

**AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR GADSDEN  
COUNTY, FLORIDA ON APRIL 18, 2017 AT 6:00 P.M.,  
THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HELD, VIZ:**

**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**  
                  **Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk**

**INVOCATION, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.; asked everyone to stand for a moment of Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag.

*Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Viegbesie arrived at this juncture of the meeting.*

**AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Presnell asked that they remove Item 4 from the Agenda.

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

**AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS AND APPEARANCES**

**1. Recognition of Reginald James**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said Mr. Reginald James was there for a presentation. Chair Taylor had comments along with Commissioner Hinson, Commissioner Holt and Commissioner Morgan. Chair Taylor then read the plaque aloud and presented it to Mr. James. Mr. James then had a few words to say.

**2. TCC Gadsden Center Update**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item.

**Kimberly Moore, Vice President of Workforce Development**, appeared before the Board and gave a brief presentation regarding the Gadsden Campus.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

Ms. Moore said they were also offering GED and ESOL classes.

*Commissioner Holt returned at this juncture.*

Ms. Moore explained they had bi-lingual teachers and said some of the classes offered were at

capacity.

Commissioner Holt asked about the ESOL certification. She also explained the "Ask the Expert" kiosk that was offered at the Gadsden Campus and be able to talk with someone regarding whatever the question or problem might be.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked her for the presentation and said he was proud to be a part of this. He said GCDC and BOCC needed to take advantage of their source to provide the skillset.

Commissioner Morgan asked if they had encouraged their students to speak with the high school students and they did have someone.

### **3. Presentation of Gadsden County Audit**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was the presentation of the Gadsden County Audit.

**Ryan Tucker, Purvis Gray & Associates**, appeared before the Board and presented the County's Audit to the Board. He gave an overall view of the audit and said the County's audit, along with the Constitutional Officers had been completed and overall the process went smoothly. He mentioned one area of concern with the Sheriff's Department and a response had been issued and one follow-up matter with a prior audit with the SHIP program and the bid process and that had been resolved. He said General Fund brought in just under \$18.5 Million in Revenues and \$18.2 Million in Expenses and there were other financing sources where the General Fund had to transfer out just over \$1 Million, which resulted in a loss of \$900,000 to the General Fund. He informed the Commissioners while their General Fund balance was \$6.1 Million, their unrestricted dollars were about \$4.6 Million and felt that was an adequate reserve. He reminded them in the past they have had to subsidize EMS funds, most recently close to \$1 Million and cautioned them to keep an eye on that going forward.

Mr. Tucker thanked the Clerk and the Finance Staff and each of the Constitutional Officers for their cooperation and overall thought it went very well. He then said he would be happy to entertain questions.

Commissioner Viegbesie thanked him for a job very well done, but he heard him say they were financially ok but needed to be very aware of the rate they dipped into the fund reserves and be more fiscally conservative to not put the County into fiscal stress. Mr. Tucker said if they continued to have a situation such as this past year, they would find themselves in a deteriorating financial condition. Commissioner Viegbesie asked that he reiterate that "so that we know where we are and what we are dealing with so we don't think that this money that replenishes this reserve comes from a tree planted in the back of the Butler Building."

Commissioner Holt thanked the Administration and Staff for what they had done and added they had to provide services, when you had more people taxes were raised and they could not say you do not spend the money and wanted people knew that. She added once a building or library was built, it became an asset, just not a fluid asset.

Commissioner Hinson said they had been cutting property taxes every year. He added they were in great fiscal condition, the BOCC 'was really doing a super job at looking out for the best interest

of the people and at the same time reducing taxes and providing half-way decent services”.

