

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
COCHISE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT SPECIAL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2012 @ 3:00 P.M.
IN THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONFERENCE ROOM
1415 MELODY LANE, BLDG. G, BISBEE, ARIZONA**

Chairman Searle called the Special Meeting of the Cochise County Flood Control District at 3:14 p.m. All three supervisors were present: Richard Searle, Chairman; Patrick Call, Vice-Chairman; Ann English, Supervisor. Also attending were Mike Ortega, County Administrator; Jim Vlahovich, Deputy County Administrator; Adam Ambrose, Deputy County Attorney; and Katie Howard, Clerk of the Board. Others present included Arizona State Senator, Gail Griffin; Gerry Gonzales, NRCS; Craig Sullivan and staff, County Supervisors Association; Karen Riggs, County Engineer and residents from the Miller Canyon area.

Following introductions, Chairman Searle announced the agenda item.

ACTION

ITEM 1

Authorize the Flood Control District to enter into agreements necessary to implement Emergency Watershed Protection Program project(s) in partnership with NRCS.

Mr. Ortega told the Board that he and Supervisor Call had spoken to several residents in the Sierra Vista area affected by the recent flooding due to deforestation caused by last year's Monument Fire, and with Supervisor Call had discussed the opportunity to bring this item to the Board for consideration. He said they had been in contact with the NRCS and there appears to be money available to assist residents affected by flood waters in the Miller Canyon area. The thought is to review those areas to see what issues there are; rely on NRCS to guide us as to where to best use the money is available. The Flood Control District does have some money available in contingency. He pointed out that they have to be careful because the rules say that any work has to be completed within 10 days. He added that the County cannot do the work unless the project cost is less than \$5,000, otherwise must bring in contractors or other agencies to help out.

Ms. Karen Riggs, County Engineer reminded the Board that in the 2012-13 Fiscal Year Flood Control District Work Plan, \$50,000 was allocated for fire-related flooding emergency work, all available countywide or for use as a county match. She suggested they could use \$25,000 each for areas affected by the Monument & Horseshoe II fires. She added that they spent almost got to \$200,000 last year.

Mr. Ortega told the Board that a part of the funds need to go to the County's own facilities as well. He also pointed out that some needs to be kept in reserve in the event we get a catastrophic storm, will need money for culverts, etc. if damaged in storm.

Supervisor English asked regarding the timeframe to get things out to bid and completed within 10 days. Ms. Riggs stated that the County did that last year, but it requires careful planning. She said if the Board

authorized a \$10,000 matchup today, Gerry Gonzales would assess areas for those that met the requirements of the grant program. When the State signs the authorization the 10-day clock starts.

Gerry Gonzales addressed the Board saying that they are better prepared this year. The State office is prepared to receive the request and the County would sign as sponsor. August is when we get most of our flood damage, historically. There has already been flooding and sediment. He is particularly concerned about the area east of Miller Canyon, where flooding is crossing the highway. The concern this year is mainly with the debris; if a storm has rainfall of 1" or more, there will be major flooding. Some water is bridging to other areas where they haven't historically gotten sheet flow. Going to be some channel work, debris removal and reconstruction. Need to declare it an emergency when it occurs. He added that he doesn't think at this point there is enough to declare an emergency. The County determines where the emergency is, in conjunction w/ NRCS. Program requirements are that there is damage to private property and/or to infrastructure.

Mr. Ortega said he knows there are some sediment flows in some areas, and the County is trying to anticipate where problems will occur. He asked if there is a way to model this, to better predict? Mr. Gonzales said the NRCS needs to see the damage and assess the damage; this program doesn't allow us to be proactive. He said this is tricky because we are likely to have a series of smaller episodes, rather than one large one. However, he added that this year is looking more like one of our old-fashioned monsoon seasons. Whatever emergencies we identify are those that we are going to treat. Once identified, you cannot deviate from the plan.

Tony Serpa discussed residents' proactive efforts to stem floodwater and debris at the east end of Hwy 92. Mr. Gonzales agreed that this is one of the areas they are really concerned with and need to do an assessment of. He stated that he knows the east side is in need of work. Need to capture the event when it happens and document the damage, etc. Ms. Riggs confirmed that Miller Canyon is private property, no easement and added that the County has no responsibility to do maintenance on that area.

Mr. Gonzales said that if the damage to private property causes a risk to life, then we can deal with it, but if it's just damage to the property, program parameters don't allow anything to be done. The problem, he said, is sediment; sediment build-up is causing water to divert to areas where it normally doesn't go.

Ms. Riggs recounted the history of last year and said that then, based on the damage to Miller Canyon, the County got some funding to fix the problem.

Supervisor Call observed that the County would need to get residents' permission to go on private property first and used Fairfield Estates as an example. Mr. Gonzales said that if access to homes is impaired, that could be used to obtain funding. He said it might have to split into two campaigns to meet the timeline. Cannot repair to an extent that improves a property beyond what it was before and could only improve to the property line. He recommended to include Fairfield and area near the Palominas Fire Station, to bundle to maximize use of available funding.

Supervisor English and Mr. Gonzales emphasized that this is for emergency, short-term fixes, no permanent fixes and we need to make sure now that we have access to the properties.

Mr. Gonzales recommended the H&FP staff getting together with the NRCS to identify the sites and assess the biggest threats, looking for things that maximize use of funds (most efficient fixes).

Mr. Ortega suggested that the Board authorize staff to expend up to \$25,000, to move forward with the NRCS. If \$25,000 or less, we can move forward, otherwise he said they would come back to the Board for approval.

Senator Gail Griffin stressed that flooding was occurring because of fires, adding that these areas did not flood before.

Vice-Chairman Call made a motion to authorize the County Administrator, Mike Ortega, to expend up to \$25,000 in pursuing assessments and possible solutions in cooperation with NRCS for the Emergency Watershed Protection program. Supervisor English seconded the motion.

Mr. Ortega stated if costs exceed \$25,000, they will bring to the Board a corresponding funding source, with a recommendation.

Chairman Searle called for the vote and the motion was approved unanimously, 3-0.

There being no further business before the Board, Chairman Searle adjourned the meeting at 4:02 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Richard Searle, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Katie A. Howard, Clerk of the Board