

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

A work session of the Cochise County Jail District Board of Directors 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
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Mark Dannels, Cochise County Sheriff
Kenneth Bradshaw, Jail Commander
Megan Kennedy, Detention Medical Services Manager
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:51 a.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of the County Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, specifically: Jail District

Mr. Bradshaw presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Bradshaw mentioned that depending on legal outcomes, funding may shift from the Jail district and the general fund. He stated a new policy will require all inmate mail to be photocopied, aiming to prevent drugs like suboxone and synthetic substances from entering the facility.

The Board and staff discussed the impact of mental health on the jail system, especially for nonviolent individuals dealing with substance abuse or psychiatric crises. Chairman Antenori introduced the idea of establishing a crisis center in Douglas to divert those cases from jail and provide short-term care through both inpatient beds and temporary respite options. Mr. Bradshaw noted that Rule 11 evaluations, which determine if a person is competent to stand trial, were noted as a major cost with fees ranging from \$36,000 to \$100,000 per person.

The Board and staff reviewed salary increase requests for detention officers and other Sheriff's Office personnel, totaling roughly \$214,000. Proposed raises include \$2,400 for detention officers and \$1,200 for corporals, lieutenants, medical, and administrative staff, with a broader market analysis expected to guide final adjustments. Mr. Bradshaw made a request for \$40,000 to better fund part-time positions, aiming to reduce overtime costs, since part-time hires don't receive benefits

and are more cost-effective than full-time equivalents.

Mr. Bradshaw requested to shift a \$12,000 cost from the inmate welfare fund to the general fund. He stated the amount was previously used to supplement the nurse practitioner's salary and, due to new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations effective April 1, 2025, jails can no longer collect commissions from phone and video calls, which had supported that fund. He stated that with commissary revenue insufficient to cover the gap, the department is asking for the cost to be absorbed elsewhere.

Ms. Kennedy shared that Detention Health Services is requesting a \$23,000 budget increase. The request includes \$5,000 for operating supplies due to rising costs and a higher-needs inmate population, \$5,000 to support contracted nursing staff due to hiring challenges, and \$13,000 for a shared medical director with the health department. She stated the department struggles to fill vacancies and must often rely on hospitals like Copper Queen for long-term inmate care.

The Board discussed plans to establish a hospital and mental health facility in Douglas to ease pressure on the jail and improve countywide mental health care.

The Board and staff emphasized the need to review operational costs and staffing plans before moving forward with a new jail. Chairman Antenori stressed the importance of designing the facility based on realistic, efficient staffing models rather than fitting staff to a preselected site. The Board confirmed a future work session is set and a proposal to review the consultant's final study and discuss site selection, layout, and how to align the project with both minimum standards and ideal outcomes.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board