Chair Taylor said being conservative was imperative and they could not continue “going to the well, it will run dry” but they could not compromise the quality of services because they were a service oriented business. She thanked Mr. Thomas, the Chief Auditor, and the Finance Department at the Clerk’s Office for doing a wonderful job and said she was aware his office had to prepare the books so the audit would go as smooth as it did with information in place so the auditors could get the necessary information to conduct the audit. She said the EMS was a situation they would be discussing

**4. ~~Contractual Professional Services Between Gadsden County & Correctional Management & Communications Group Housing Inmates for US Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections~~**

Item pulled

**CLERK OF COURTS**

Mr. Thomas mentioned the Dori Slosberg Act the Commissioners enacted approximately one year ago that instituted a \$5.00 fine on civil infractions to be used for Driver Education training at the schools and informed the Commissioners \$10,327.00 that had been collected and placed in its own fund. He brought this to their attention so they could decide when they wanted to notify schools and decide on the distribution process. He said he was going to mention the EMS issue because there was a negative cash situation, approximately \$91,000 and payroll was the next week. He reminded them they budgeted \$281,000 and that had not been enough in the past and would not be enough for this year and will more than likely need to transfer an additional \$500,000-600,000 into that fund.

Commissioner Holt said she would like the Administrator to look into the Medicaid issue with the Hospital. He said they would do a detailed presentation during the budget workshops.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**5. Report and Discussion of Public Issues**

**Commissioner Brenda A. Holt, District 4**

Commissioner Holt said with regard to the hospital, she said she was at the Emergency Room the other day and on the wall where staff was separated from the patients and customers; there were complaints about that because it was not that way at other Emergency Rooms and was very impersonal.

**½ Cent Indigent Care Tax**

She wanted them to review that and said at one point there was a doctor at the Health Department that could see people there and wanted it brought back to look at the information.

**Creek Entertainment Gretna**

She said they were going into Conference and the Chairman of the Conference Committee for the Senate had spoken positively on that item to get the bill to Congress to hash it out and then hopefully going to the floor and try to move it on and get it to the Governor’s Office for a signature. She added they were looking at approximately 800 jobs starting. She said this would be a major economic boost for the County.

**Homestead Exemption Tax**

She said as Commissioner Hinson had mentioned with the Homestead Tax Exemption, a lot of the Counties and Cities were saying that was something that would hurt the budget. She mentioned services could not be provided without the money and quite a bit for paving, etc. comes from the State of Florida. She said this was also one of the main concerns with the County Association, League of Cities and she had spoken with Lobbyist Chris Doolin and Senator Montford and they were concerned with the same thing.

**Commissioner Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2**

Commissioner Viegbesie said some of the items he was going to comment on, Commissioner Holt did, especially with regard to the Homestead Exemption.

**Stuff the Boot**

He suggested they, as a Board, consider a fund-raising method to help finance their fire departments. He said it was done in Leon County and the firefighters were the ones to do it but suggested the Commissioners along with the volunteer firefighters do it and it was called “Stuff the Boot”. He said they take boots and go into strategic areas across the County and collect money from drivers and money be divided among fire departments to offset some of their operational costs.

**Sunshine Law**

He then said they needed to let members of their Advisory boards and Committees know they were subjected to abide by the Sunshine Law as well as the elected officials and mentioned staff committees may be subjected to Sunshine laws and gave examples. He asked the Administrator that that be explored. Mr. Presnell said they have been working with Ken Moneyham (sp) with FAC for over a year and a video has been developed specific to this and will be available and they will be sending it out to everyone they have appointed to boards. Commissioner Viegbesie asked what if the County got the video and has the committees at one of their meetings watch the video.

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

Commissioner Hinson asked how they could save the bumblebees and said 90% of a certain type was not in existence now and also how could they save the butterflies. He said at the last Board meeting he mentioned they needed to spray everywhere for the mosquitos and his daughter educated him and said that was killing the bees.

