



## **Gadsden County, Florida**

**Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners and the  
Gadsden County School Board Joint Workshop 03/09/17**

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### **JOINT WORKSHOP AGENDA**

**March 09, 2017 at 06:00 PM**

**UF/IFAS University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences**

**Present:**

**Sherrie Taylor, Chair, District 5  
Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1  
Dr. Anthony "Dr. V" Viegbesie, District 2  
Gene Morgan, District 3  
Brenda Holt, District 4  
Nicholas Thomas, Clerk of Court  
Robert Presnell, County Administrator  
David Weiss, County Attorney  
Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk**

**Present :**

**Isaac Simmons, Chair  
Audrey Lewis, Vice – Chair  
Steve Scott  
Charlie D. Frost  
Tyrone Smith**

### **General Business**

**1. Welcome**

(Sherrie D. Taylor, Chairperson/Isaac Simmons, Jr., Chairperson)

Chair Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting. She talked about the positive things coming to the County.

Mr. Simmons, GCSB Chair, also said welcome to everyone. He posed the question as to how they could come together to find out what would benefit Gadsden County.

Ms. Taylor said she would like to have a round robin discussion and suggested they talk. She thanked Mrs. Holt, as this was her child, to have a meeting of the minds and asked what they could do to work together?

**2. How can we help each other?**

(Sherrie D. Taylor, Chairperson)

Commissioner Holt discussed how the two entities could work together.

Commissioner Hinson said he liked the idea of the coming together as he has had the opportunity to serve on both Boards and it was needed. He recalled a conversation he had with a principal about Grandparents Day at schools and asked how they could wrap that into what they were doing? How could we push by working with State Lobbyists by pushing their top agenda?

School Board Member Frost said his concern was with insurance for the employees. He spoke of a joint policy with the County and School Board that would benefit the entire County.

Mr. Presnell discussed insurance and concerns about retired individual rates. He said there were different rates and that was something they could explore more.

Commissioner Morgan said there was a Committee that reviews each year for insurance with the County. He said they meet once a year and recommended they meet more often and thought they should be the ones to look into a joint venture if possible.

Superintendent Milton said they have an Insurance Committee as well and they should work together, and then come together for a meeting.

Commissioner Hinson suggested the Florida Association of Counties/ Florida School Board of Association get involved and maybe that was a starting place.

School Board Member Lewis said she serves on the Committee. She said she talked with Mr. Craig McMillan and he said there were different tiers. She said if the two (County and School) met it would carry more weight.

Commissioner Holt said she holds a license in insurance sales and if you don't have a state association there was no leverage. She said there is a lot of pressure and they pull out. She said this is a large ticket item; you may want to start with the individual Associations.

Commissioner Viegbesie said he would like to take a different point of view. The School is an entity by itself, so is the County. He asked were there constitutional limitations as to what they could do.

Attorney Weiss said he had no legal response at this time.

School Board Member Frost continued his discussion and his stance to why working together would be beneficial.

Commissioner Holt said they tried that with the City of Quincy and it didn't work. She said with business you have 30 days to make a profit. She said a lot of things will go into the play. She said we have done them a disservice.

School Board Member Smith said he agreed with Commissioner Holt. He said most aren't committed with the friendship as to the relationship.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie said his concern was governmental regulations that may prevent these types of unions.

School Board Chair Simmons suggested the two committees work together; research, give findings and move forward.

### **Diesel**

School Board Member Frost discussed cost effectiveness of coming together on diesel.

Commissioner Holt said the larger the volume the better the rate.

Superintendent Milton said they bid the Schools.

### **Banking**

Chair Taylor said banking was another issue and they could get better rates. She said the County Manager, Mr. Presnell and Superintendent Milton will work together on all issues and report back.

School Board Member Smith suggested continuing communication between the two Boards would be essential.

## **3. Economic Development**

### **a. Training Locally For Jobs (Sherrie D. Taylor, Chairperson)**

Chair Taylor said economic development was Commissioner Holt's area. She said they knew what businesses were coming and needed to get people trained and ready and this was where GTI came in.

Commissioner Holt said the economic development engine was working. She spoke of the Freightliner relationship and what it took to bring them to Gadsden County. She said for them to look at buildings for more than one use such as multi-use buildings (schools). She suggested CDBG as possibilities. She told the School Board they had an asset, if only they could market it right, "Repeal and Replace."

School Board Member Smith asked if this was group effort with obtaining Freightliner.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie thanked Mrs. Holt for all she did with economical development. He said the independent parties have to change their mindset. "You must understand it is for all. We are all in this together."

Commissioner Hinson said Chair Taylor was the representative for the School Board and they are at the table. He said better communication is needed between them all.

