

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Frank Antenori, Chairman, telephonic; Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman; Kathleen L. Gomez, Supervisor, telephonic

Staff Present: Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator
Joe Casey, Interim Deputy County Administrator
Bert Whitehead, Civil Deputy County Attorney
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Vice-Chairman Crosby called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Review of agenda items for the Board of Supervisors/Directors meetings and work sessions for the week of June 2, 2025.

Ms. Gilman presented this item. Ms. Gilman stated that the library is the only district with an additional action item on next week's agenda. She stated the item involves E-rate consulting services, which are tied to the library's internet and wireless service needs.

Amadee Ricketts, Library District Director, explained that the item is to renew an agreement with Yavapai County for E-rate consulting services, provided through their educational service agency. She stated this agreement has existed since 2017 and is renewed every three years. She stated the E-rate program reimburses about 85% of internet service costs at rural library branches, based on local school district free lunch rates. She stated the consulting fee is \$2,500 annually, but the program brings in \$12,000 to \$15,000 each year, making it cost-effective.

Ms. Gilman stated that an action item would be added to the district board of directors meeting regarding a resolution to end the jail district tax. She stated if adopted, the tax will end effective July 31st, based on the 60-day notice requirement from the Arizona Department of Revenue.

Ms. Gilman shared updates on the consent agenda item, including a resolution to designate Monica Miranda, the Finance Director, as the Chief Fiscal Officer for submitting the FY26 annual expenditure limitation report. She stated the public hearing items are scheduled but won't be discussed ahead of time, as those require proper deliberation during the meeting. She introduced Action Item 7, which involves a work plan under the Sheriff's Office with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for wildlife control services.

Kenneth Bradshaw, Commander, stated that the item is an annual renewal for the county's wildlife services officer, who handles calls related to destructive or sick wildlife. He stated this agreement has been in place for nearly 20 years and the renewal includes an increase of \$2,000 to cover the officer's salary.

Ms. Gilman explained agenda item 8 is a new Resolution 25-11 replacing Resolution 03-15 to clarify the authority and responsibilities of the County Administrator. She stated the new resolution consolidates feedback from work and executive sessions and aligns the organizational chart to reflect current reporting structures. The Board discussed the chart's connections to elected officials and the limits of board authority, especially regarding budgeting. The Board also discussed how to handle repeated complaints about staff behavior, emphasizing documentation, due process, and the appropriate steps through administration and human resources.

Supervisor Gomez introduced agenda item 9 and requested to fund architectural design for a flag pavilion at Camp Naco using District 2 community enhancement funds. She stated the pavilion would honor the Buffalo Soldiers by displaying their unit flags and include infrastructure like a concrete base, pole, flags, and possibly lighting.

Supervisor Gomez requested the removal of agenda item 10, which involved a separate community initiative. She explained the decision was due to recent news that Sierra Vista will sponsor the Boys and Girls Club in Douglas. She plans to propose reallocating the funds to support the endowment for the Douglas club at a future meeting on June 17, 2025.

Supervisor Gomez introduced agenda item 11, which involves using community enhancement funds to support a summer basketball program in Douglas. She emphasized how important sports have been for the community, especially since the closure of the mines left limited options for youth. She stated the proposal would establish two basketball leagues for middle and high school students.

Rachel Gray, Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court, introduced agenda item 12. She stated approval of an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to extend the use of a digital evidence portal through a Thomson Reuters contract. She stated the portal allows for secure digital submission of evidence, reducing physical storage and risk of loss. Funding comes from a restricted court fund, and the system costs \$5 per case.

Paul Esparza, Building Official, discussed agenda item 13, an extension request for the assurance agreement tied to the Kings Ranch at Coronado subdivision. He explained that the assurance guarantees subdivision improvements are completed before lots are released, and that about 53% of lots have already been released. Mr. Esparza assured the board that drainage was reviewed during development, and the county uses a third-party trust system to manage lot releases responsibly.

Darrel Crowley, Facilities Director, discussed agenda item 14, a lease renewal between Cochise County and Northrop Grumman for space at the Bisbee Douglas International Airport. He stated the lease covers a section of the tarmac and terminal space used by Northrop Grumman, who have been occupying the area for several years. He stated the company uses a temporary structure and a mobile office, with about 1,500 square feet in the terminal.

Emily Harris, Clinical Services Director, presented agenda item 15, a request for continued approval of a grant through First Things First to provide countywide childcare health consultation services. She stated this grant ensures childcare centers serving children aged zero to five are safe and effective, with training and support services in

place. She stated the grant fully supports two part-time employees and covers the necessary travel for safety consultations, with no impact on operational funds.

Natalie Johnson, Environmental Health Director, presented agenda item 16, the delegation agreement between the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and the Cochis Health and Social Services Environmental Health Division. She noted that the delegation allows the health department to handle inspections and reviews of on-site wastewater systems (septic systems). She stated that it also involves addressing complaints, such as resolving issues with failing systems. Mike McGee, Environmental Health Specialist, clarified that he took over the septic system program when it was transferred back from Planning and Zoning. He mentioned that the county has maintained the delegation agreement since the mid 1980s.

Chairman Antenori discussed item 17, focusing on federal legislative matters. He mentioned challenges surrounding the "big beautiful bill" and its potential impact on grants for both the state and county. He also highlighted ongoing delays in the state legislature's budget process, noting that there has been no progress since his last conversation with the state delegation.

2. Discussion and possible direction to staff on proposed meetings, scheduling, and agenda items for future meetings and work sessions.

The Board discussed the need for a work session on public records, with concerns about potential abuse of exclusions like attorney-client privilege and security claims. The Board stated the issue is that certain county entities may be withholding documents improperly, leading to a growing public records request backlog. The Board would like to clarify when records require attorney review and when they can be released immediately, potentially reducing repetitive requests by posting documents online. The Board also considered discussing the varying fees charged for these records, and the possibility of inviting a citizen familiar with the subject to provide input, with an executive session afterward to hear from the county attorney.

The Board discussed the upcoming quarterly work session on county roads, scheduled for June 10, 2025 at 1:00 p.m., where public works will provide an update. Supervisor Gomez emphasized the need to address ongoing public concerns regarding county roads, including road maintenance methods.

Supervisor Gomez confirmed that she would take on the role of selecting the invocation speaker for the next meeting.

Vice-Chairman Crosby adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

APPROVED:

Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

