation will remain with the BOCC and most of the employees will become County employees. Those who they were looking at end up being direct service workers, who for the near future, will remain under the non-profit, GSS, mainly for the licensing purpose. GSS to continue with the license that would allow them to work as the County did not have that license. All services were at a point to be determined by BOCC, they will transform those people and services to County control. The budget remains at the large number is a reorganization of those numbers to make sure they were able to carry out that mission. He said they understood the RFP was out and they were now in crunch time and it was time to get it. They believe they have everything in place.

Chair NeSmith said they were just receiving the budget and the Commissioners have not had a chance to review it closely. Mr. Dixon explained it was the same as in the book, it might be "tightened up" a bit but was the same as in the book.

Commissioner NeSmith said they had an opportunity to talk about the title and Mr. Dixon shared that he was not happy with the term "Elderly Affairs" and wanted to put out for the Board to look at.

Commissioner Green said at this point, he wanted to get this approved and they could come back to the naming of the organization at another time.

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

**14. Approval of the Agreement between BOCC and the Gadsden County Senior Citizen Foundation, Inc.**

Commissioner Green said he thought this was an opportunity as well and was going to wait and if not in order for them to let him know, but they have been talking about having non-profit meetings so they could identify what non-profits were asking from the Board and who

they could and could not help. The last meeting the Clerk was here and he stated they had funds they could give to other senior services. He said he has had several constituents call and he met with them about the other Foundation that offers senior services. He asked if it was ok to make a motion, because they have to do something for that Foundation, he could do it in his comments or do it now.

Mr. Knowles asked if he was asking if they could shift funding to the other organization and Commissioner Green said yes. Mr. Knowles said that might be a budget question. He did not think procedurally there was a problem but if they move money, thought they should do a Resolution like they did earlier. The motion might be to direct the County Administrator to bring that Budget Resolution back at the next meeting and vote then.

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for the approval of the agreement between the BOCC and the Gadsden County Senior Citizen Foundation, Inc. He said there was an agreement for their approval. He explained it had a lot of things in it that was required on every end, the monitoring, gives them the authority to end the contract and the ability to monitor anything the Foundation does. They want the Foundation to be successful and they have one goal and that is to sell Senior services and fundraise for them. They will not have any staff that belongs to Services but will have the ability to help with programing. He asked they approve the contract.

Chair NeSmith asked about the fiscal impact and Mr. Dixon said it was \$40,000 and was in the budget. He said it is using the Foundation to deliver services in a different way than they were able to do.

Commissioner Green asked if that would be in addition to what they have already agreed to give to the Foundation. Mr. Dixon said it was within the budget of \$475,000.

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

**15. Discussion and Direction Regarding the Gadsden County Indigent Burial Policy**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for Board discussion and direction regarding Policy 2023-01; Indigent Burial Program Policy.

Mr. Knowles said this was brought about because there are certain mandates within the Legislature that require the County to take on certain responsibilities as it relates to unclaimed human remains. He explained that prior to Commissioner NeSmith and Commissioner Green joining the Board, there was a lawsuit with TMH where they sued the County in order to take custody of some deceased remains that ended up where the costs were split. This policy would codify that and the impact stated there is currently \$2,000 budgeted and as the County

receives these, it may have to be brought back before the Board to get more authority. There have been two within the past few months.

Mr. Dixon explained one of the bodies was at the Medical Examiner's Office for almost two years. Secondly, the law requires the County to deal with the situation.

He said Legislature said the County "must take custody of and dispose of" and there are the bodies they were contractually obligated to dispose of. What was before the Commissioners was a policy that encompasses for the completely indigent persons who either have no family member or have a family member that cannot afford it, they could apply for the indigent burial program and receive a very basic disposition of the remains. He said lastly there was a provision that allowed for the disposition and if it was found out later the person who the County paid for their disposition was entitled to some type of money, life insurance, etc., the County could have the right to probate their estate and try to recapture funds that was put forth to dispose of the remains.

Commissioner Green said it would be a very complicated policy and his biggest concern was how to manage and dictate whose service would get utilized. He said there was rotation calls that are made as far as accidents and was there a process with funeral homes to be on rotation. He said there were a lot of people that did not have insurance but he did not want the County to take on that burden.

Commissioner Holt said Commissioner Green said most of what she was going to say. She asked Mr. Knowles to restate what was required by law.

