

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2024**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 11:30 a.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
Joe Casey, Associate County Administrator
Christine Roberts, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Craig Sullivan, Director of County Supervisors Association

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

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. County Supervisors Association's (CSA) annual County Outreach Tour: update regarding activities of the CSA for fiscal year 2023-2024, including activities from the recent legislative session and future legislative proposals.

Craig Sullivan, CSA Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Sullivan presented an update on the organization's efforts, covering intergovernmental activities, strategic initiatives, and data projects. He emphasized the importance of collaboration between counties and the association to support effective decision-making and good governance. Mr. Sullivan highlighted key areas such as broadband development, pension system improvements, and the County Data Initiative, which collects critical information to aid policy discussions. Mr. Sullivan mentioned ongoing research projects, grant acquisitions, and resource guides aimed at supporting county operations across the state.

In response to the Board, Mr. Sullivan clarified that the hexagons likely represent layered data points related to broadband service locations, rather than anything connected to Mexico.

Mr. Sullivan discussed the CSA's work with the legislature, particularly focusing on bills that impact county operations. Mr. Sullivan noted that most difficult issues were resolved, with many partisan bills vetoed by the governor being referred to the ballot. He stated the primary concern going into the session was the state's \$1.4 billion budget deficit, but the state avoided shifting costs to counties, opting instead to sweep funds and make internal cuts. Mr. Sullivan stated the state swept money from the Water

Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) and the state share of opioid settlement funds, but left the county's share untouched.

In response to the Board, Mr. Sullivan stated a sweep of funds from the WIFA, which was initially intended for water augmentation projects such as desalination and water conservation efforts. Mr. Sullivan stated these projects included initiatives like turf replacement and flood control recharge. Now the projects lack resources. He stated concerns were raised, particularly by rural counties, about water rights being transferred from farms along the Colorado River to central Arizona, signaling potential future issues regarding water distribution and rights.

The Board discussed concerns over water rights in rural Arizona, focusing on the long-standing issues of water allocation, tribal rights, and the state's history of prioritizing industries.

Mr. Sullivan emphasized a list of items that are not new funds or appropriations but are crucial commitments the state made to counties. These include allocations for indigent defense, juvenile dependency proceedings, cybersecurity grants, and lottery monies, all of which were protected.

Mr. Sullivan outlined unresolved budget issues impacting counties. He stated one major issue is the cost shifting for the State Department of Juvenile Corrections, which some counties, like Cochise, are trying to resolve. Mr. Sullivan stated the main concerns, however, revolve around probation officers and Justice of the Peace (JP) salaries. He stated the state has not been meeting its funding obligations for state-funded probation officers, relying on temporary patches; similarly, for JPs, a legislative fund sweep and last-minute pay raises destabilized funding, leading to a potential shortfall unless the legislature increases resources in the next budget.

In response to the Board, Mr. Sullivan explained that counties are required to contribute a significant amount of money to support physically disabled and indigent individuals who need long-term care. He stated the county contribution serves as a match for federal funding, which is then used by the state to access federal Medicare funds. He noted the state combines the county funds with other resources to pull down the federal money, which is then distributed through Arizona's Medicaid system, known as Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS).

In response to the Board, Mr. Sullivan stated the use of "flexibility language" in the budget, which allows counties to access funds that are typically restricted by statute. He stated the measure was introduced during a budget shortfall to help counties manage financial difficulties.

Mr. Sullivan summarized key legislative actions and outcomes for the county. He highlighted a successful bill addressing election recounts and ongoing efforts to amend problematic bills. He stated there are notable issues including a new reporting requirement for cities and counties regarding permitting and adjustments to the legislative appointment process. Mr. Sullivan stated several measures affecting counties were referred to the ballot, and upcoming challenges are anticipated, especially related to affordable housing. He emphasized the importance of feedback and noted the preparation for the next legislative session, including setting a new agenda and addressing the impact of elections.

Chairman English expressed strong appreciation for CSA's role in providing essential research and expertise that counties often lack. She praised CSA for its ability to distill complex information into actionable insights, which helps county officials present

well-informed proposals and stories. Chairman English stated the support allows counties to confidently advocate for their needs. She emphasized that CSA's work is crucial for effective governance and decision-making.

Supervisor Judd reflected on how her experience as a supervisor was enriched by the support and connections provided at the state level. She highlighted the value of building relationships and camaraderie among counties, noting that these interactions have been particularly beneficial for her. She stated the ability to reach out to peers in other counties and collaborate on various issues is a significant advantage.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board