

**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 1:00 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: Jennifer Graeme, Human Resources Director
Pete Campbell, Human Resources Manager
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

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

Jennifer Graeme, Human Resources Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. Graeme stated the proposed budget for professional services remains unchanged. She stated the amount covers background screenings for non-elected, non-Arizona Peace Office Standards and Training Board (POST) positions as well as volunteers.

The Board and staff discussed random drug screening policies, especially for safety-sensitive positions. Ms. Graeme stated that individuals with commercial driver's licenses, law enforcement, South Eastern Arizona Communications (SEACOM) staff, and others whose roles involve potential risk are subject to random testing. She noted the Risk Department oversees the process, while judicial employees, including probation staff, fall under the courts and are not included in this county-managed screening.

Ms. Graeme shared that traumatic events counseling is another expense covered by the professional services budget. This service is mandated by statute for law enforcement and dispatchers and must be offered at no cost to them. She stated the counseling is provided by a specialist experienced in working with law enforcement and last fiscal year saw four sessions used, while nine sessions have been used so far this fiscal year.

Mr. Campbell noted that with the County hiring up to 200 people annually and handling as many terminations, having an unemployment administrator is very helpful. He stated the service is provided by TALX UC Express, which manages all unemployment claims.

He stated when employees appeal unfavorable rulings, TALX also provides a hearing representative to assist Human Resources and the relevant department through the process. He clarified that this service is limited to unemployment compensation and does not cover severance packages.

Ms. Graeme explained that leases and rentals are a significant budget item, totaling \$35,000 and the primary expense is the county's applicant tracking system, NEOGOV, which has been in use since around late 2016. She stated a key benefit of this system is its integration with GovernmentJobs.com, ensuring all posted positions receive national exposure.

Ms. Graeme explained that funds are set aside for Merit Commission hearings, which occur when an employee appeals a disciplinary action. She stated this process is handled internally and functions as a semi-judicial proceeding, with a former judge overseeing the case.

Ms. Graeme noted that the largest general ledger item outside of wages is unemployment insurance, with a proposed budget of \$60,000. She stated the amount covers unemployment costs countywide, including for court employees.

Chairman Antenori expressed interest in understanding how to maximize resources by leveraging different funding sources. He clarified that the discussion wasn't about taking from anyone's budget, but rather about avoiding additional hires by utilizing existing services and to strategically support departments without increasing their individual costs.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board