Mr. Knowles said the law was a bit unclear. It said essentially, folks that die in the County that are indigent were required to be taken on for burial or disposition by the County. He said it was an unfunded mandate so it would require that there was not a next of kin and did not have the money.

Commissioner Holt said if they had to bury someone, they need to make sure they look at assets also. If not, there will be ones that would not want to claim the body to not have to pay for the final services.

Mr. Knowles said funeral homes would be different. The distinction would be if the next of kin could not be found. If they did cremate someone, the County could file a caveat with the County and if the estate was ever probated, that would function as a claim that they could be reimbursed for.

Commissioner Green said in order for them to get to the funeral home, they have to be claimed. If the body gets to the funeral home and does not have money to pay for the service, they try to work out a plan.

Commissioner Holt asked when they look at the length of time that an unclaimed body may be there, once the body is not claimed, they could look at their own policy. If they go ahead and do the cremation and a family member comes forward later saying that should not have happened, the liability should be written in the policy to address that.

Mr. Knowles said the Statute provides the County a measure of immunity because they are required to take possession of the bodies. They are a legally authorized person pursuant to statutes. The County would have the same rights as the family member.

Commissioner Green said to help with Commissioner Holt, in previous policies and other Counties, what is the limitation when it gets to this point? Once the County steps in, they should have already researched and sometimes they may have found the next of kin and the next of kin said they did not want to have anything to do with that person. Then they pretty much released the body and it is still at the Medical Examiner's office and the County is responsible for.

Mr. Dixon said the Sheriff has an obligation to search for next of kin, the County has an obligation to search also. Attached to the packet is an application and that forces the County to go down the line to find a next of kin. The first step is always cremation, there is only a burial under certain conditions.

Mr. Knowles said he thought it might be best to put out an RFQ to funeral homes that were interested and then put them on a rotation list.

Commissioner Simpkins said her point was already addressed, she wanted to make sure they were clear in their policy.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HOLT AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE A DRAFT POLICY WITH CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE ASKED.**

**~~16. Approval of the Contract with Dewberry for the CDBG-CV Engineering Services~~**

Item Pulled

**16a. Approval of Donations for the Black History Month Celebrations**

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of donations given during Black History Month. They were fortunate enough to have a good show as well and have



bumped into a stickler with the Clerk's Office. He stated he did not know why but they asked them to bring this before the Board for approval.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at 7:20 pm*

Mr. Dixon said donations were made to bands to come because otherwise they would not have been able to because they did not have traveling money. Donations were made to Black History and Cultural Committee so they could begin to take over some of the planning and be able to take it to another level. He said that was not all of the funding from the City, they will true up and provide additional donations as well. He said the donations were before them for their support.

Commissioner Green asked how much was budgeted and if they were within the amount that was budgeted and they approved.

*Commissioner Holt returned at 7:22 pm*

Mr. Dixon said they approved a total budget that included several things and they tried to stay within the budget of \$60,000. He said they stayed within that and once they true up, it will be much less than that.

Commissioner Green asked if they stayed within the budget or if they were a little over, could they amend the budget.

Mr. Dixon said this did not require them to amend the budget, the Clerk's Office was asking them to singularly approve those things. Commissioner Green said they were a month away and this was March 21<sup>st</sup> and have any of the people they have agreed to pay been paid. Mr. Dixon said some have been paid and a lot have not been paid.

Commissioner Green said that was a problem.

Commissioner Simpkins asked how much did the City contribute, what was the agreement to contribute to any costs. Mr. Dixon said they were going to go back, they asked the City to do certain things, entertainment and other things that they knew would get caught up so they used each other's system to move things. The City has agreed, like the band, to the donation to Black History and he said there was another that was around \$15,000-\$20,000.

Commissioner Simpkins said they have to do things in a business manner and the County was partnering with them. The County was coming to the table and they should have had a number that the City of Quincy was agreeing to contribute so they would have known exactly what was being contributed toward the Black Heritage Cultural and Education Organization Scholarship and toward the FAMU Foundation Scholarship. The County should have those

numbers from the City of Quincy because when we leave, they were saying that they approve the \$71,000 because they do not know what the agreement was with the City of Quincy.

