

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON OCTOBER 17, 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 “Ron” Green, District 5
Edward J. Dixon, County Administrator
Clayton Knowles, County Attorney
Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair NeSmith called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He asked Commissioner Hinson for the Invocation and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

Amendments and Approval of Agenda

Mr. Dixon asked to amend the agenda with the addition of Item 18a-Approval of Gadsden County Legislative Priorities.

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

Awards, Presentations and Appearances

CONSENT

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

1. **Ratification Memo**
2. **BOCC Meeting/Workshop Minutes:**
 - a. **August 8, 2023 Workshop**
 - b. **August 23, 2023 Housing & Bond Workshop**
 - c. **September 5, 2023 BCC Meeting**
 - d. **September 6, 2023 Intergovernmental Workshop**
 - e. **September 12, 2023 Budget Hearing**
 - f. **September 18, 2023 Budget Workshop**
 - g. **September 19, BCC Meeting**

3. Approval of the Annual Contract between the GC BOCC and the Florida Department of Health for the operations of the Gadsden County Health Department
4. Approval of Required Training for Gadsden County Sheriff's Office TeamOne SWAT Operator
5. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract-State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and Gadsden Emergency Repair Program
6. Approval of Appointment to the CareerSource Capital Region Board
7. Approval of FY 2024 SC408 Small County Consolidate Waste Grant Agreement with Florida Department of Environmental Protection
8. Approval of Barineau Road over Willacoochee Creek Bridge Rehabilitation Agreement
9. Approval of CR 161A Dogtown Road Widening and Resurfacing Agreement
10. Approval of Bunker Gear Purchase
11. Approval of Agreement between Lexipool, LLC and Gadsden County Emergency Management Services
12. Approval of Board of County Commissioners 2024 Holiday Schedule
13. Consideration and approval of a Resolution in Support of the Florida Department of Transportation Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) Grant application for the proposed Tallahassee to Havana Multi-Use Trail Project Design and authorization for the County to be the Willing Manager
14. Consideration and approval of a Resolution in Support of the Florida Department of Transportation Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail (SUN Trail) Grant application for the proposed US 90 West Multi-Use Trail Project for a feasibility study and agreement for the County to be the Willing Manager
15. Approval to Accept Grant Award from Department of Financial Services

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.org 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.

Mr. Dixon read the above statement aloud.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

GENERAL BUSINESS

16. Approval of Resolution 2023-033 Grant Budget Amendments for FY 2023

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was for approval of Resolution 2023-033 for Grant Budget Amendments and for authorization for the Assistant County Administrator and the Finance Director to complete and execute all budget amendments necessary to maintain a balanced budget for the FY 2023 BOCC budget.

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

17. Approval of CRTPA Appointments

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item and said it was presented to the board for approval of a representative to the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency and an alternate. Chair NeSmith asked commissioner Hinson if he would allow him to continue as designee and Commissioner Hinson agreed.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION FOR CHAIR NESMITH TO SERVE AS THE PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE FOR CRTPA AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.

18. Approval of County Administrator Contract

Mr. Dixon introduced the above item. This agenda item seeks approval to renew the Employee Agreement for the Gadsden County Administrator.

Mr. Knowles said on Section 3, the second paragraph would be removed but he could serve on prior approved boards of non-profits.

Chair NeSmith said he wanted to make sure they were looking at a contract for the position and not the person.

There were comments from Commissioner Green concerning the amount of the salary and it was stated that Ms. Maas was the one that suggested the amount after reviewing the County Administrator salaries from seven other counties. She said \$148,000 was the average of the salaries.

Commissioner Simpkins said with the salary, have to look at the benefits also. When they look at some of the compared counties such as Key West, that is a totally different ballgame and they have a much higher budget than Gadsden County. She did not think they should have been on the average.

Ms. Maas said when they were originally given the assignment, they reached out to FAC. They assemble information every other year and did not have current year's data. They were included because it was a similar population but their budget is much higher than ours.

