

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

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

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

Attendees: Mark Dannels, Sheriff
Robert Watkins, Commander
Celina Ybarra, Finance Manager
Juan Frisby, Budget Manager
Monica Miranda, Finance Director
Tom Alinen, Chief of Staff

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

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

Members of the public may also [attend this meeting](#) via Microsoft Teams computer or mobile app, or via phone by calling 602-609-7513 or 888-680-6714, Conference ID 242 139 500#. If you have trouble accessing this meeting remotely, call 520-432-9200 for direction.

Work Sessions are a time for County staff to inform and discuss agenda items with the Board of Supervisors and public comments will not be taken.

INTRODUCTIONS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of the County Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, specifically: Sheriff's Department and Jail District.

Technical difficulties for the first 5 minutes of the recording occurred and corrected as soon as possible

Richard Karwaczka, County Administrator, introduced Sheriff Mark Dannels, and his staff. Mr. Karwaczka clarified that there would be no discussion regarding the Jail District. The Jail District's Board will have their Work Session at a later date.

Sheriff Dannels presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation and responded to

questions from the Board throughout. Sheriff Dannels thanked the Board and stated that the Sheriff's Office priority is retention and recruitment of personnel. Sheriff Dannels explained that the Border is a challenge, with significant costs incurred, mostly covered by state funds. He noted that recruitment and retention struggles are due to competitive salaries, although their reputation helps attract applicants. Sheriff Dannels made a request for a raise of \$2,600 for all employees to align with market standards for a total request to the Board of \$200,000. He noted that financial stewardship and efficiency measures were emphasized to manage budgetary constraints effectively.

Sheriff Dannels explained that last year, there were cost-saving initiatives regarding body cameras and tasers, resulting in negotiations with Axon and securing a \$104,000 annual savings. He explained that other expenses, like those for animal shelters and equipment, were managed in-house through grants and savings. He noted that he received assurance from the governor and state officials that public safety funding, especially for border counties, would not be cut despite statewide challenges.

In response to the Board, Robert Watkins, Commander, stated the Legacy Foundation Mental Health Response Team grant was initially for three years, but due to hiring delays, it wasn't utilized until about six months later, and it took almost a year to hire the full team. He stated there is a year and a half to two years left on the grant, and plans are in place for when it ends. He noted that all team members were aware they were grant employees when hired. Commander Watkins stated the department is actively seeking additional grants and exploring other funding options with Dr. Clay, Cochise County Superintendent of Schools, to sustain the team without impacting the general fund budget.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels, discussed with legislative leaders, including the Appropriations chairs, have been positive, though it's unclear if funding allocations will materialize. He stated efforts like hosting Congressional tours showcase proactive measures taken by the department, garnering support from both political sides. He noted that while no concrete assurances have been provided, the Governor's commitment to law enforcement and previous funding levels offer some optimism for continued support.

Vice Chairman Crosby read an excerpt from Cooperation and Assistance in Enforcement and Immigration Laws and Indemnification.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels emphasized collaboration with state and federal partners, with thousands of arrests made for border crimes over two years. Sheriff Dannels expressed frustration with the federal government's approach to border issues.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels stated the salary increases will be for all staff, not just deputies. Sheriff Dannels noted that the increases would bring the positions very close to their target. He stated as long as the office can remain competitive and enjoy community support, his staff is content.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 1:34 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sharon Gilman, Interim Clerk of the Board