Commissioner Green said the transparency was very important and going forward, as Commissioner Simpkins has stated, they have to have it lined up (like what was presented to them at the meeting) before now so they would know what they were doing. He said he thought they approved the general budget for the event but they do need to know who was giving what and to what extent because they did not want to run into these problems continuously every year every time there was an event. He said there were hiccups last time they had this event. He said they have to perfect the way they were doing this because there were vendors that have provided services who had to spend money to make money. They have to get the vendors taken care of like tomorrow. It was not their fault that their due diligence was not done. He said they had to move this forward and take care of the vendors. He said things had to be done a little more different with more transparency.

Commissioner Holt said the items have to be paid and they want to pay them, bottom line. They need to stand by what they say, they budgeted the money and can pay for the items. That was not it. She added as things change, to send an email to the Commissioners. She also said they have done this and the Tourist Development Council does it. They did a Bass Tournament and set aside \$25,000 in the past for events. These vendors need to be paid in a timely manner. They need to take care of their housekeeping and need to keep moving.

Commissioner Simpkins said the agenda request they have listed the Foundation Scholarship, the Heritage Cultural, the DRS Transportation, the band transportation and Born2BeAMan. She said the marketing, advertising, the video production, because there was not a request for that and the Black History Parade and Festival material. She then asked if everything except what was listed on the Agenda had been paid.

Mr. Dixon said some were paid and the rest was being held up was what he understood. He said this was what they requested them to bring before the Board and that was what they have done. He said as he understood, the checks were written but they had no idea, they thought certain, as he read their Procurement Purchasing policy, they were within their rights. However, to get people paid, this was what the Clerk requested and he was bringing it before them because he did not take kindly to people not being paid and there was no given reason other than what has been said.

Commissioner Simpkins said if they approve this that is being held up, were there other items were being held up, how is that going to be cleared? So, when they leave tonight...

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Mr. Dixon asked Georgette Daniels, Assistant County Administrator, if he was missing something or if he was quoting it right that this was what the Clerk wished to be brought before the Board.

Ms. Daniels, Assistant County Administrator, said this was what they wished to bring before the Board because this was donations or reimbursements for expenses, whatever and it was not vendors that provided goods and services to the County like they paid for the media board. This was going to individual groups and the Clerk wanted to clarify that these items have been approved by the Board of County Commissioners and that they would not be making any other payment related to Black History Month until these things were clarified.

Commissioner Simpkins asked Ms. Daniels the actual vendors for actual services, the Clerk was willing to pay and Ms. Daniels said some have already been made and this came up. Commissioner Simpkins said currently the only thing that was being held up was the information on the agenda request.

Mr. Dixon said all payments inclusive of those were being held up until...

Commissioner NeSmith said he was confused. With the option they have as far as the FAMU Foundation, the Heritage and Education Scholarship, the DRS Transportation, Gadsden County high school band transportation and Born2BeAMan, those five entities that were on the agenda...

Mr. Dixon said yes.

Chair NeSmith said regarding the other items that were not on the agenda, will they have to come back and Mr. Dixon said no. He asked if these five were the only ones that were addressed.

Mr. Dixon asked Ms. Daniels to repeat the language the Clerk's Office used.

Ms. Daniels said these were more in line with a donation or reimbursement and not for goods and services that the County received. She said what she received along with the Administrator was until those things were approved by the Board, there would be no other payments made relating to Black History Month.

Commissioner Hinson said to be transparent as well, these were not donations, they were expenditures.

Commissioner Holt said they were.

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Commissioner Hinson continued and said they were expenses and expenditures, was something they spent, not that someone gave to them. He said when he first heard "donation" he thought about someone giving them money. He said his assumption was they were \$11,000 over-budget. The BOCC said \$60,000 and the County Administrator spent \$71,000 and that meant the Administrator over-spent. He said in looking at it, it was a budget issue. They did not stay within the confines of the budget. If they had stayed within the budget, there would not be this problem. This is called being fiscal responsible. He said they had the same problem two weeks ago with Senior Services. They gave money to them to pay for outreach and they paid other things. The Seniors were unable to go on an out of town trip because of what the Administration did not do, not the Board. The Board gave money to Senior Services. He said they were beating around the bush. The issue was that he needs budget training because apparently everything he touches, he overspends without Board approval. He said last year there was the same problem. It was like he did not care. He said to forget about the County Administrator, to let it go, it was their right to be fiscally responsible as a Board and could not run the County as a renegade. He said by law, if the Board approved it, it was legal. He said there should be a list of things he should not be doing, bring it to the Board and let them know this was some of the things that they would like to spend the money on. Then the Board could approve that list and him follow within that list. He said he did not ask for much, but he asked for transparency.