Ms. Holt said she even called some counties and did not know that some administrators were making more than ours and they were in the county. She had no problem for paying for the work, but has a problem when the work is not done.

Chair NeSmith said had issue with automatic roll-over with contract. No administrator would allow the contract to expire without it coming before the Board. Mr. Dixon stated he had no problem with removing the automatic roll-over.

Commissioner Simpkins said it was their responsibility to read the contracts and be aware of when the contracts expire as they only had two employees, the Administrator and the Attorney. Commissioner Green said they need to take the automatic renewal out but keep the 90 days. Commissioner Holt said their only concern was getting the position filled if they had to. Mr. Dixon said he could only presume the statement was about stability and making a smooth transition.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought, not only with the County Administrator, the Administrator should give 6 months' notice when contracts expire.

Commissioner Green wanted to make sure they understood that the 90 days was for contractual renewal; the Administrator works at the will of the Board.

Commissioner Holt said she was ready to vote. When it comes to contracts, that was the legal side.

Commissioner Simpkins said her concern was dealing with Section 9. Chair NeSmith said they were going through each section.

Commissioner Hinson said if not mistaken, that was why they have Human Resources. Their job is to do that and they have to entrust they will be trustworthy and do their job. Commissioner Green concurred and agreed with Commissioner Hinson as it related to Human Resources.

Commissioner Hinson stated for them to be notified 6 months prior to the contract ending. That way, they have enough time to advertise and interview.

Commissioner Simpkins said when looking at the termination conditions and severance pay; agreeing to pay a full year if they terminate.

Ms. Maas reappeared before the Board. She stated she could look through the copies of the other contracts that she has and let her know which counties had the same situation. The additional is the severance for the executive compensation. Commissioner Simpkins said it stated that whoever shall receive his salary and benefits for 20 weeks as severance payable in accordance with the county's bi-weekly pay schedule, and be paid for 6 months of additional annual leave. If terminated, shall be paid up to 480 hours for his unused annual leave balance.

Ms. Maas stated it was time that they have earned, and that is why it is capped. It is 25% of sick leave for regular employees. She stated it was not uncommon.

Mr. Dixon said Commissioner Green alluded to it earlier that these are high risk employment opportunities. They do not require a reason to terminate him.

Commissioner Simpkins stated with the 6 months and then half of the sick leave, that was almost a year. She stated it was not favorable to the County for them to also do 20 weeks as severance.

Commissioner Hinson thought if it was ok with everyone, they go with the 20 weeks' severance and they could bring this back again.

Commissioner Holt said Commissioner Greens suggestion was to remove the 6 months and would move for approval.

Ms. Maas said this was existing language. She suggested to tie that to length of service for the County Administrator.

Derrick Elias, 233 Cheeseborough Avenue, Quincy, appeared before the Board. He said it appeared that they might want to table this for right now and get the changes in place so they knew what they were voting on. He asked what the current salary was for the Administrator.

Ms. Maas appeared and said the current annual salary was \$105,000.

Mr. Elias said what they were voting on was an increase to \$140,000. He asked if there has been an evaluation. Chair NeSmith stated yes. He asked does the position warrant \$140,000 or does the person holding the position warrant \$140,000.

Chair NeSmith said with regard to the Counties they used, three years ago they used surrounding counties and now they were using Counties in southwest Florida.

Ms. Maas reappeared before the Board. She said they went to the FAC report that is done every other year and tried to get as close as they could. She said the County Administrator's salary has been lower than it should be for quite some time.

Commissioner Green said he believed the City of Quincy salary was \$115,000, the City of Midway is \$121,000 and Gretna was \$105,000. He added this was city managers compared to county administrator.

Ms. Maas said the City of Quincy was \$120,000. In order to stay competitive, they have to have a good salary number.