He spoke of global warming, mental health issues, homelessness and the Gadsden County Senior Citizens appointment. He said he had not appointed anyone from his district to the Gadsden County Senior Citizens. Mr. Presnell explained the Commissioners did not have specific appointments there. Mr. Presnell explained they were having issues some time back and he had asked the Commissioners for names to be submitted and they now have twelve members on the Board. He said he “gave his word” a couple of months ago and asked if that was something “that you guys made up that...” Mr. Presnell explained that the Commissioners fund them annually but they have their own By-laws and their own Executive Director and the BOCC was strictly a funding agency. He said at one time the BOCC had to step in and take over and the Board was heavily involved until around 2007 or 2008. Commissioner Hinson said last year he had asked for names to appoint and Mr. Presnell explained he was working with them trying to help straighten out some problems and the response from their Chair was to have the BOCC submit names and they

would expand their Board.

Commissioner Hinson then spoke about Deacon Madry and asked for prayers for him.

**Commissioner Gene Morgan, District 3**

Commissioner Morgan said on their previous meeting held on March 21<sup>st</sup> they had a detailed presentation regarding their existing county-wide radio communications system with law enforcement and they were informed there were dead spots around the County and a lot of the law enforcement had to carry multiple radios with them in order to communicate. He said he was concerned about their safety and could not think of a more important matter and it was a risk. He reminded them of the approaching budget season and reiterated the need to have an action plan in place to move forward if the Board chose to do so.

Mr. Presnell said the instructions he got from the Board was to explore other competitive prices and they were 99% through doing that and it would come back before them in the near future for options from Board and agreed it was a critical matter.

Commissioner Holt said she preferred a workshop on this item because of it being a big ticket item.

**Commissioner Sherrie D. Taylor, Chair, District 5**

Chair Taylor spoke about the homestead tax and said they needed to know how much that would impact them and they needed to know the projected amount during budget season.

**Medicaid Costs**

She said they were never able to nail it down and they need to know where it could go.

**Debt Service Savings**

She asked that the Administrator take look at where they could save money because she said they needed to be mindful of their expenditures and did not want to use reserves to balance their budget.

Commissioner Hinson suggested the need to have a workshop on how the County could be affected by what may come from Washington and Tallahassee.

Mr. Presnell said they were already working on a workshop with the Lobbyists.

**CONSENT**

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

**6. Approval of Minutes**

- a. June 16, 2016 Workshop
- b. March 21, 2017-Regular Meeting

**7. Ratification to Pay County Bills**

**ITEMS PULLED FOR DISCUSSION**

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

(Brought up after General Business)

**Eugene Kovacs, 501 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Havana, FL**-Stormwater issue. Mr. Kovacs appeared before the Board and informed them of Stormwater coming through his property and flooding his home.

*Commissioner Holt stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

He said he had been working with the Town of Havana for fourteen years trying to correct the problem and had lived in the house for fifteen years. He said in 2006 the Town did a Stormwater management plan and have not been implementing it and had been working the past two years trying to determine when 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue was going to have work done on it because he was hoping some work would be done to alleviate some of the problem and two years ago he contacted the County about 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue being resurfaced and they directed him to the Town and when he talked with the Town he was directed to the County and he has been back and forth.

*Commissioner Holt returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

He said he had emailed pictures to the Administrator's Assistant and has met with Justin Ford and said he could testify it was a very difficult problem. He said he has tried to be proactive and has been told by Howard McKinnon and Mr. Ford there was no money in the project for Stormwater, just a resurfacing project. He added that on March 22<sup>nd</sup> he noticed 19 concrete pipes, backhoes and giant machinery ready to work by the Auto Zone and found out there was Stormwater work being done, just being done everywhere except where the issue is where the water is going into his home. He said after talking with the City several times he had consulted a law firm and said a more drastic situation was with the failure of the Stormwater system, if his home was flooded, they would take his case on contingency. He added that 20-25% of the water was coming from a County road and they recommended if he did get flooding and they do take the case, suit be filed against both the Town and the County. At that point he realized he had never been before the Commission, only the Town and was hoping there could be a review of communication and did not want them blindsided.

