

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORK SESSION HELD ON  
THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Frank Antenori, Chairman; Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman; Kathleen L. Gomez, Supervisor

Staff Present: Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator  
Joe Casey, Interim Deputy County Administrator  
Paul Correa, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney  
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION**

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Review of agenda items for the Board of Supervisors/Directors meetings and work sessions for the week of March 23, 2025.

Ms. Gilman presented this item. Ms. Gilman outlined the schedule for upcoming meetings, starting with the first sessions on Tuesday, which will cover the Library District, Flood Control District, and Jail District minutes and budget amendments. She mentioned a change in approach to prioritizing work sessions. She stated that on March 25th, 2025, at 1:00 p.m., a work session with the courts will focus on the judicial system's structure, operations, and goals, featuring key judicial representatives; following that, at 2:00 p.m., there will be a budget work session for the Benson Constable.

The Board discussed challenges related to constables, particularly the workload disparity between different areas. The Board noted that Sierra Vista's constable has significantly more work compared to Benson and Wilcox, which impacts reimbursement and workload distribution, prompting the need for legislative action to establish a baseline salary and a structured workload schedule.

The Board and staff discussed the work session on meeting procedures and rules, scheduled for Thursday at 10:00 AM. The Board emphasized the balance between following formal procedural rules, like Robert's Rules of Order, and maintaining practical, efficient meetings. Chairman Antenori stated strict adherence to certain formalities could slow discussions. Vice-Chairman Crosby stated the goal is to establish clear and agreed-upon rules to prevent past procedural challenges. The Board aims to draft and finalize a structured set of rules that are both functional and reflective of their operational needs.

The Board and staff discussed the final meeting of the week, scheduled for Thursday at 2:00 p.m. and will involve a discussion with outside counsel, regarding indemnification defense costs.

Ms. Gilman discussed the Regular Board meeting on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Gilman discussed updates to the consent agenda, including a change to item number 3 for the approval of 11 Democratic Party appointments. Vice-Chairman Crosby discussed managing public hearings, where it was suggested to open and close the hearing once for each public hearing item to save time. Ms. Gilman encouraged the Board to review Public Hearing materials ahead of time, with information available in Agenda Quick, which includes meeting minutes, staff presentations, and public input forms.

In response to the Board, Matthew Taylor, Planner II, explained that there was a rezoning in 2020 with special conditions, including the prohibition of mobile homes and manufactured homes, due to enforcement concerns. He stated the original application by Mr. Thiede property owner did not have conditions, and neither the Planning and Zoning Commission nor staff recommended any. After the Board denied Mr. Thiede's application, Mr. Prince filed a new application for RU4, which the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended with the same condition.

The Board discussed the need for a better understanding of zoning issues, with Supervisor Gomez expressing a desire to meet with the County Zoning Commission. Supervisor Gomez stated the aim was to foster communication and clarity on topics like opt-out communities and zoning practices. Supervisor Gomez suggested to hold a work session after the meeting to address potential changes and discuss issues like the appeal process for special event permits. Supervisor Gomez encouraged members to attend meetings in person and consider changes to allow neighbors, not just applicants, to appeal certain zoning decisions. Ms. Gilman stated the timing of the requested work sessions may be delayed until May due to budgetary priorities in April.

Vice-Chairman Crosby highlighted the importance of being familiar with Arizona's Open Meeting Law, specifically ARS 38-431, which outlines the rules for meetings and executive sessions. He suggested that all members review these regulations and that perhaps the board could consider training on them, especially regarding emergency meetings. He also noted the importance of understanding what qualifies as an emergency meeting, as defined by legislation.

The Board and staff discussed Item 8 relates to a resolution supporting legislation for the 5 p.m. drop-off of mail-in ballots

Ms. Gilman explained Item 9 involves a grant amendment from the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona for the Cochise County Development Support Team Project, which supports the Cochise County Sheriff's Office's mental health support team. Ms. Gilman stated The Legacy Foundation is a private nonprofit funded by proceeds from the sale of Sierra Vista Regional Hospital to Canyon Vista, which generates ongoing revenue for its projects. Commander Watkins shared details about the mental health support program funded by the Legacy Foundation. He stated in 2022, a proposal was made to fund a team designed to respond to mental health crises, diverting individuals from emergency departments and jails. He stated the program was initially funded with nearly \$1.3 million over three years. He stated the team, led by an expert in mental health crisis response, has proven effective in supporting both first responders and individuals in need, such as veterans and people with mental health issues, without impacting the county budget.

In response to the Board, Commander Watkins highlighted the fiscal challenges in

sustaining the mental health support program, noting efforts to secure additional funding. He shared plans to attend a border initiative event in Scottsdale to raise funds specifically for the team. He stated the team, which includes licensed professionals and paraprofessionals, was initially funded with nearly \$1.3 million over three years, but there have been delays in receiving the final installment due to hiring challenges. Commander Watkins also discussed the Craig Tiger Act, which mandates specialized counseling for public safety workers exposed to traumatic events, emphasizing its importance in supporting first responders.

Ms. Gilman stated that the Drug Overdose Prevention Program Agreement, listed as item #10, has been moved to the next meeting. Ms. Gilman stated item #11 on the agenda regarding the Housing Five-Year Plan will be discussed in more detail at a work session scheduled for today, March 20, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

2. Discussion and possible direction to staff on proposed meetings, scheduling, and agenda items for future meetings and work sessions.

Supervisor Gomez emphasized the need for a work session on the port of entry to clarify why a grant, initially expected to be awarded to Douglas, was ultimately denied. Concerns were raised about misinformation and the disconnect in the process, highlighting the importance of bringing in key stakeholders from ADOT and other agencies. Ms. Gilman explained that this meeting is currently being planned. The Board and staff discussed the potential development of a slaughterhouse, concerns over a USDA-certified facility in Mexico, and the need to engage local cattle industry representatives through meetings and town halls.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board