

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGULAR MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025**

A regular board meeting of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

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

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 10:05 a.m.

***CALL TO THE PUBLIC***

Eli Dalton-Webb expressed concerns about the County Attorney's Office labeling lawsuits as frivolous, criticized the Board's acceptance of funds from Sulfur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, questioned the use of those funds, and requested clarity on the supervisors' priorities.

Allison Morse expressed her concerns regarding the Mexican Gray Wolf issue.

***CONSENT***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Approve the Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of May 6, 2025.
2. Approve Temporary Extension of Premises application submitted for American Legion Post 52, 12E Theater Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650.

**Elections**

3. Approve the appointment of 3 Democratic Party Precinct Committeemen and 2 Republican Party Committeemen, by recommendation of their respective Cochise County Party Chairman, to serve through the October 1, 2026 term.

**Finance**

4. Approve demands and budget amendments for operating transfers.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 4. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

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

## ***PUBLIC HEARINGS***

### **Board of Supervisors**

5. Approve Series 09 (Liquor Store) new liquor license application submitted by Kevin Arnold Kramber, 4273 S Highway 92, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635.

Chairman Antenori opened the Public Hearing and no one chose to speak.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to approve Series 09 (Liquor Store) new liquor license application submitted by Kevin Arnold Kramber, 4273 S Highway 92, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Ms. Loewenheim, presented a Series 9 liquor store application for Cactus Liquor Fine Tobacco in Sierra Vista, noting all legal requirements were met, no protests were received, and board staff recommended approval.

Chairman Antenori closed the Public Hearing.

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

6. Adopt Resolution 25-03 granting a Water Services Franchise to Cactus State Utility Operating Company, LLC.

Chairman Antenori opened the Public Hearing and no one chose to speak.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to adopt Resolution 25-03 granting a Water Services Franchise to Cactus State Utility Operating Company, LLC. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Mr. Correa presented this item. He stated the company submitted the required application, fee, and service area description, and the agreement includes updated language previously discussed in a work session.

Chairman Antenori closed the Public Hearing.

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

## ***ACTION***

### **Board of Supervisors**

7. Approve Community Enhancement Fund expenditures for District 2: Sponsor 6 Episode Television Series - Tombstone in the Heart of Cochise County on the Cowboy Channel, in the amount of \$5,500.

Supervisor Gomez made a motion to approve Community Enhancement Fund expenditures for District 2: Sponsor 6 Episode Television Series - Tombstone in the Heart of Cochise County on the Cowboy Channel, in the amount of \$5,500. Vice-Chairman Crosby seconded the motion.

Eli Dalton-Webb spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Supervisor Gomez stated that the decision to support a six-part series on the Cowboy Channel was a strategic investment based on detailed discussions. She emphasized that the funds came from designated community enhancement resources and aligned with state budget laws. She stated the goal is to boost tourism, stimulate local economic growth, and support small businesses without raising taxes.

Chairman Antenori stated that while a cut to community enhancement funds was discussed during the budget work session for fiscal year 2025-2026 enough funding will remain for supervisors to support worthwhile district projects.

Vice-Chairman Crosby expressed hope that tourists visiting Tombstone would also explore Kartchner Caverns and other attractions throughout the county.

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

## **Elections**

8. Appoint Melissa Avant to the position of Elections Director, effective May 27, 2025.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to appoint Melissa Avant to the position of Elections Director, effective May 27, 2025. Chairman Antenori seconded the motion.

Ms. Gilman presented this item. Ms. Gilman stated that the elections director position was advertised from March 3 to March 31, 2025; a panel of county leaders interviewed three finalists; and Ms. Avant bringing 17 years of local experience and strong civic dedication was recommended for appointment.

Eli Dalton-Webb spoke in opposition and discussed the reasons.

Chairman Antenori clarified that the elections director position was publicly advertised for a month, covered in the Sierra Vista Herald, and transparently handled by county staff, who conducted extensive interviews before selecting the most qualified candidate.

Allison Morse spoke in favor and discussed the reasons.

Ms. Gilman added that if the board approves Ms. Avant, she is already registered for the Secretary of State's election certification officer training from June 2nd, 2025 to June 6th, 2025, ensuring she will be certified in time for the primary and future elections.

Paul Rice raised concerns about the non-certification of Election Systems and Software (ES&S) electronic voting machines, and the lack of responses to his public records requests.

Vice-Chairman Crosby referenced a video interview and reiterated past concerns about the accreditation of voting machine testing labs, citing Title 52 and a 2022 letter to the Secretary of State, asserting that improper certification undermines election system legitimacy and suggesting that recent commentary supports his longstanding position.

In response to the Board, Ms. Avant expressed gratitude for the opportunity and affirmed her commitment to following all lawful directives, emphasizing her duty to uphold election integrity while working under county administration. She clarified that she would work with the Board and administration to find lawful solutions. She declined to speculate on past events, stressing her focus on doing the job well if appointed.

Chairman Antenori expressed confidence in Ms. Avant's readiness for the challenges of the elections director role. He highlighted her commitment to follow the law, remain transparent, and work closely with county leadership and legal counsel when conflicts arise. He stated that the Board stands ready to support Ms. Avant with resources while also holding her accountable if necessary.

Supervisor Gomez emphasized confidence in Melissa Avant's ability to lead in a challenging role. She assured the public that both the Board and Ms. Avant are committed to transparency and working effectively together.

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

## **Engineering & Natural Resources**

9. Approve Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Cochise County and the City of Douglas for the acquisition of right-of-way for the Kings Highway Right-of-Way Project, in support of the future Commercial Land Port of Entry west of Douglas.

Vice-Chairman Crosby made a motion to approve Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Cochise County and the City of Douglas for the acquisition of right-of-way for the Kings Highway Right-of-Way Project, in support of the future Commercial Land Port of Entry west of Douglas. Supervisor Gomez seconded the motion.

Ms. Gilman presented this item. Ms. Gilman explained that the intergovernmental agreement allows the City of Douglas and Cochise County to work together on acquiring right-of-way between Kings Highway East and James Ranch Road. The goal is to create a future connector road and utility corridor supporting the new port of entry.

Supervisor Gomez emphasized how critical the project is for both Douglas and Cochise County in terms of economic development. She stated support from Sonora includes transporting minerals, products, and cattle through the new port.

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

## **STATE & FEDERAL LEGISLATION**

10. 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 explained that the state budget may not pass before June 30, 2025,

which could negatively affect the county's budget planning process. He also shared concerns about federal legislation impacting healthcare funding, and warned that state-level budget uncertainties and economic fluctuations might lead to increased financial burdens on local governments.

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

Ms. Gilman shared that the Arizona Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) board may consider increasing employer payroll contributions in the future due to rising law enforcement salaries and updated actuarial calculations.

***SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS***

**Report by District 1 Supervisor, Tom Crosby**

Vice-Chairman Crosby reported that a judge identified a procedural issue in the Arizona Attorney General's case against alternate Trump electors.

**Report by District 2 Supervisor, Kathleen L. Gomez**

Supervisor Gomez emphasized the county's lack of coordination and planning around the Douglas Port of Entry. She proposed a future work session to create a county master plan for economic development and suggested a June meeting to address deteriorating county roads.

**Report by District 3 Supervisor, Frank Antenori**

Chairman Antenori deferred his report.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board