Mr. Elias said he was not here to fight against the contract. Three years ago, when they went through the same process, their rationale was totally different. He said to portion in the contract where they wanted the Administrator to give a 6 months' notice, if they do not give that, what was their recourse. He asked what the budget was that was approved for the position.

Chair NeSmith said they were asking that 6 months prior to the expiration, the Board be notified. Their goal was not for it to be punitive. Mr. Elias asked what was the purpose of being notified if there is no recourse. Chair NeSmith stated they were not looking for a recourse, they were looking for notification. Mr. Elias asked what was the budget for the County Administrator's position.

Ms. Daniels appeared before the Board and said they were unsure what the negotiated contract would be so they included a figure of \$150,000 for the purpose of the budget. Mr. Elias said he thought it would be prudent for them to have a completed contract before them before they voted.

Commissioner Holt said that was why it was put online, so the public can see. It was not like the County was trying to hide anything. She said she put a motion in to remove the 6 months additional leave time, 20 weeks of severance pay, 480 hours of unused annual leave, and ½ unused sick leave.

Commissioner Simpkins said for the record, as it relates to the contract, she has problem with the increase of \$135,000 and with the counties that were chosen to compare.

Commissioner Green said when they have a commissioner say they have a problem with a number, how can they go negotiate a number.

Commissioner Holt said to vote up or down.

Commissioner Hinson asked for clarification of the motion. Commissioner Holt said the motion is to approve the contract, 20 weeks' severance pay, 480 hours unused annual leave, and ½ unused sick leave, and inclusion of 6 months' notice from the Administrator.

Commissioner Hinson asked if the paying for ½ of the unused sick leave was also in the last contract. Mr. Knowles said the number of hours is unique to the individual, the ½ of unused sick was ¼ of unused sick and he was offered ½; 480 was statutory. He was not entitled to severance pay if fired.

Commissioner Simpkins asked if they could provide what the total compensation package would be. Ms. Maas said in dollars and could provide it later, she did not bring a calculator with her.

Commissioner Hinson said for future reference, they need to be prepared. When he was with the School Board, they had figures in front of them when talking about the budget.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT WITH A 6 MONTHS NOTICE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR, 20 WEEKS OF SEVERANCE PAY, 480 HOURS OF UNUSED ANNUAL LEAVE, ½ UNUSED SICK LEAVE, AND THE REMOVAL OF THE 6 MONTHS ADDITIONAL LEAVE TIME. COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS OPPOSED.

18a. Review and Approval of the 2024 Gadsden County Legislative Priorities

Mr. Dixon said they have the review and approve of the legislative priorities.

Commissioner Hinson said he thought it would be fair to the Board to have a meeting to bring ideas in. He thought they needed to go after infrastructure.

Chair NeSmith said he would like to approach this and have had the opportunity to meet with the Administrator and was in support of these items. This was not exclusive. Commissioner Hinson said whatever was coming from the Board is what they would look at.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 7:39 p.m.

Commissioner Hinson thought they needed to shorten the list to a few projects that they could get and go after certain projects.

Commissioner Green said he also had a chance to speak with the Administrator and there was \$7 Million of infrastructure and would like Commissioner Hinson to have a chance to meet with the Administrator. He asked if they had to vote on this tonight.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 7:41 p.m.

Mr. Dixon said the earliest due date is November 1st and they do not meet before that date. He stated they do need to be on the same page together and as things come through from cities, they will knock things off and narrow the list.

Commissioner Green said it was good to have a start but wanted to make sure every Commissioner had an opportunity to speak with the Administrator before submittal.

Commissioner Hinson said he has been talking back and forth with the Administrator forever. They need to meet and hold a conversation collectively.

Chair NeSmith said they have to have this to legislative delegation by November 1. He stated they could call a special meeting. He asked Commissioner Hinson if he could provide a list. If they work with cities, they will come together as one.

