

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, August 27, 2024, at 2:00 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, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Dan Coxworth, Development Services Director

Chairman English called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the status of Miracle Valley Bible College, located at 9229 E. Miracle Valley Loop, Hereford, AZ 85615.

Dan Coxworth, Development Services Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Coxworth provided an update on the property at Miracle Valley. He stated the property, which was deeded to the state in March 2022, had all taxes and liens cleared before being transferred to the care of the Board of Supervisors. He noted that when the County took ownership, the county conducted environmental assessments, removed hazardous materials like asbestos, and cleared illegal trash dumps. Mr. Coxworth stated a previous auction did not result in a sale, the property is up for auction again, with the county continuing to address remaining trash and structural issues.

In response to the Board, Ms. Loewenheim stated last year, a \$50 deposit was required for all tax sale properties, but there's been feedback suggesting this needs to be increased. She stated the auction company recommends a higher bid deposit, potentially requiring it to be a wire transfer; a local realtor suggested requiring at least 1% of the minimum bid as earnest money, also payable by wire transfer, and possibly requesting a letter showing proof of funds for at least the minimum bid amount.

In response to the Board, Mr. Coxworth stated the minimum bid was set at \$250,000. Mr. Coxworth stated that in regards to this years minimum bid, a 1% earnest money deposit would be \$1,500, which would not be refundable if the successful bidder fails to complete the payment.

The Board discussed and made a suggestion of increasing the earnest money deposit to \$50,000, reflecting the property's estimated value. The Board touched on the potential costs for cleanup, considering the property as a "white elephant," meaning even if acquired for free, substantial expenses would be involved in clearing it down to just dirt.

In response to the Board, Mr. Coxworth stated the plan involves demolishing the boys' dorm, girls' dorm, Tabernacle, and laundry building, while the apartments and remaining structures are considered salvageable and in decent shape, though they are deteriorating.

In response to the Board, Ms. Loewenheim stated a proof of funds from the bank should be included with the bid.

The Board discussed setting a minimum bid of \$150,000 for the property and determining an appropriate amount for earnest money, with figures ranging from \$1,500 to \$50,000 being considered; the current preference leans towards a \$50,000 earnest money deposit, which would be refundable if the bidder is not successful.

In response to the Board, Mr. Coxworth will ensure prospective bidders can properly inspect the property by allowing small groups to reserve time slots for viewing. He noted each group, up to 10 people, will have a staff member accompany them to answer questions and provide access to the buildings; an hour is proposed as a reasonable viewing time, but if more time is needed, additional appointments could be scheduled.

In response to the Board, Mr. Coxworth stated if the property remains in its current state without any progress, a code enforcement letter will be issued, giving the responsible party a chance to address issues before a hearing officer. He mentioned that if no action is taken, the matter would proceed to court to obtain a court order for cleanup. He stated this process applies regardless of whether the property is owned by an individual or an organization; the County would handle the cleanup and place a lien on the property.

The Board provided direction to return the property to private ownership quickly. Discussed various criteria for the sale that deviate from the normal tax deed sale process. The Board asked for the plan to finalize decisions on a \$50,000 earnest money deposit and a \$150,000 minimum bid, with the goal of advertising the auction for two weeks before proceeding. The Board directed staff to prepare to start the auction process and get the property ready for sale along with other properties.

Ms. Roberts stated the board has discussed the options and provided enough direction for staff to proceed. There's no need for a formal vote on a board agenda item since such votes haven't been required for similar matters in the past.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

