

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL/EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2020**

A special meeting of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Executive Conference Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Thomas E. Borer, Chairman; Ann English, Vice-Chairman; Peggy Judd, Supervisor, telephonic

Staff Present: Edward T. Gilligan, County Administrator
Sharon Gilman, Associate County Administrator
Christine Roberts, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Kim Lemons, Clerk of the Board
Amanda Baillie, Public Information Officer

Attendees: Brian McIntyre, County Attorney
Arlethe Morrison, Facilities Assistant Director
Gabe Lavine, Emergency Services Director
Xochitl Orozco, Legal Advocate
Lisa Marra, Elections Director
Richard Karwazcka, Public Defender
Amy Hunley, Clerk of the Court
Vicki Barton, Deputy Clerk of the Court
Jennifer Graeme, Associate HR Director
Jennifer Davis, Administrator, Library District
Dan Coxworth, Development Services Director
Cathy L. Traywick, Treasurer
Rita Shipley, Superior Court Budget Manager
Keith Buonocore, Finance Director
Daniel Duchon, Budget Manager
Elda Orduno, HR Director
Joe Casey, IT Chief Information Officer

Chairman Borer called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.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

ACTION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding the County Administrator's Position.

Vice-Chairman English made a motion to remove this item from the table. Supervisor Judd seconded the motion.

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

Chairman Borer read an opening statement he prepared and a statement from Ms. Laurie Smallhouse, as requested by her, from an email to the Clerk of the Board.

Vice-Chairman English said today's meeting is to discuss the County Administrator's position. She clarified that as a member of the Board, you should keep your comments to the public as a representation of the Board. Unfortunately, one board member's comments through social media caused a public discussion citing actions by the Board that were not true. This meeting is to bring those inaccuracies to light.

Supervisor Judd defended her position and said she is 100% behind Mr. Gilligan and his performance. She believed that only Ms. Baillie was responsible for marketing the logo. She said she has apologized to Mr. Gilligan, and he accepted.

Mr. Gilligan said he had requested this meeting be public. He said in social media, when misstatements and false narratives are made, they become the truth to those followers. He detailed some of those portrayals. He outlined his resignation notice and preparation for a smooth transition of County administration. He said he had no fore knowledge of a newspaper article, which indicated the Board lacked knowledge about the County's marketing strategy. He praised Ms. Baillie's integrity and professionalism as the County's PIO and positive voice for Cochise County and its residents. He read a quote from Supervisor Judd from the J-6/Mescal Community Development Organization (CDO) newsletter. He described his dismay at the quotes in the newspaper and social media that are inaccurate descriptions of the experience of the marketing strategy for the previous three years. He talked of emails received by Supervisor Judd.

Mr. Gilligan presented a list of the timeline of the marketing/branding public presentations to the Board, and others, and discussed each decision point over the last three years.

He said as of April, economic growth from consumer activity was high, in part because of the work of county government to advance the strategy and vision of the Board. He talked about the outcome from the lack of tourism because of the impact of Covid-19. He stressed the importance of the marketing strategy to address our population decline, since 2008, and to ensure growth, new business, and enhanced quality of life for retirees to spend their wealth. In a span of five days, three years of positive work and progress turned into an unsolicited beat down of individuals, with lies, misleading statements, and confusion. A public vote on the logo was not necessary. He said he was mortified by this outcome. He respects history but this project has been handled with integrity and professionalism and tourism cannot be ignored. Because of abuse, hostility, and death threats, etc., he had to wonder if this is a community where someone wants to live. Over the previous weekend he spoke to each Board member individually and advised if his efforts were not supported by them, he would resign immediately. Mr. Gilligan believes that Supervisor Judd delivered that message to social media.

Supervisor Judd and Mr. Gilligan spoke of email exchanges and posts on Facebook.

Mr. Gilligan said the marketing strategy was totally transparent and, for a reasonable amount of money, a campaign was developed to boost tourism.

Supervisor Judd spoke of her defense of the marketing strategy, but she was not pleased by the logo and thought it should have gone to a vote by the Board.

Mr. Gilligan asked what he should have done differently.

Supervisor Judd wished that the Work Session request to discuss the logo would have been scheduled, so she could hear her colleagues' opinions.

Mr. Gilligan clarified that back in October 2018, when the rebranding was laid out and what the process would be, there was no discussion that it would result in a public vote. And, there was no discussion of getting rid of Cochise or the County Seal.

There was another discussion about the public uproar, Facebook, and comments in the newspaper.

Mr. Gilligan thought the information he and Supervisor Judd exchanged was given to individuals who then shared it on social media. Supervisor Judd agreed that was she did.

Mr. Gilligan said that her sharing of information and putting blame on county employees was better for Supervisor Judd politically.

Supervisor Judd tried to explain.

Vice-Chairman English reiterated that changes can only be voted on through the Board. The complaints should have gone to Mr. Gilligan. The fallout of how this issue was handled has had a huge negative outcome on current staff and potentially for future County Administrator candidates.

Supervisor Judd said she would work on earning the trust of the Board, administration and the constituents.

Mr. Gilligan spoke of helping the County find the next County Administrator, and the Board to reach their strategic goals. He knows he is the one who is responsible to take the heat. He is very concerned this time because staff members are worried about their positions. Their confidence is shattered. This organization needs to continue to attract talent, which is damaged by the social media frenzy. He said he drew the line at personnel and staff. During his tenure great talent was recruited and bad actors left. Corruption claims through social media simply are not true.

Supervisor Judd did not recall seeing any statements of corruption in social media about the County. And, she said she was not aware the logo would not go before the Board for a vote.

Mr. Gilligan read another Facebook quote, that came from a person he thought was a Judd family member, regarding the logo and corruption at the County. Supervisor Judd agreed it was a family member.

Chairman Borer restated the facts of the marketing campaign and how it was handled by professionals. He said the campaign needs to reach individuals outside the County and not take away from the history and County seal. He said he has tried to defend this position and will continue to even if it costs him the election.

The Board agreed to move on to the discussion of the Letters of Interest for the County Administrator position.

Vice-Chairman English asked the Board to discuss how to handle the recruitment of a County Administrator.

Chairman Borer said they need to consider reaching out to the County Supervisors Association (CSA) and other professional organizations, for guidance and recommendations.

The Board agreed that an individual board member does not speak for the Board and act accordingly.

Mr. Gilligan spoke of the challenges, but the environment needs to be stabilized. He has asked the professionals at the County to stay out of social media and focus on the work.

The Board agreed they want Mr. Gilligan to continue his work until the end of August.

Vice-Chairman English commended Ms. Baillie's work as a PIO and how she will be missed maybe more than Mr. Gilligan.

Mr. Gilligan agreed that Ms. Baillie was doing the work of a team and built a communication network and massive transparency of government. He does not accept that somehow no one knew about the marketing campaign.

Vice-Chairman English asked to help keep Ms. Baillie.

Chairman Borer said the shield of the Board was not there when the public turned on Ms. Baillie.

Chairman Borer adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

APPROVED:

Thomas E. Borer, Chairman

ATTEST:

Kim Lemons, Clerk of the Board