

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 2:00 p.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
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Dan Duchon, Emergency Management Director
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Vice-Chairman Crosby called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the Emergency Management Department's Financial Position.

Mr. Duchon presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Duchon discussed the Emergency Management budget, consisting of two employees and covering supplies, equipment, and software. He stated the majority of the budget is funded through a 50% match between the county and the grantor. He stated one of the main grants, the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), has faced 10% cuts for three consecutive years and is expected to continue its downward trend. He stated the grant, which traditionally supports staff and recurring expenses, may shift to funding one-time projects aimed at building emergency management capabilities, potentially leaving organizations to maintain those capabilities on their own.

In response to the Board, Mr. Duchon clarified that the state does not directly provide funding to local governments during emergencies. He stated if a state disaster occurs, the county would be reimbursed for expenses it incurs. He also explained that the funding for specialized services, like fire bombers, would depend on the jurisdiction that owns the fire service.

In response to the Board, Mr. Duchon explained that emergency management coordinates with several dispatch centers, including Southeastern Arizona Communications Center (SEACOM), Benson, and Douglas and for fire-related issues, state and federal dispatches are handled by Tucson and Phoenix. He stated when it's time for an evacuation, these dispatch centers contact emergency management to handle the situation or send out the necessary alerts.

Mr. Duchon shared details on various grants, including the State Homeland Security Grant, which has funded a range of supplies and systems, such as counter-drone

systems, medical kits, and cyber resiliency equipment. He stated several of these grants, including the most recent ones, have been expensed, closed out, and submitted for review by FEMA and DHS.

Mr. Duchon discussed several upcoming grants, including the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which had been approved with a 10% match and two requests were in progress for hazardous material training for public works employees and contractor support for hazmat plans.

Mr. Duchon stated that the emergency management budget and grants are currently balanced at a 50% match, but with continued cuts to the grant, the department will face a decision about whether to continue the program. He stated the future of the department may depend on the grant's sustainability, as funding from the grant covers half of the budget, and the other half is from the general fund. He asked the Board and administration to assess whether to maintain the program if the grant continues to decrease.

The Board and staff discussed the potential for combining SEACOM and Emergency Management into one agency. Chairman Antenori stated SEACOM could manage all alerts and disaster coordination, including shelters and relief efforts, under one roof. Chairman Antenori also suggested that this consolidation might allow for charging for services.

Mr. Duchon confirmed that the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) includes a mix of government employees and non-government members, such as a press representative and a hazardous materials facility owner, to ensure broad representation.

In response to the Board, Mr. Duchon stated that flooding has caused more damage than fires in the county and state over the past decade.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board