

**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 2:30 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: Dr. Sara Pizano, Animal Welfare Strategist
Mark Dannels, Sheriff
Tom Alinen, Chief of Staff

Chairman English called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding recommendations in the Maddie's Millions Pet Challenge pro bono feasibility report for animal control and sheltering services in Cochise County.

Sharon Gilman, Deputy County Administrator introduced Dr. Sara Pizano, Animal Welfare Strategist with Team Shelter USA who presented the item by PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Pizano introduced the program, Maddie's Million Pet Challenge, and explained the need for improved ordinances, shelter software, and targeted spay/neuter programs. Dr. Pizano discussed a feasibility study related to animal welfare programs, specifically focusing on field services and sheltering practices. Dr. Pizano highlighted the importance of collaboration between various organizations and the need for updated ordinances to improve animal services. Dr. Pizano emphasized the benefits of proactive, community-minded programs, such as targeted spay-neuter initiatives, which have shown success in reducing shelter intake, euthanasia rates, and improving outcomes for animals.

Technical difficulties occurred at 31:52 and meeting resumed at 33:36.

Dr. Pizano highlighted challenges such as the high cost of medical care and the shortage of veterinarians, suggesting that creative solutions like partnerships and visiting surgeons could help. She discussed various options for improving or relocating shelters, with a preference for maintaining multiple locations to serve the expansive

county. Dr. Pizano's overall recommendation is to increase funding for existing shelters rather than purchasing new properties or centralizing operations.

In response to the Board, Dr. Pizano stated the PetSmart Charities team, was involved in helping the Humane Society of Southern Arizona amid various issues. She stated the focus on improving shelters in Cochise County and the City of Douglas was to alleviate the strain on the Humane Society.

In response to the Board, Dr. Pizano stated that the Animal Control Officers (ACOs) already travel long distances daily, maintaining multiple shelter locations is seen as the most efficient and effective way to provide both field and sheltering services.

Technical difficulties at 47:38 and meeting resumed at 47:48.

In response to the Board, Sharon Gilman, Deputy County Administrator, stated she addressed the issue of whether Huachuca City is interested in running the shelter, specifically the Tailtopia location. She reached out to the Huachuca City City Manager, and it was clarified that the town does not have an appetite for running the shelter, especially since Tailtopia is outside Huachuca City limits. Ms. Gilman stated the city manager has not brought this issue before the council and currently sees no interest in pursuing it.

The Board and staff had a lengthy discussion to purchase Tailtopia or enhance existing local shelters. One view suggested that Tailtopia offers a turnkey solution and may be more cost-effective than building a new facility, while another perspective highlights the importance of improving current shelters, such as those in Willcox and Benson, rather than starting anew. The Board discussed the operational costs and management of a new facility like Tailtopia, including potential impacts on the budget and existing staff. The Board explored many options such as issuing a request for proposals to nonprofit organizations to manage the facility if purchased.

In response to the Board, Ms. Gilman suggested establishing standards for euthanization and benchmarks for adoptions to improve animal shelter operations. She proposed a unified database to track adoption events and success rates. Ms. Gilman suggested having consistent hours of operation across shelters would make it easier for people to know when they can visit to adopt an animal.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels suggested implementing inspections and reporting back to the board to ensure better oversight of shelters. He stated their current system doesn't effectively document animals, particularly cats, and mention ongoing efforts to improve this internally.

Mr. Karwaczka emphasized not waiting for the USDA's decision on revising the current grant before taking action. Mr. Karwaczka recommended moving forward with current shelter support and simultaneously seeking guidance from the USDA on potential flexibility in funding.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board