

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2022**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Executive Conference Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Ann English, Chairman; Peggy Judd, Vice-Chairman, telephonic; Tom Crosby, Supervisor

Staff Present: Richard G. Karwaczka, County Administrator
Sharon Gilman, Deputy County Administrator
Christine Roberts, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Tim Mattix, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Jackie Watkins, Engineering & Natural Resources Director
Joaquin Solis, Floodplain Administrator

Chairman English called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

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

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

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the Engineering & Natural Resources Department, Flood Control District Division Projects.

Ms. Watkins, Engineering & Natural Resources Director presented this information using a PowerPoint presentation. She said her department spends 50% of their time addressing citizens' concerns regarding diverting stormwater. Citizens concerns mainly consist of citizens diverting water which causes flooding for neighbors. There are 26,418 parcels in flood hazard areas with 14,463 structures and 57 floodplain use permits were issued. The County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for disaster assistance provided from the federal and state government, as well as eligibility to have Veterans Administration (VA) and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) loans for the residents. The County's Community Rating System (CRS) rating is currently a Level 9; the County is looking to move to a Level 8, so citizens would receive a 10% reduction in their flood insurance. A Level 8 would include requiring all new homes to be elevated by one foot above the highest adjacent grade. 40% of claims are from residents not in a flood zone. Flooding is the number one disaster in the United States. Floodplain regulations include flood warning systems, which feed into the National Weather Service to help warn citizens.

Discussion ensued between the Board and staff regarding the alert system to the

citizens when a certain amount of rain falls.

The history of monsoon floods was given. After the floods of 1983 the state put more emphasis for having flood control districts monitor and regulate flood zones. In 1984, the County put regulations in place. Cochise County had its wettest year on record this year and received the most rain of all the state counties. Flooding impacted homes in St. David and Elfrida, with small localized flooding in Bowie, Portal, Willcox and Douglas. She shared pictures of flooded homes in St. David, Elfrida and Whetstone.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps will be updated in 2023 and the County will hold public meetings to notify citizens who will remain in the flood zones and how it will affect their insurance rates. FEMA Base Level Engineering will map watershed basins and flood zones. The Board discussed the Babocomari River and the funds spent in that area. The project was not cost effective and the developer walked away.

Mr. Solis gave an update on the Leslie Canyon Water User Pond construction. The design approved by the Board to remove it from the jurisdictional status cost \$219,250. The design is complete with the construction cost expected to be between \$1 million to \$2 million. The Bay Acres project, also approved by the Board, a potential cost of \$350,000 for Right-of-Way Acquisition, approximately \$500,000 for NEPA clearance, and an estimated \$8 million for construction. In response to the Board, Mr. Solis and Ms. Watkins stated that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance is required to receive Federal funds. NEPA clearance makes sure that there is nothing archeological in the way of construction.

Ms. Watkins updated the Board on various Upper San Pedro Valley projects, including: Coyote Wash, currently in Phase Four and with a \$1.5 million grant for construction; Riverstone, currently in Phase Two and awaiting a \$925,000 grant for design and engineering; 3 Canyons, currently in year 2 of a 5-year project; Horseshoe Draw repair; and, the Bisbee Effluent project, beginning November 2022. General Flood Control District projects being investigated include: Pomerene Road, with surveys done; Cochise Stronghold and drainage flow changes; and, grants for Watershed Studies in the Wilcox Basin and Elfrida. A map of Willcox special flood area was displayed; the watershed is 704 square miles. In response to the Board, Ms. Watkins said citizens may elevate their house a foot or higher. FEMA does not pay for that, only provides guidelines.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 12:11 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tim Mattix, Clerk of the Board