Commissioner Simpkins said they have a meeting on the 26th for fire services, she asked could they come earlier by an hour and meet with municipalities. Commissioner Hinson said they needed more time than an hour. Chair NeSmith asked if 2 hours was enough time.

Mr. Dixon said the City of Greensboro asked they include their City Hall and Fire Station to the County's submissions.

Commissioner Hinson asked why not have the meeting on Monday. The fire meeting will be very intense and why not meet Monday.

Commissioner Holt said back to the timeline, they scheduled meetings before every meeting and commissioners did not show up. Chair NeSmith asked what was convenient to the Board

and Commissioner Hinson said to meet on Monday, 30th. Commissioner Holt said they could add on to it after being submitted. Chair NeSmith said to schedule this for Monday.

Commissioner Holt stepped out at 7:56 p.m.

Commissioner Green asked Commissioner Hinson how about when they bring this and go through it, then they can say yay or nay.

Commissioner Simpkins said November 14 at 5:00 p.m. is the deadline.

Chair NeSmith said to Ms. Daniels that they wanted to have a special meeting on Monday at 4:00.

CLERK OF COURT

19. Updates

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

20. Updates

Ms. Daniels said nothing from the Administrator, he stepped out.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

21. Updates

Nothing unless questions.

DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS

22. Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, District 2

Commissioner Simpkins said this month is Breast Cancer Awareness and they needed to recognize survivors and encourage women to get mammograms. She was glad to see work start on the railroad on Shady Rest Road.

Commissioner Simpkins would like them to take a look at back door services for Waste Pro for some of the citizens that cannot get to the road. She also wanted to make sure they were still working on parks.

Commissioner Simpkins also stated on Saturday October 21st, DJ Trucker will be holding a trail ride again.

She mentioned that she listened to a sermon on Sunday that said “when isolated you’re missing out on what others may have to offer, so it’s important for us to work together”.

Commissioner Hinson said they need to schedule a meeting with Waste Pro and address their issues.

Commissioner Brenda Holt, District 4

Commissioner Holt said next Saturday will be Robertsville Day.

She stated she would like to be put on the next agenda the Attorney contract and it be brought up for vote.

Commissioner Holt stated she was in favor of Items 12 and 13 but if employees were to take care of that, they may need to hire more people.

She was hoping to get together with Star Metro on providing transportation, especially to Amazon in Tallahassee.

Commissioner Holt stated she made sure she told some people to be careful when driving. She had a lady ask for the County to pay for her car because she ran over a board in the road.

Commissioner Holt mentioned that she was invited to the White House to do a presentation on Thursday and asked what else they needed.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, District 5

Commissioner Green thanked Commissioner Simpkins for mentioning Breast Cancer and wanted to mention that on the 8th, there will be the annual breast cancer walk from Piggly Wiggly to the Courthouse.

He said he would like if the Board would consider being in FAMU’s parade.

Commissioner Green mentioned Drake Acres and asked if they could they get striping or have Public Works look at the road.

Commissioner Green thanked Public Works for the work done on Shiloh Road.

Commissioner Green asked about Trunk or Treat. Ms. Daniels said the Board would be participating at one held at the Ward’s Lot.

Commissioner Simpkins mentioned there is a Trunk or Trat taking place in Havana as well and wanted to make sure was represented.

Commissioner Eric Hinson, Vice-Chair, District 1

Commissioner Hinson echoed what Commissioner Simpkins said, they need presence there. He mentioned Deacon Madry passed away, and called him the “praying guy”.

Commissioner Hinson also echoed what Commissioner Simpkins and Commissioner Green said and felt they should have a “Pink Out Day” in the County for Breast Cancer Awareness.

Commissioner Kimblin NeSmith, Chair, District 3

Chair NeSmith needed support for recognizing Marcus Green. Green second 5-0

CHAIR NESMITH MADE A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE MARCUS GREEN AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Chair NeSmith wanted to mention Chris Daniels and Colonel Collins with the Sheriff’s Department in the audience. He asked them to stand and say hello.

