

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, April 30, 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: Christine McLachlan, Interim Development Services Director
Anissa Acedo, Business Manager
Stacy Fenhaus, Budget Manager

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

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

Christine McLachlan, Interim Development Services Director, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. McLachlan explained that Development Services is part of the Community Development division and supports areas like real estate, economic development, and facility management. She stated that despite having only 12 staff compared to similar counties with 40 employees, the department brings in over \$1.1 million annually through permits and fees and also supports smaller cities through intergovernmental services.

The Board and staff discussed the county's use of a \$600,000 brownfield assessment grant, which helps identify potential contaminated sites. Ms. McLachlan stated that sites can be nominated by the public, and common examples include former gas stations, mining areas, or railroad zones. Ms. McLachlan stated there are far more potential brownfield sites in the county than available funding can cover, the assessment grant identifies sites, and the revolving loan grant is used for actual cleanup.

The Board and staff discussed the limitations of current housing-related funding, noting that while the fund doesn't cover all scenarios, it does support critical repairs like roofs, HVAC systems, and bathrooms.

Ms. McLachlan discussed the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across each supervisory district. She noted that cities have shown strong support for the

stations, particularly for their placement along busy corridors. She stated the charging stations collect fees per kilowatt hour, which helps offset electricity costs.

Ms. McLachlan summarized that the Development Services Department is primarily funded through grants, followed closely by permit fees, with only 18% coming from the general fund. She emphasized that the department is not just sustaining but thriving under this funding model and there's also optimism that grant funding, particularly from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields program, could potentially be doubled.

Ms. McLachlan shared that the department is operating in high-cost recovery mode and key tasks this year include finishing the Comprehensive Plan update and possibly adopting the 2024 building code.

Ms. McLachlan explained several strategies to improve housing access, noting the greatest need is for rental assistance due to high costs. She stated the county can help by supporting affordable housing projects and offering emergency repair aid through programs like Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). She stated a six-month housing study will begin soon to assess current conditions and recommend solutions.

The Board and staff discussed the fluctuating revenue from various sources, including permit reviews and fines. Ms. McLachlan highlighted that fines and miscellaneous revenue often show no actual income due to the lack of levied fines or enforcement activities. She stated some of the fine categories, such as those for code violations, have no income recorded because no fines were issued.

In response to the Board, Ms. McLachlan stated that a potential text amendment for zoning issues will be discussed in a work session with the Planning and Zoning Commission on May 14, 2025. She stated the amendment aims to explore solutions to zoning challenges, potentially allowing accessory structures to match the height of the primary structure in antiquated subdivisions.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

APPROVED:

Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board