Chair NeSmith said point well taken.

Commissioner Holt said to give the Administrator a chance to respond. The Administrator said he was not going to respond to that.

Commissioner Hinson said he would love for him to respond.

Mr. Dixon said as a response, that line item has (then asked Ms. Daniels how much money). Ms. Daniels said the overall budget that the BOCC approved for all events was \$180,000 and that included Christmas, Veterans' Day celebration, Fourth of July, Black History Month, Women's' History Month, and a variety of special events.

Commissioner Hinson said if someone went back and looked at the tape, rewind for about 5 minutes, it was stated \$60,000.

Chair NeSmith said he will follow-up with that.

Commissioner Hinson said the only reason he said that was because it was stated that it was \$60,000.

Commissioner Green said they could stay there for 30-40 minutes but at the end of the day, whether budgeted, mis-budgeted, over-budgeted, or under budgeted, however budgeted, they had to pay the vendors. He said he was in approval they pay their bill, including everything on the outline so they could retain their good credit and was his motion.

**COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE A MOTION TO PAY THE BILLS TO RETAIN THEIR GOOD CREDIT AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND.**

Commissioner Simpkins said if they were looking at the item and see FAMU Foundation Scholarship \$12,000, then it looks to be giving a donation. She felt it should have been laid out to say for the performance of the Marching 100 and that was the fee. Black Heritage Cultural and Education Organization Scholarship, laying what services were being provided and that was where the problem lies. What was presented to the Board looked like the County was giving donations, not paying vendors. It should have laid out what services were provided by each of the organizations and did not think they would be at this point had that been done for the Clerk. She also felt that was something they should see as well. When she saw the number for the Heritage was it the County saying they were providing scholarships or providing for their consultation and the services that the Cultural committee provided, were we paying for that, that should have been listed. She understood they needed to pay bills but at the same time, they were the stewards of the citizens monies and it was OK for them to know exactly what was going on, how the funds were being spent and she wanted to know because she was sitting there and she was a taxpayer also. She said if she was sitting on the other end, she would want to know as well, so it was OK if they took a few minutes to let the citizens know exactly what was going on. She said Black History Month was great and everybody enjoyed it but they need to make sure they were being totally transparent in listing the information and if all of that was listed as to what services were being provided, she did not think they would have to have this discussion.

Mr. Dixon said they will present to each of them the notes that were presented to the Clerk.

Mr. Hinson said he believed in paying people, but at the same time, there are some things that just could not be done. It was frivolous, irresponsible and despicable in a sense when things were being done that were not decent and in order. He said they put a budget out there and it was their job, citizens wanted them to talk things out, not just pass stuff, especially when a budget was given for \$60,000 and it was overspent, it should be asked. If the City of Quincy does not (pay), it would mean that the County will have to incur all the costs. Their Board may say to forget about it and the County will have to eat the costs. This wss about being fiscally responsible.

Commissioner Green said when he made the motion, he was not finished and was why he stated discussion would be necessary because to be clear, not that he wanted to rush through

it, but these things have already taken place. That was why he was adamant about making sure they were taking care of the things that have already taken place and being responsible for paying their bills. But the discussion was duly noted and needed that this should not have happened, the transparency has to be there because they were guardians and stewards. Commissioner Simpkins made it very clear and just to be noted, he wanted them to pay what had already been out there so they do not have undoing bills with vendors and the next time we need the vendors, they did not need them to say 'We're not going to deal with Gadsden County because they don't pay their bills'. It was not the vendors fault they were here; it was their fault meaning they should have already requested all of this individually before now. He said he was not there to throw rocks or to bring someone down. He did want them to be transparent in reference to what they were doing and having it outlined to the "T" if possible. He felt the Administrator knew how each of them felt about what has happened.

Commissioner Holt said she was ready to move on but Black History Month was in February and there was not one question about this item that one Commissioner could not have asked before now. It happens on a lot of items in the budget. You pick up the phone, call the attorney, call the administrator so she asked that they not appear as if they were innocent, they were not innocent of anything. They could call at any time. She said they were not innocent in those conversations because there was an open door with the people they hire. There were two employees. She said to vote and pay the bills. She said there was absolutely nothing gained by doing this kind of criticism in public. Because there are vendors that will tell you they do not deal with Gadsden County simply because of the way the meetings are ran and they will tell you that. They needed to stop. If they were going to sit here and throw innuendos at this type of thing, then do it after the meeting.

