

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, April 15, 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, Telephonic
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Mark Dannels, Cochise County Sheriff
Kenneth Bradshaw, Jail Commander
Tom Alinen, Chief of Staff
Celina Ybarra, Cochise County Sheriff Finance Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of the County Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, specifically: Sheriff's Department

Ms. Gilman clarified that the meeting would follow with a jail district budget discussion. She explained that the budget being presented includes all aspects of the sheriff's office, not just the general fund, but also grants and financial positions. She stated the sheriff is present to provide highlights of the budget, explain different requests, and address any questions.

Sheriff Mark Dannels presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Sheriff Dannels discussed the focus on fiscally responsible budgeting, mentioning how the sheriff's office restructured eight years ago to prioritize road deputies over commanders. He emphasized the challenges faced due to border security and the fentanyl crisis, noting that recruitment and retention are significant issues, with competitive pay from agencies like the federal government and Department of Public Safety (DPS). Sheriff Dannels explained the importance of keeping salaries competitive to attract and retain staff, proposing a salary increase for deputies and detention officers. He also highlighted the ongoing efforts to secure funding through grants and emphasized that public safety is a priority in the budget request.

Chairman Antenori pointed out that the county's limited population and property values make it difficult to generate enough revenue to fund essential services. He compared the situation to Maricopa County, which benefits from a broad tax base due to the Palo

Verde nuclear plant, making it one of the lowest taxed counties in the state. He explained that the county's shallow tax base creates challenges in meeting the increasing demand for services. He stated balancing these priorities remains a significant challenge for the county.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels highlighted that the state is committed to continuing funding for border security, with \$50 million allocated, and that his office has been innovative in securing grants and partnerships to sustain their operations. Sheriff Dannels emphasized the importance of ensuring funding remains consistent and sustainable, avoiding temporary funding like the Community Orientated Policing Services (COPS) grant, which places long-term financial burdens on local agencies.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels clarified that the grant-funded vehicles were not just additional vehicles but replacements for existing ones, with the cost savings from maintenance, tires, and oil changes covered by the grant.

The Board and staff discussed the ongoing revision of a cost model related to the joint dispatch expenses, which amounted to \$982,000. Sheriff Dannels shared his perspective on the regional concept for dispatch centers. He explained that the idea was made possible by a private donor who helped fund the IT upgrade and regional center development.

In response to the Board, Sheriff Dannels explained how the county is divided into three regions, ensuring deputies are assigned based on community policing and efficiency. While most deputies live in the regions they serve, there are challenges in some areas, like Willcox and Benson, where recruiting and retention are harder.

Sheriff Dannels described the county's approach to predictive policing, which involves regularly reviewing analytical data to allocate resources effectively. Sheriff Dannels compared local staffing levels to larger cities, highlighting how understaffed many areas are, including Tucson, and stressed the importance of community-focused policing. He also mentioned the Sheriff's Office's success in recruitment and retention, thanks to partnerships with local colleges and strong relationships with other departments.

Sheriff Dannels discussed efforts to find cost savings, such as exploring a switch from Verizon to T-Mobile for the department's phone plan. Sheriff Dannels mentioned that the department has already sacrificed positions, like a commander role, to prioritize deputies on the road and is exploring other funding options to maintain resources.

Sheriff Dannels explained that the shift in focus allows the department's interdiction teams to spread out into different communities, addressing local issues instead of solely focusing on the border. He emphasized the adjustment aims to balance resource distribution across the county while maintaining preparedness.

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

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

