

**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 11:00 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: Julie Morales, Risk Management Director  
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of the County Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, specifically: Board of Supervisors and Risk Management.

Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator, presented this item. Ms. Gilman provided an overview of the Board of Supervisors' department budget, noting that it's divided by district and includes staff operations. She addressed a question about the sharp increase in Elected Officials' Retirement Plan (EORP) contributions and clarified that spending has not yet reached the budgeted amount. She discussed community enhancement funds, with examples like neighborhood cleanups and event support, and a reminder that any spending requires Board approval. She highlighted the addition of a legal services budget line to be transparent about what we are spending on outside counsel. The Board and staff discussed that long distance allocation would be removed and the use of county cell phones.

Julie Morales, Risk Management Director, explained that the risk management budget covers staff wages, general supplies, and safety-related expenses. She stated a countywide CPR training initiative was launched through a "train the trainer" program. Ms. Morales noted that the risk management budget also includes typical expenses like cell phone service, a travel budget, and training costs, primarily for CPR certification through the American Red Cross. She stated the two largest items in the budget are insurance premiums paid to the Arizona Counties Insurance Pool (ACIP) and a \$350,000 fund reserved for settlements, claims, and damages.

In response to the Board, Ms. Morales explained that the judgment and damages fund covers a wide range of claims, from minor property damage like windshield or tire spike incidents to more serious cases. Smaller, straightforward claims without injury or complex legal issues are usually resolved internally by risk management or the county attorney. She stated that for county vehicle damage under \$5,000, the

matter is handled by fleet services in coordination with risk management. Ms. Morales explained that the more severe cases involving fatalities or long-term medical obligations may be referred to ACIP, especially if the county attorney lacks the necessary litigation expertise.

Ms. Gilman explained that the Board discusses risk when liabilities become significant. She stated the counties in the insurance pool have worked together over several years to reduce exposure to cyber threats. She stated sharing knowledge and strengthening systems collectively has helped lower risks across the board.

Ms. Morales noted that the county expects a premium increase for ACIP next year. She stated the anticipated rise is due in part to risk claims and mainly because of a recent in-person appraisal of county properties. She stated as a result, ACIP is applying an 8% increase on top of their usual 5% estimate.

Ms. Morales emphasized that ACIP should not be viewed as just an insurance provider. She stated ACIP provides comprehensive risk analysis, consultation, and proactive training tailored to Arizona public sector needs. She stated the organization supports counties with cybersecurity efforts and risk mitigation that would be hard to manage alone. Ms. Gilman added that Cochise County's unique risks, especially near the border, also contribute to its higher insurance exposure.

The Board and staff discussed funding for the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, particularly its Water Wise program. The Board questioned the \$87,000 allocated annually to the Agricultural Extension and the \$99,000 budgeted for water projects, of which only \$23,000 has been spent so far. The Board noted a drop in visibility and effectiveness compared to past efforts.

Ms. Gilman mentioned that a work session is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14th, 2025 to review county funding requests and revenue projections. She stated the session would include a presentation of consolidated requests and anticipated revenues, including options based on different property tax rates. She stated this will help guide the Board in deciding which funding requests to approve and how to pay for them.

Chairman Antenori agreed that some funding requests require deeper analysis beyond the initial submission. He emphasized the importance of reviewing specific line items to understand the full context of each request. He suggested applying a percentage cut to a budget and having departments justify why the cut shouldn't be made. He stated this approach could reveal unnecessary spending or areas where reductions are possible.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board