Commissioner Simpkins said she wanted to be clear, she was not throwing any innuendos. When she took this office, she said she would be open and transparent with the citizens. If she did not have the information, then she could not ask questions about it. She said they were just receiving that particular item just before the meeting so some of the questions they could not ask until they got there. She did not think that any of them was throwing any rocks, as for her, she was not. She said she meets with Mr. Dixon on a regular basis and calls him because most of the time she would forget to ask something in the office and would call him back. Had she had that paper, she would have had that conversation with him but since she had just received it, she had to ask the questions today.

Commissioner Hinson said he had to say he just received the list a few minutes ago. When someone said they had a chance to look over it, that was not true. He wanted to do what was right and there was nothing wrong with doing what was right. He did not think he was rude, but asking questions that make you feel uncomfortable when you know, he could not take advantage of people's money and knowing that he was going with the crowd because it made him feel good but sometimes you have to stand alone.

Chair NeSmith said he thought the point was made that they did just receive it. He said he did not go in the community and talk about Mr. Dixon because his life was so complex as it was. If anything, Mr. Dixon needed to find time to talk with him, he was the County Commissioner.

Chair NeSmith said point well made.

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

**16b. Approval of Settlement Offer**

Mr. Knowles explained this was from the shade meeting they had a few weeks ago with the ambulance roll-over with the physician that happened on I-10. The fiscal impact is the deductible of \$10,000. It was approved by their insurance counsel and he requested it be approved.

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

**CLERK OF COURT**

**17. Updates**

The Deputy Clerk had nothing to report.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**18. Updates**

Mr. Dixon said they have upcoming Rural County Days at the Capitol next month and were accepting any ideas on what the presentation could look like. He stated they would send out the right date.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**

**19. Updates**

There was nothing to report from Mr. Knowles himself but Commissioner Hinson had something to discuss with him.

Commissioner Hinson stated he had called Mr. Knowles earlier in the day and asked about the internet cafes/slot machine places. Mr. Knowles stated they were illegal. He stated there are municipalities and counties that have enacted their own ordinances to forbid it. Commissioner Hinson said he received several phone calls concerning this and was the reason he brought it

up. He stated the Board had addressed this twice and informed it was illegal. He stated it is Florida Statute 849.08.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

#### **20. Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2**

Commissioner Simpkins said on Friday at 4:00 PM there would be a bridge renaming ceremony in Jamieson.

She asked Mr. Dixon if the RAISE grant had been applied for. Mr. Dixon stated no they did not apply for it. Commissioner Simpkins stated there was a grant out there called Public Works Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant. It can be used for acquisition and development of land and improvements for use in Public Works or other types of development facilities like water and sewer system improvement operations and construction or expansion of facilities for workforce development. She believed it was something that they need to take a look at. She stated DEO with the Division of Community Development, the CDBG, was due by May 5<sup>th</sup> and webinar would be on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

She stated she had been noticing people putting household goods on the side of the road. She asked if there are certain days that Waste Pro was picking them up. Mr. Dixon stated people were reading about the bulk item pick up and they had asked them not to put it out early, but people will and are putting it out early. Mr. Dixon said for those that have Waste Pro, they are able to call them and have them pick up their bulk items.

Commissioner Simpkins stated their collaboration with the municipalities was very essential to the growth in the county. She would like for them to continue to build those relationships.

Commissioner Simpkins stated she was disheartened when she found out that the contract with USDA would not be renewed. She stated they have to take a look at their facilities. She would like to put back on the schedule their Strategic Planning meeting so that they can address their organizational charts to make sure they have the right people in the right places. She also stated they need to schedule a time for them to workshop with the Gadsden County Development Council because in order for them to be successful, they cannot do this on their own.

#### **Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4**

Commissioner Holt stated she spoke with Ms. Walker about a situation she had when she went by ambulance to the hospital due to her being ill. When the doctor discharged her, the ambulance could not take her where she wanted to go. She said she brought it up with Mr. Dixon and he researched it. She stated she got back with the family and told them that when the doctor discharged them, it does not say transport on the form. They are not able to



override what a doctor tells them. What she is hoping to do is that they can look into this with Capital Regional Medical Center and look at the hospital, emergency room, and the contract. That way they could go ahead and put that on the table. It could bring everyone up to date on that contract.

*Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 8:10 pm*

Commissioner Holt stated that when Commissioner Simpkins was speaking, she had written in her notes that they do need to rotate to the cities and meet with them. She stated in the past when she was Chair, they have met with the City of Havana and Gretna to see how they can partner with each other and coexist.

She stated they know they are fiscally restrained, and was worried about what was going on in the legislature and what bills will be passed. She stated she was worried and the people should be worried too about what was going on in the Legislature. She stated many of the bills were going to pass, so if there was anything that needed to be said, people should be calling them and saying it now. She wanted the public to know that when those laws are passed, there is nothing that the Board of County Commissioners could do other than follow the law. She said by law, the public is able to call any legislator, not just the ones in their district.

*Commissioner Simpkins returned 8:13 pm*

Commissioner Holt said there are 38 fiscally constrained counties. When they are told to take over bridges, the County does not get those kinds of taxes to repair a bridge, and they have to ask for money from the larger counties. The large counties would get upset and feel like they have to babysit. They are the receiver counties and the large counties are the donor counties.

Commissioner Holt thanked everyone and said they were moving pretty good. She stated people are still watching them, and when they watch them, they want to know why they are arguing and not voting. They do not realize what they do. She stated Commissioner Simpkins brought up a good point about the grants and that they need to apply for them.

Chairman Nesmith asked Mr. Dixon where they were with the Grants Department. Mr. Dixon said they were probably going to interview some people in the next few weeks. He stated they are hard to come by and he knows grants are out there but they have to be mindful of the grants that they apply for. They cannot apply for every grant but he is hoping soon they will have people they can connect with in the next week.

Commissioner Holt said that in order to have a good Grants Department, they have to have good Grants Coordinators. She stated the budget is coming up and when they start talking about the budget and hiring extra people, to not think that they are going to get the same

thing of all their wants because the money is not going to be there. They have to cut back on what that want in order to get more money, then they are able to get what they want.

**Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5**

Commissioner Green said if anyone from Reed Street Community was watching, to please contact him directly. He stated he did receive the letter with the petition. He said on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the Shiloh Community will be having an Emancipation Day event from 1 to 5 PM. He hoped they could do some type of partnership. He stated he will ask the County Administrator about the do's and don'ts of what they can and cannot do in regards to providing services to that community.

Commissioner Green stated he also received an invite from librarian Ms. Shannon Powell. They are having a story book carnival at the main library in Quincy, and he had been asked to be one of the readers. He said it is on April 26<sup>th</sup> at 10AM.

Commissioner Green asked about the ditches being cleaned, especially Shiloh Road and Spooner Road. He stated if Public Works could, to go out and take a look at the old trash that is clogging up.

Commissioner Green asked about updates on positions like Public Works Director, Budget Director, Economic Development Director and if they have been filled already. Mr. Dixon said that interviews for Public Works Director are currently happening. He said they are looking for folks to fill the Budget Director position. They have not found anyone that meets the needs of the office. They are starting to not only advertise but to recruit for these positions.

Commissioner Green stated he had the opportunity again to speak to a few people in his district that utilize the Wellness Center and if there is anything that they can do to help that program, he believed it was a necessity. Commissioner Green wanted to make a motion to ask the County Administrator to put it on the agenda to give \$45,000 to the Wellness Center. Commissioner Holt asked Mr. Dixon if the Wellness Center could still apply for the same money they applied for. Mr. Dixon said he was not sure but he would think that they would apply. Commissioner Holt asked if they move money over there and they do not get the grant, how would that affect them? Mr. Dixon said he did not know how it would affect them, and what message it would send. Commissioner Green said from his understanding, the Clerk stated that they do have the funding. Mr. Dixon said they have funds that they can direct anywhere they would like, he was not speaking of that funding authority, he was speaking on the Area Agency. Commissioner Green said that his urgency was from both programs having the same funding issues. He stated he was aware that they had given \$60,000 to the Senior Services and they should be able to do something for others as well.

Commissioner Holt said she was not debating the point of bringing it back, the reason she brought it up was because of the Area Agency making their decision. She stated that it is not a problem with giving money to the other organizations, but the concern is how does the Area Agency look at that? That was the only reason she had not called the U.S. Department of Elder Affairs was because she was waiting to see what AAA is going to do. She stated AAA is a contractor. She stated all they really need is a date, when are they going to make a decision.