Chair Taylor explained they could not discuss this matter because it was not properly advertised and asked him to get with Mr. Presnell.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**8. Telogia Creek Road-FDOT Contract Amendment**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said there were three items that pertained to this road project. He said the first item was for Board approval of the FDOT contract amendment through the County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP). He said they applied for and received a grant; the Board approved the agreement with FDOT; they bid the project and it came in over the grant award; Staff and the engineer and DOT negotiated together to try to address the overrun, DOT agreed to give half of the costs and the job was reduced by half the amount it was over and this was a contract amendment to that agreement.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if this item was leading to the subsequent item eventually leading

to the approval of a change order and Mr. Presnell said yes, there was a change order to reduce the amount.

**COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION 1 AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND.**

Before the vote was taken, Mr. Weiss pointed out this particular item was to increase the funding from FDOT.

**Justin Ford, Dewberry Preble-Rish**, appeared before the Board to explain the process and said it would not affect the integrity of the project

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

**9. Telogia Creek Road-Bid Award**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said this item was for Board approval to award the bid of the Telogia Creek Road to Roberts and Roberts, Inc., the low bidder in the amount of \$704,226.20 and approving the motion needed to be contingent on approval of the next item for the change order reducing the amount to \$64,815.00 to make the price \$639,411.20.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN TO APPROVE THIS ITEM CONTINGENT ON THE CHANGE ORDER (NEXT ITEM) BEING APPROVED AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**10. Telogia Creel Road-Change Order #1**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above referenced item and said it was the Change Order mentioned in the item above.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked where the road was located and Mr. Presnell said it was in District 3, southeast of Greensboro.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE ITEM AND COMMISSIONER MORGAN MADE THE SECOND, THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE. CHAIR TAYLOR OPPOSED.**

**11. CR 269 (Little Sycamore Road) SCRAP Agreement**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of the FDOT SCRAP agreement for the widening and resurfacing of CR 269 (Little Sycamore Road) and for authorization for the Chair to sign documents.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE FOR ADOPTION OF OPTION ONE AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**12. Application to Renew Sublease for Florida State Hospital Property**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of Resolution 2017-011 and the completed application for the Use of State Owned Uplands. He added if approved, the application would be submitted to Florida Department of Children and Family Services, who would

then submit it to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for approval. He added this was for the building they leased from the State to house the ambulance service at Florida State Hospital.

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

**13. Donnell Dawkins; Parcel ID No.: 2223N6W0000003430100/Code Enforcement**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for board direction regarding the release of a code enforcement lien on property formerly owned by Donnell Dawkins located at 4158 Bonnie Hill Road, Chattahoochee, FL in consideration for \$750.00.

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

**14. Approval of Addendum for Actuarial Services for OPEB (Optional Post-Employment Benefits) a GASB Requirement**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval to renew an agreement with Stanley, Hunt, Dupree and Rhine to provide actuarial services that were required to be performed every two years to comply with GASB 45 and for authorization for the Chair to execute the Addendum.

Commissioner Viegbesie said his only concern with the item presented, what was the horizon of the advertisement; how well exposed was the advertisement to have no response. He said maybe the media the County was using was so restricted and so local that the exposure was not there for others to see. Mr. Presnell said on this particular item he could not answer but knew in the past they had mailed out up to 30 invitations to bid and on a recent one, they bid three times on a building repair because no-one was interested. He asked Jeff Price to come forward to address the Board's questions.

**Jeff Price, Senior Budget Analyst**, appeared before the Board and said regarding actuarial auditing firms send bids to them, send to local papers and place on website. He said regarding this item, they tried to send invitations to professional organizations to ones that did this type of work and it was published in local papers and placed on the website.

Commissioner Holt said there were other companies in Tallahassee that did actuarial services and asked if they advertised in Tallahassee and Mr. Price said they sent out invitations to bid and it was advertised in local papers. Commissioner Holt said she would like to see the list and asked that it be emailed to her.

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

**15. Approval of Signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contract-SHIP Program or Gadsden County Emergency Repair Program "ER"**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval and signatures for Special Assessment Liens and Rehabilitation Contracts that were agreed upon by the homeowner, contractor and Community Development Administration's SHIP Housing Rehabilitation Program for

the rehabilitation of their home.

**COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE THE SECOND. COMMISSIONER HINSON HAD QUESTIONS BEFORE THE VOTE.**

Commissioner Hinson asked when someone could come to speak on how the application process worked and Mr. Presnell said they would workshop it. Commissioner Holt said if the workshop was televised, it would reach a lot of people.

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

**16. Approval of Resolution 2017-005, Approving the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) Local Housing Assistance Plan FY(s) 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of Resolution 2017-005 adopting the SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan for Fiscal Years 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 and for authorization for the Chair to sign the certification documents.

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

**17. Approval and Signature(s) for Satisfaction of Special Assessment Lien State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Program**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval and signatures to satisfy the Special Assessment Lien(s) that were agreed upon by the Homeowner and Community Development State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) Rehabilitation Program and Community Development Block Grant (GDBC) Program.

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

**18. Mental Health Transportation Plan**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board approval of a Transportation Plan with the Big Bend Community Based Care (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Managing Entity) for people who fall under the Baker Act/Marchman Act to be transported to the nearest facility that could meet their needs.

**COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE OPTION ONE AND SECOND MADE BY COMMISSIONER HOLT. BEFORE THE VOTE CHAIR TAYLOR HAD QUESTIONS.**

Chair Taylor asked if this was what they traditionally did and Mr. Presnell explained it was a little different and was required by the Legislature. He explained it was related to the people they transported by EMS that had mental health issues. Chair Taylor asked if there was a fiscal impact and Mr. Presnell said not to them.

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

Commissioner Holt said regarding the transportation when someone was Baker Acted a lot of times they needed assistance and Mr. Presnell said there now was a policy in Gadsden County that if they were involved, a deputy had to be there due to the incident that happened in Havana a few years ago.

**19. Ratification of Ring Power Invoices**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for Board ratification of Ring Power invoice #02WE290264 for \$4,599.67 and invoice #02WE2897732 for \$2,490.21. He said they were for the Gabber truck.

Commissioner Hinson said he was curious; they had a shop where people could fix stuff, why have someone else fix what they could fix. Mr. Presnell said there were certain things they could fix but this was not one of them and there was not enough to justify what they would have to pay that person. Commissioner Hinson said they had put a lot of money into Ring Power and Mr. Presnell said they would continue to. Commissioner Hinson asked for a list of what was spent with Ring Power the past 5 years.

Commissioner Viegbesie piggybacked on comments and concerns of Commissioner Hinson; if they continue to spend money regularly, he said they had an Engineering Department and a Service Department and maybe they should send someone to get special training to get knowledge on how to work on this type of equipment so they could have an in-house expert to take care of this to save money.

Commissioner Morgan asked which Ring Power they were dealing with and Mr. Presnell said the one in Midway. Commissioner Morgan pointed out they were doing business with a local company in Midway.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MORGAN FOR APPROVAL OF OPTION ONE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**20. Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Possible Provision of Economic Development Incentives for the Development of an Indoor Amateur Sports Complex**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said it was for consideration of a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the possible provision of economic development incentives for the development of an Indoor Amateur Sports Complex on property located near Highway 90 and Interstate 10 in Midway.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the project was not only asking for tax incentives but for monetary support as well. Mr. Presnell said it no, it was only tax incentives. Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Presnell his opinion and he said he recommended they enter into it and there was no down side to it and would allow them to get more information from them. Chair Taylor said he was asking the Board to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with little to no information about the project and Mr. Presnell said this was to get the information. Chair Taylor said "I think you got the cart before the horse on this particular one and then we're gonna commit. I see where it says County Commitment to consider. I appreciate that language in there; it does give us a door out. I don't see where there's anything wrong with what I did hear about the project, but how to you ask for a Memorandum of Understanding when we don't understand what they are doing. So, I'm just curious of how, I know what you're saying...they want this in order for them to come with

more.” Mr. Presnell said “They don’t want to show their cards unless they think you’re serious.” Chair Taylor said she did not want to be serious unless they showed their cards.