Commissioner Hinson said he had an opportunity to call a young man up who started doing business like building homes and he wanted to recognize Shontell Rittman.

COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO RECOGNIZE SHONTELL RITTMAN AND COMMISSIONER GREEN MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Chair NeSmith stated the Love Where you Live Campaign is now active in District 3 and they will be picking up bulky items on the 16th – 19th.

Chair NeSmith congratulated Commissioner Holt, who will be representing Gadsden County in Washington, DC.

Chair NeSmith stated the Attorney reminded him of claims and legal issues. They have had a number of claims and legal issues withing the last couple of years. There is something called risk management and they need to know where the legal issues are coming from. He stated the Attorney was working on this.

Chair NeSmith mentioned the Summer Youth Program and stated they cannot wait until February or March to start talking about it. They need to start determining now what they want the program to look like so that they can arm the county with the resources needed.

Commissioner Holt said she forgot to mention that a few weeks ago, a couple groups were given money. She stated others have asked about that and she told them to come before the

Board to present. She stated there were no stipulations there. Commissioner Holt also said that Commissioner Simpkins mentioned on Saturday the County will make money on taxes on gas from the concert and they are not sponsoring it as a commission. They should be a sponsor. She stated how are they going to get people into the County to purchase products and buy gas. Chair NeSmith asked if there was a reason why the County was not working with them. Commissioner Holt said the County needs to make sure they approach them. Commissioner Holt said if they are having the event, to give them \$20,000 and Commissioner Simpkins second.

Chair NeSmith said he has been consistent with non-profits and entities. If they have an organization that is coming into Gadsden County and they are going to assist them with economic development, that is awesome, and he would support it. Commissioner Holt stated she was not talking about nonprofit she was talking about gas taxes and the taxes they would get from the event.

Commissioner Simpkins stepped out at 8:36 p.m.

Commissioner Simpkins returned at 8:37 p.m.

Commissioner Holt asked Ms. Steele about monies in the Tourist Development Council for marketing and grant funds. Ms. Steele said they have marketing dollars that can be used for the event, but they need to make sure they use the County's branding. Commissioner Holt asked about the amount of marketing dollars and Ms. Steele said usually, it is \$5,000 but the Board has the ability to instruct the Tourist Development Council to spend a different amount and take from a different line item. Commissioner Holt said the reason she was asking was because they were trying to figure out how to get Tourist Development in the County.

Commissioner Hinson said a couple weeks ago, they had a Pumpkin Fest in Havana and they were approved because they knew the value they brought into the community. He believes they gave them \$25,000. The Board suggested to give them money, they did not come to the Board. Ms. Daniels said that funding was in line of an event they sponsored with other cities.

Commissioner Green wanted to clarify this is not for a non-profit organization. This is an event that the individual has done before and brought in a lot of money for the County. This is a group that they need to invest in; they have provided for the County.

Commissioner Simpkins said this was different when talking about guidelines for non-profits, this is bringing in funds for the County. Hotels were sold out and people had to stay in Jackson County. This event will generate funds for the County.

Commissioner Holt said she had to disclose that he is distant relative of hers, but she is not benefitting from this.

Commissioner Hinson said, in all fairness, he has heard of Billy Dean and he had an event in Chattahoochee and after that, Chattahoochee got \$37,000 because Chair NeSmith brought it up.

COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO GIVE DJ TRUCKER \$25,000 FOR THE TRAIL RIDE EVENT AND COMMISSIONER SIMPKINS MADE THE SECOND. THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE.

Commissioner Holt said if they want to settle the problem, they need to set up policies and procedures.

Commissioner Green provided a green light moment:

“The strength of a team is each individual member or organization. The strength of each member is the team”

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR NESMITH DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:51 PM.

GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

KIMBLIN NESMITH, Chair
Chair Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk