

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025**

A regular board meeting of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman; Kathleen L. Gomez, Supervisor; Frank Antenori, Chairman

Staff Present: Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator; Joe Casey, Interim Deputy County Administrator; Paul Correa, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney; Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:18 a.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE ORDER OR DELETION OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AT THE MEETING

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Dixie McNeely discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Allison Morse discussed concerns regarding the Recorder position.

Kara Harris discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Patrice Nicholson was called upon but did not speak.

Hoang Quan discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Inga McCord discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Johnny Lee Wilson, Sr., discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Tricia Gerrodette thanked the Board for having the Recorder work session and discussed her concern about partisan considerations in the Recorder job.

Eli Dalton-Webb was called upon but did not speak.

Randall Limbach discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Radford Hyde discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Henry Conroy discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Joseph Patterson discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Nancy Olmstead discussed various concerns regarding the jail tax and election law lawsuit.

Paul Varble discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Daniel LaChance discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

Yvonne Mayer discussed various concerns regarding the jail district tax.

CONSENT

Board of Supervisors

1. Approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of January 7, 2025.

Development Services

2. Approve a letter to the State Broadband Director, Sandip Bhowmick, supporting Valley TeleCom's application for funding through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program for all areas of Cochise County served by Valley TeleCom not designated under the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) program.

Finance

3. Approve demands and budget amendments for operating transfers.

Juvenile Probation

4. Approve Fiscal Year 2025 Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund (JCRF) Funding Agreement as provided by the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), in the amount of \$8,141, effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to approve Consent Items 1-4. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Development Services

5. Adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-02 to rezone tax parcels 117-05-042, 117-05-043, and 117-05-054A (District 3) from NB (Neighborhood Business District) and SR-43 (Single-Household Residential District, one dwelling per 43,000 square feet) to RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) pursuant to the application of Jeff Thiede.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-02 to rezone tax parcels 117-05-042, 117-05-043, and 117-05-054A (District 3) from NB (Neighborhood Business District) and SR-43 (Single-Household Residential District, one dwelling per 43,000 square feet) to RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) pursuant to the application of Jeff Thiede. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

Matthew Taylor, Planner II, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Taylor presented a rezoning request for docket RZ 23-24, seeking to change the zoning of a property in Sunsite Unit 2 from a neighborhood business and single household residential to rural district. He stated despite significant opposition from nearby property owners, the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff both recommended approval, noting the proposed development aligns with the area's residential growth and would reduce the number of allowed dwellings.

Chairman Antenori opened the public hearing.

Keaton Shepherd spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Kevin Todd spoke in opposition and expressed concerns about the rezoning application.

In response to the Board, Mr. Taylor clarified that the surrounding properties would remain SR43 residential, creating a zoning "island" with RU4 in the middle, and discussed the voting dynamics within the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Lindsay Rothschild spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Michelle "Mickey" Shields spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Jeff Thiede, the applicant, clarified that he is seeking approval to downzone his 6 acres to RU4 to take advantage of the County's residential owner-builder program, which would allow him to build accessory buildings before constructing his dream home. Mr. Thiede emphasized that he does not plan to place a mobile home on the property, instead intending to live in an RV or trailer with a permit while building his home.

In response to the Board, Mr. Taylor explained that the RU4 zoning would allow Mr. Thiede to build accessory structures before the main house, which SR 174 would not permit, and the zoning change would also enable him to participate in the residential owner-builder program, which doesn't allow mobile homes or manufactured homes.

The Board discussed concerns about the long-term impact of approving the RU-4 zoning and expressed difficulty in balancing the property rights of Mr. Thiede with the interests of his neighbors.

John Seaburg spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Amos Julian Hudson "AJ" spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Chairman Antenori closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed a rezoning request where the applicant sought to downzone their

property to RU-4 for participation in the owner-builder program. Concerns were raised about maintaining neighborhood zoning integrity, potential property devaluation, and ensuring compliance with zoning regulations. The Board considered the broader impact on neighboring properties and future zoning requests.

The Chairman called for the vote and it was denied 0-3.

6. Adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-03 to rezone tax parcel 105-28-005C (District 1) from RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) to RU-2 (Rural District, one dwelling per 2 acres) pursuant to the application of Zane and Carina Ritermour.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-03 to rezone tax parcel 105-28-005C (District 1) from RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) to RU-2 (Rural District, one dwelling per 2 acres) pursuant to the application of Zane and Carina Ritermour. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Matthew Taylor, Planner II, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Taylor presented a request to rezone a 5.6-acre property from RU-4 to RU-2 to allow for a parcel split. He stated the property is located near Parker Canyon Lake, is currently designated for single-family residential use, and the proposed zoning remains consistent with the surrounding area. He stated the applicant's request aligns with the county's planning guidelines, with no opposition from nearby property owners or ADOT, as long as public access to Coronado Trail remains intact. The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval, and staff also supports the request without conditions.

Chairman Antenori opened the public hearing and no one chose to speak.

Chairman Antenori closed the public hearing.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 3-0.

7. Adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-04 to rezone tax parcel 209-09-240A (District 3) from R-36 (Residential District, one dwelling per 36,000 square feet) to RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) pursuant to the application of Ronald and Jessica Engelkes.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to adopt Zoning Ordinance 25-04 to rezone tax parcel 209-09-240A (District 3) from R-36 (Residential District, one dwelling per 36,000 square feet) to RU-4 (Rural District, one dwelling per 4 acres) pursuant to the application of Ronald and Jessica Engelkes. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

Matthew Taylor, Planner II, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Taylor requested to rezone a 5.2-acre property from R-36 to RU-4 to allow participation in the County's Owner-Builder Program. He stated the property, located near the Cochise County line, is currently designated for single-family residential use, which remains unchanged under the proposed zoning. He stated the rezoning request aligns with the area's residential growth pattern and reduces the number of allowed principal dwellings. He stated the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval, and staff also supports the request without conditions.

Chairman Antenori opened the public hearing and no one chose to speak.

Chairman Antenori closed the public hearing.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 3-0.

ACTION

Board of Supervisors

8. Approve the renewal of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Cochise County and the following municipal corporations: Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, and Willcox in support of Cochise County Tourism and Economic Council, in the amount of \$34,000, effective through June 30, 2025, with automatic renewals for four successive one-year periods.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to Approve the renewal of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Cochise County and the following municipal corporations: Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, and Willcox in support of Cochise County Tourism and Economic Council, in the amount of \$34,000, effective through June 30, 2025, with automatic renewals for four successive one-year periods. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Gilman provided an update on the Explore Cochise program and the Cochise County Tourism Economic Council, focusing on marketing efforts and data analysis. She stated the Arizona Office of Tourism's cooperative funding supports various banner and digital ads, including campaigns with the Smithsonian. She stated social media efforts promote local events, and GPS-based Placer data helps municipalities analyze visitor trends. She state the data highlights peak tourism periods for towns like Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, and Wilcox, allowing for more targeted marketing.

The Board discussed concerns regarding the IGA's alignment with the budget process and the effectiveness of the county's tourism marketing efforts. Supervisor Gomez raised concerns that Douglas is not receiving sufficient benefits from its \$15,000 investment, citing a lack of representation in marketing materials despite the city's many attractions. Chairman Antenori suggested using the upcoming budget review as leverage to push for improvements, ensuring a more balanced promotion of all municipalities within the county.

Steve McNeely, owner of Tombstone Ziplining, discussed the reasons for his opposition to the money spent on Explore Cochise.

The Board emphasized the need for transparency, noting that only five cities were being discussed while the rest of the unincorporated county remained unrepresented. The Board agreed to revisit the issue during budget discussions.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 2-1 (Crosby opposed).