Commissioner Holt said usually they were not going to and most companies did not unless they knew that they were serious.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the MOU was a non-binding document and Mr. Weiss said yes.

Commissioner Morgan said this was the natural next step of process and was a very common thing they were doing, particularly on a potential project of this size. He said he knew they “were open for business for projects that make sense for Gadsden County and I think with the waiver, the two parties become a little bit closer in getting information and that type thing and that’s simply all it is. I don’t think there is anything that, and I think the attorney just confirmed it, there is nothing that binds us to do anything, it just simply takes us to that next step to see if it’s a serious consideration that we might want to make.”

Commissioner Hinson thanked Chair Taylor for her tough questions.

**COMMISSIONER HINSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE AND COMMISSIONER HOLT MADE THE SECOND. CHAIR TAYLOR ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS.**

Commissioner Hinson said one concern he had was anything that came around them, all taxes would go to them but they could talk about that as the process went along. Chair Taylor said her concerns were they were approving something blind and did not know what they would offer.

Commissioner Holt said they were not agreeing to anything; they were agreeing to the option to negotiate, to go ahead to talk.

**CHAIR TAYLOR CALLED FOR THE VOTE. BEFORE THE VOTE, COMMISSIONER MORGAN ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYONE PRESENT REPRESENTING THE GROUP THAT MIGHT SHARE INFORMATION.**

**Beth Kirkland, GCDC Executive Director**, appeared before the Board to speak on behalf of the company and the project. She first thanked them for their consideration of the project and she said they started working with the company two years ago and looked at a number of properties in the County to find a potential location. She added that during the two years, the Board passed their Economic Development Grant program and there was now a tool in which they could have a conversation.

**Warren Emo, Emo Design Build and Jeff Shivers** appeared before the Board and said the offer referred to regarding the incentives regarding the economic development, they were looking from May 1<sup>st</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup> to finish their feasibility study to provide exactly what they County was looking for. He said it was not necessarily “hiding the ball” and they were looking to make sure the County had interest of this type of project. He said they were not looking for any money from their budget but was looking for participation in the revenue and was time specific with a joint venture participation that was on a sliding scale.

**CHAIR TAYLOR CALLED FOR THE VOTE. THE BOARD VOTED 4-1 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOU. CHAIR TAYLOR OPPOSED.**

**21. Update on Stevens School**

Mr. Presnell introduced the above item and said this was to give an update on the Stevens School property. He reminded the Commissioners that on Sunday morning, March 26<sup>th</sup>, the school caught fire and burnt to the ground. Staff promptly arranged for security to be provided until fencing could be installed and perimeter fencing had now been installed around the school. They have worked with the Fire Marshal and the insurance carrier while they were doing their investigation. He said they had released the site and they were waiting on it in writing. He said he sent an email out regarding the bricks and the Board would put a lot of thought into this working with the community to come up with a plan.

*Commissioner Morgan stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

He said Staff was seeking from the Board how they wanted them to proceed; he said they would store the bricks in an undamaged building, the cafeteria and they were 90% sure the State would let them use some of the grant funds to fix up the undamaged building. He added the people in Tallahassee understood the significance of the site and they were going to proceed with a \$200,000 proposal to do something with the remaining building. He felt they would let them use \$50,000 to clean the area up. Chair Taylor said she had not heard why it caught fire and asked if it was public information and Mr. Presnell said not yet.