School Board Member Frost said they (school) needs to know what they want. "We have it here, now let's get them trained." He suggested meeting the new companies prior to them being brought to the table to know exactly what they want and when training could begin. He suggested they all work together.

School Board member Smith asked if GTI had the dollars to provide training and they should come together since they are targeting funding to help.

Superintendent Milton commented they didn't have the facilities or funding to support that at this time with Freightliner. He added when you have various things come into play it is essential they all come together.

Commissioner Hinson commented on Adult and Vo-Tech from the Department of Education.

Superintendent Milton congratulated Dr. Jackson, Principal of Gadsden Technical. He said she was doing a great thing with the institute.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie asked who anticipates what is needed. How do you go about the need or projection.

School Board Member Frost asked how we get jobs.

Chair Taylor said it all starts with the Chamber. She said the best thing to do is get in with the Tallahassee Chamber and learn from them. She said they were getting the jobs. They won't hire people with the criminal backgrounds, (public health, infrastructure, schools, safety and skilled labor). She recalled a discussion with Waste Pro and the people that had done due diligence and eventually they were hired. She said it was important to hire Gadsden County people.

Commissioner Hinson said once they become a cohesive group and start building relationships and become stronger it would build Gadsden.

Commissioner Holt responded to Mr. Frost. She spoke on being creative. She gave reasons for funding of the GCDC.

School Board Member Smith asked questions about the Chamber. "Can a BOCC member serve?"

Chair Taylor said no, it would pose a conflict.

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie discussed solar possibilities coming to the County for discussion. He commented on workforce development and vocational development.

School Board Member Lewis mentioned an apprenticeship with students would be a great idea.

Chair Taylor said the biggest resource in GC is the lakes and what could we do to build economic development around the lakes, antiques, etc? Where do they go to train?

Commissioner Hinson said a couple of years ago they were looking at business incubators. He suggested reinvention of schools. He then discussed the importance of owning the land (community center).

Chair Taylor said there is an issue with the market if buildings were empty.

#### **4. Potential Uses of Available Buildings**

(Sherrie D. Taylor, Chairperson)

Mr. Presnell discussed vacant school buildings.

#### **General Discussion**

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie discussed 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment (voucher) we are looking at how we could grow our County. He mentioned how it will take away the nutritional aspect and the kids may come to school hungry and they should look at legislation level.

Mr. Simmons said they are very much aware and it was one of their items as they go to the Legislative Delegation.

Commissioner Holt said resolutions on infrastructure how all entities come together and are versed; students on the social skills they need. We have to go back and teach them as a community such as protocol issues.

Chair Taylor mentioned a referendum on half - cent sales tax to help support. She said each Commissioner will have to be versed and get support from their districts.

#### **Citizens Requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (3 minute limit)**

**Rick Soskis**, 270 Small Pond Road, Havana, FL, commented this was amazing; he said meeting monthly would be a great idea; common denominator in the room is students and money for the best teachers. He spoke of cohesive groups. He spoke on a lot of different issues (marijuana not for, reconfiguration in support; increase teacher salaries). He discussed on March 27 round table at BOCC for well being for the County.

**Jakari Wilcoxson**, 1380 Hutchinson Ferry Road, commented on lack of discussion is the kids. "We should support the children." He mentioned electives that were cut. He discussed the Art Center to build alliance within the schools, you give the funds and how if promoted 4H would build the county with positive results.

School Board Member Lewis responded on the performing arts.

**Rev. Charles Morris**, Gadsden United, Pastor New Bethel AME, mentioned the healthcare of County, "talk is cheap, and we will continue to be 67." We are all connected and we must do something. "Seek excellence." "Teach our children this process, instill it in the children." He said great progress was made and the need to come together. He reminded them businesses were tied to the school districts.

Chair Taylor said this was a great meeting.

School Board Member Simmons thanked the BOCC for the joint meeting. He added they have put issues on the table, and they should continue to work on them and meet on a regular basis. "Great ideas have come from this. Improvements can be made and a working relationship established."

Chair Taylor recapped some of the evenings' discussions such as the Senior Program, Housing, School Board Rep at Ground Breaking, Half Cent Sales Tax to build schools, etc. "Tonight was productive. We should not let this meeting go in file 13. The goal is how to move forward. We will understand there is a shift coming to the County that will be great. We know each other and let's take flight."

Commissioner Holt gave the story on Geico how they all had the same objectives." It must be a Community Effort."

School Board Member Smith gave the closing prayer.

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**Motion to Adjourn**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR TAYLOR  
DECLARED IT ADJOURNED AT 8:06 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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**SHERRIE D. TAYLOR, CHAIR  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

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**NICHOLAS THOMAS, CLERK**