Commissioner Simpkins said prior to voting for Elderly Affairs, the request was made so that they are not setting a precedent because of dealing directly with the seniors. She said they really are not setting a precedent as it relates to nonprofits as a whole because of dealing with the Senior Citizens. She does not believe that giving the donation for the Wellness Center would have an effect on the County when they apply for the RFP.

Commissioner Holt said if they were going to choose one or the other, when looking at giving out funding, it's going to be absolute. That would be the problem. In this case, if the Foundation is set up, then they are the competitor against the Wellness Center. She stated they are competing for this entity for funding.

Commissioner Green said he understood the possibility of the comment made, but his focus is that they do not know how long it would take for them to give the money to any other organizations. Mr. Dixon said they would know how long it would take and said it would be around July 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Green said he does not want to see any program that is beneficial to the county fail. If they can help, then help.

Commissioner Green asked for a vote, Commissioner Hinson said they did not have to vote to place it on the agenda. Commissioner Green said because they were asking for money, he would like to do a vote.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GREEN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO PUT ON THE AGENDA TO GIVE \$45,000 TO THE WELLNESS CENTER.**

**Commissioner Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1**

Commissioner Hinson said they went to Legislative Day last week. He stated he thought that for the next few months they need to have a continuance of infrastructure workshops. He stated it is too much money for them to be relaxing and chilling. He said they also need to address the housing crisis as well. Also, they need to start having budget workshops soon. He said they need to focus on infrastructure. He stated a couple years ago, they approved a Grants Coordinator and they have not hired anybody yet. He said if Gretna was able to find almost \$4 million dollars, they should be able to make it happen without excuses. He said they created positions two years ago and they still have not been filled. He said his heart is in it, and

he would like for everyone else's heart to be in it as well. He asked the Chairman to have them schedule budget workshops so they can finish the budget well in advance this time.

**Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District 3**

Chairman Nesmith stated 2022 was great but 2023 will be outstanding. He stated he was pleased to see new nets on the basketball goals at Rosedale Park.

Commissioner Holt said this year the County received \$55 Million for Infrastructure. She stated they have to have staff to take care of the money. If they do not get an Economic Development person, she would advise to bring it back to the Board. If they want to raise the money to get the kind of people they need, then they can put it on themselves. So that way they can decide if they want to hire those people or not.

Chairman NeSmith informed Commissioner Green on where they stood with the Executive Director for Economic Development. Chairman Nesmith said he spoke with the Director of HR and was asked to inform them that they have another two weeks on cycle and if they do not receive enough traction, they will bring it back and see if it needs tweaking. He stated they have received applicants but they need persons that have specialization in Economic Development.

Commissioner Simpkins said that is why they need to look at their organizational chart, who they have on staff and what are their specialties. Then they can come back and say these are the positions that they need to add.

Commissioner Hinson said Commissioner Simpkins has been bringing it up every week but they have not had the workshop on it yet.

Commissioner Hinson asked for a list of all the accomplishments. He stated they have \$55 million dollars, and that is great, but they have more money that they have not touched yet and they need to be more aggressive.

*Commissioner Simpkins stepped out 8:50 pm.*

Commissioner Green said he taught 2 people last week how to play pickle ball and it can be a health improvement. He stated next year he wants to do a camp.

*Commissioner Simpkins returned 8:52 pm*

Chairman Nesmith informed Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Simpkins the strategic planning meeting is being scheduled.

Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners  
March 21, 2023-Regular Board Meeting

Chair Nesmith talked about the new government complex with the 52 acres the County just purchased. He stated to Commissioner Hinson that as soon as they get through infrastructure, they need to talk about what that building is going to look like.

*Commissioner Green stepped out 8:54 pm*

Chair Nesmith talked about having a wellness center, gym, and walking trail at the new building. Chairman Nesmith stated they need to have someone that works for the Board that is constantly following these bills so that they know what positions they need to take moving forward.

Commissioner Hinson said what Chairman Nesmith said was right, it was the best time to do it using ARPA money and it would not affect the general fund.

*Commissioner Green returned 8:58 p.m.*

Chairman Nesmith asked Commissioner Simpkins to repeat a quote she stated earlier to close out the meeting.

Commissioner Simpkins said "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success".

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:59 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**