

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 10:30 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: Alan Gordon, Interim IT Director
David Kelso, Project Manager
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of County Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 specifically: Information Technology (IT)

Joe Casey, Interim County Administrator, stated the IT department covers a wide range of responsibilities for the County. He introduced Alan Gordon as the Chief Technology Officer and IT Director, and David Kelso, Project Manager, both stepped up to assist with the budget management and Mr. Casey acknowledged Mr. Gordon and Mr. Kelso for their detailed work and valuable contribution to the IT department.

Mr. Gordon explained that the IT team supports over 25 departments, managing thousands of devices and critical systems, including 30 communication tower sites used for emergency response. He stated the department also assists external public safety agencies through intergovernmental agreements (IGA) that help offset costs. He stated the team has stretched funds by extending equipment life, handling repairs in-house, and securing long-term purchasing deals to keep services stable and secure.

Mr. Casey noted that the County evaluates each IT function individually when deciding whether to outsource or keep services in-house. He stated that each time there's staff turnover, the team reassesses whether outsourcing would provide better value or service. He mentioned that having in-house staff is sometimes preferable, especially when middle-of-the-night issues arise.

Mr. Gordon shared that the IT department places bulk orders to secure better pricing from vendors like Dell. He stated the goal is to get equipment in early, avoiding delays

or price hikes. The department has also been locking in contracts and pricing in advance to stabilize costs.

Mr. Casey explained that licenses are adjusted based on user needs, using various tiers. He stated specialized programs are manually reviewed for active usage to control costs. He stated that the IT department is beginning to explore AI tools like ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot but is proceeding with limited licenses and user training.

In response to the Board, Mr. Casey stated that the County uses Azure as a cloud provider for certain servers to ensure secure external access. He stated this setup improves security and enables remote access without compromising internal systems.

Mr. Casey clarified that the IT department has six vehicles, though only three are on the official replacement plan and the other three are older, hand-me-downs from the Sheriff's Office, used mainly for local errands. He stated the \$37,000 fleet charge covers gas, maintenance, and a replacement fee for the newer vehicles.

Mr. Casey stated the IT department's role in supporting other county departments by helping improve efficiency, not just maintaining technology. He stated the IT budget is funded through the 450 fund, which comes from a portion of the county's half-cent sales tax and covers hardware like laptops, servers, and public safety radios. Chairman Antenori raised a concern regarding overlapping funding across departments, with a request for more transparency in tracking total costs, especially where multiple departments benefit from shared IT resources. Mr. Casey confirmed that while it would take effort, the current budgeting system could support that kind of cost analysis.

Ms. Gilman shared that during a previous fraud risk review conducted a few years ago, some process weaknesses were identified in certain areas of the county. She clarified that no actual fraud was found, but the review highlighted potential vulnerabilities.

Chairman Antenori suggested the idea of conducting a focused review on one section of the county each year.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board