County Schools

9. Approve Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Arizona Department of Education and Cochise County Schools for the Arizona Project Bright Futures Program, in the amount of \$122,724 (annual), effective upon execution.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to approve Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Arizona Department of Education and Cochise County Schools for the Arizona Project Bright Futures Program, in the amount of \$122,724 (annual), effective upon execution. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

Jacqui Clay, Cochise County School Superintendent, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Clay stated the initiative includes hiring a coordinator to assist schools, especially in rural areas, where resources are limited. She stated since 2021, 11 suicides have been reported, and the county superintendent's office emphasized the need to bridge gaps in support for students. She stated the program's goals include increasing youth service organizations, expanding clinical service capacity, and improving continuity of care, which is critical in preventing self-harm and suicide among at-risk youth.

Cynthia Meyers, Outreach Manager, explained that Cochise County was selected as the pilot for the Arizona Project Bright Futures program, working with the Department of Health and Department of Education to develop a model that will be expanded statewide over the next five years.

Vice-Chairman Crosby emphasized the importance of suicide prevention, particularly among veterans, citing a rate of 23 suicides per day. He recalled previously requesting a well-thought-out strategy for suicide prevention and expressed concern that increased taxes would reduce discretionary income for charitable donations.

In response to the Board, Dr. Clay highlighted ongoing collaboration with nonprofits already working within schools on suicide prevention initiatives. She stated the program aims to formalize and expand these efforts by hiring a dedicated coordinator to manage partnerships and strategies. She stated the initiative will also extend outreach to military-affiliated nonprofits to address young service members, acknowledging concerns about limited discretionary funds for low-overhead charities.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 3-0.

Information Technology

10. Approve Contract 25-10-ITD-01 with All Copy Products for the Lease of Multi-Use Copiers.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to approve Contract 25-10-ITD-01 with All Copy Products for the Lease of Multi-Use Copiers. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

Alan Gordon, Chief Technology Officer, presented this item. He presented a contract renewal for copiers with All Copy Products, aimed at refreshing the county's fleet of multi-function machines. He reported that, despite inflation, the new contract would result in an estimated savings of \$570,000 over five years.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 3-0.

Juvenile Probation

11. Approve the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Title IV-E Service Agreement between the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and Cochise County Probation Department, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to approve the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Title IV-E Service Agreement between the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and Cochise County Probation Department, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Sharon Gilman noted that Teresa Rockrich was not present at the meeting, however, Ms. Gilman mentioned that Ms. Rockrich had briefed the Board during the previous week's work session.

Chairman Antenori called for the vote and it was approved 3-0.

STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATION

12. Discussion and possible action regarding state and federal legislative matters listed or described in the attached County Supervisors Association Legislative Policy Committee Agenda, the Arizona Association of Counties (AACo) Legislative Policy Committee Agenda, and the proposed State budget, and other matters related thereto.

Chairman Antenori discussed the introduction of election reform bills, with one proposal being to end the practice of dropping off ballots on Election Day. He suggested having ballots returned by 7 P.M. on the Friday prior, and a resolution to be drafted in support of this legislation. He mentioned the need for a legal impact review of recent executive orders, particularly their effects on the Sheriff's Office, Health Department, and local school districts.

REPORT BY SHARON GILMAN, INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR -- RECENT AND PENDING COUNTY MATTERS

Ms. Gilman reminded the Board she would be attending the Cochise Combined Trust Annual meeting in Tubac on Thursday and Friday, where discussions about employee medical benefits, including vision and dental coverage.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS

Report by District 1 Supervisor, Tom Crosby

Vice-Chairman Crosby deferred his report.

Report by District 2 Supervisor, Kathleen L. Gomez

Supervisor Gomez will be hosting a "Dance for Douglas" event on February 8, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. She stated the dance would have live Mexican music by Rudy Bernal and his band, along with food served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She stated the dance is open to all and is a casual dance for the community.

Report by District 3 Supervisor, Frank Antenori

Chairman Antenori derffered his report.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board