

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND GADSDEN COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS JOINT WORKSHOP

UF/IFAS
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SCIENCES
155 RESEARCH ROAD
QUINCY, FLORIDA

March 9, 2017

6:00 P.M.

The workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following members were present: School Board Member Isaac Simmons, Chairman; School Board Member Steve Scott; School Board Member Audrey D. Lewis; School Board Member Charlie D. Frost; School Board Member Tyrone D. Smith; Superintendent Roger P. Milton; Commissioner Sherrie Taylor; Commissioner Gene Morgan; Commissioner Brenda Holt; Commissioner Eric Hinson; Commissioner Dr. Anthony Viegbesie; and County Administrator Robert Presnell; and others.

1. WELCOME

Commissioner Sherrie Taylor welcomed everyone to the workshop. She stated that this was a positive shift coming forth for the two boards to have regular dialogue.

School Board Member Simmons welcomed everyone to the workshop. He stated that he hoped that this will begin a series of meetings between the two boards. He stated that the two boards are coming together to discuss ways to best benefit Gadsden County.

2. HOW CAN WE HELP EACH OTHER

School Board Member Frost stated that he was concern about finding ways to save on health insurance. He stated that if the county and school board could pool their employees it could save both the county and school board money on premiums. He stated that the school board spends a lot of money on health insurance and any savings would be a help to the district. He stated that by combining the two groups of employees there could be a savings in buying health insurance as a larger group.

County Administrator Presnell explained that the county uses an insurance committee to negotiate their choices and premiums and thought that it was a good idea to work together on a possible buying group.

Commissioner Holt also stated that it was a good idea to look at ways to save on health insurance premiums. She stated that by working together it would help the county's economic development programs. She stated that business will come if there is a good school system. She stated that the county wanted to work with the school board.

Commissioner Morgan stated that he wanted these types of meetings to continue with both boards.

Following discussion of the health insurance premiums, it was decided the insurance committee from the school board, of which Mrs. Lewis is a member, and the county's committee will meet sometime in the near future to see if there can be a savings from joining forces.

In response to School Board Member Frost's concern about the large diesel expense for transportation, County Administrator Presnell and Superintendent Milton agreed to meet to further discuss the issue.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commissioner Taylor stated that there needs to be open communication with Gadsden Technical Institute.

Commissioner stated that the economic development engine is growing. She stated that Freightliner is training individuals to be diesel mechanics. She stated that businesses are looking for facilities to renovate

4. POTENTIAL USES OF AVAILABLE BUILDINGS

County Administrator Presnell stated that the available use of buildings could very well tie into economic development.

Commissioner Hinson and Commissioner Holt both brought up the issue of using empty schools as a possible opportunity for those looking for site ready buildings for their businesses. Commissioner Hinson stated that the Havana Elementary School building could be used as an incubator to help entrepreneurs start their businesses. He stated that Havana Elementary School could be used as a community center as well.

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Commissioner Dr. Viegbesie stated that the two boards needed to be aware of the Congressional Bill HR610 which will effectively start the school voucher system to be used by children ages 5 to 17, and starts the defunding process of public schools.

6. CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The following individuals from the audience addressed the boards with comments and concerns: Mr. Rick Soskus, Mr. Jakari Wilcoxson, and Pastor Charles Morris.

Both School Board Member Simmons and Commissioner Taylor thanked everyone for attending the workshop. The two boards agreed to have another meeting in two to three months.

School Board Member Smith offered prayer before the workshop adjourned at 8:05 p.m.