*Commissioner Morgan returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Chair Taylor said she asked to bring this item because she was being asked questions by the public and was unable to answer and said there was a great interest to rebuild. She said there were other entities within the building and understood there were valuable artifacts in building, the food bank was there and maybe they could workshop it.

Commissioner Viegbesie said with the burning of the building, he had learned the school was an important part of the history of the County and did not want them to rush into doing anything and the respect the school held and would like to see them workshop this matter along with town hall meetings and have the community's input regarding the historical site. He said they needed to figure out how to pay homage to the area by using some of the bricks and salvaged items to build something there that would forever give people knowledge of what was there, maybe a monument with an eternal flame. He asked if there was temporary space they could house the food pantry until it could be relocated to a better spot. He added they should not rush to do anything at that location without input of the citizens.

Commissioner Holt said she would be happy with workshops on this matter and people wanted to help with restoration of the building. She added they wanted to form committees regarding this. She added to see if USDA would consider letting them use some of money to redo the cafeteria area.

Commissioner Hinson asked Mr. Presnell about a rumor he heard that there was no water at one of the older hydrants and Mr. Presnell said he did not know, that was the City. He did say the City had said that was not true but did know tankers came from Gretna and the surrounding areas.

Commissioner Hinson asked how the fire could happen and the Commission was not informed

about it. He said it was embarrassing when he was asked about it and it was embarrassing he did not know anything about it. Mr. Presnell said emails were sent out.

*Commissioner Viegbesie stepped out at this juncture of the meeting.*

Commissioner Morgan said the most immediate need was the food pantry and a place to store the food and one option might be the cold weather shelter. Chair Taylor asked if that needed to be agendaed or could they approve for the Administrator to go ahead with that item. Mr. Presnell said as long as a contract was not done because he was over the buildings. Mr. Weiss said he preferred anyone using county buildings have a lease agreement.

*Commissioner Viegbesie returned at this juncture of the meeting.*

Chair Taylor said there was no problem with the Commodity building being used, but they needed to have a contract on it. She felt they needed to have a lease in place and as long as one was in place to protect the County and them as well. She asked if they could tentatively state tonight as long as an agreement was in place and the Attorney approved...Mr. Presnell spoke up and asked if they were giving pre-approval to the lease and her signing it and Chair Taylor said she had no problem in signing it as long as the Board approved it. Mr. Weiss said for them to be specific to the particular need and have it be for a short period of time.

**UPON MOTION BY COMMISSIONER VIEGBESIE TO APPROVE A LEASE FOR ONE MONTH UNTIL A FORMAL LEASE WAS PUT INTO PLACE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER HOLT, THE BOARD VOTED 5-0 BY VOICE VOTE TO APPROVE THIS ITEM.**

**\*\*\*AT THIS TIME CHAIR TAYLOR RECOGNIZED EUGENE KOVACS. PLEASE SEE ABOBE UNDER CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD\*\***

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

### **22. Update on Various Board Requests**

Mr. Presnell said Representative Al Lawson would be using the Commissioner Meeting Room to hold a Town Hall Meeting the following evening starting at 6:00 p.m.

He reminded the Commissioners that Friday night was the Relay for Life event at the Track and they would be selling fish dinners.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked what happened to the revenue received from disposal of surplus from the hospital and Mr. Presnell said the hospital revenue would go to the general fund and anything Public Works disposed of had to go into the transportation fund because it was a restricted fund.

## **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

### **23. Update on Various Legal Issues**

Mr. Weiss said he had nothing to report. Chair Taylor thanked Mr. Thomas for staying for the meeting.

**Receipt and File**

- 24.           a. Resolutions for the Week of March 13, 2017
- b. 2017 PowerTalk Proclamation
- c. Gadsden County Chamber of Commerce Report

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

May 2, 2017-Regular Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR TAYLOR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:05 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA**

---

**SHERRIE TAYLOR, Chair  
Board of County Commissioners**

**ATTEST:**

---

**NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk**