

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
Tuesday, July 28, 2015**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 1:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Executive Conference Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Patrick G. Call, Chairman; Ann English, Vice-Chairman; Richard R. Searle, Member

Staff Present: Jim Vlahovich, County Administrator

Britt W. Hanson, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney

Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board

Mark Genz, Commander, Sheriff's Office

Forest Hauser, Sheriff's Office

Lisa Marra, Communications & Community Relations Administrator

Chris Mullinax, Risk Manager, Human Resources Department

Chairman Call called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE ORDER OR DELETION OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AT THE MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Sheriff's Office

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the Sheriff's Office Helicopter Program.

Chairman Call asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Vlahovich gave the background and stated that the helicopter would be acquired through a benefactor for the Sheriff's Office.

Commander Genz gave an overview of helicopter program and said the program started in May of 2013. He stated that the benefactor provided a specific number of hours for a helicopter service, which included: pilot costs, maintenance, overtime, on call costs, and equipment. He clarified that those services were provided and at zero cost to the County. As the project manager for the program he is in charge of how the hours were used and which officers provided coverage as well as coordinating with the City of Sierra Vista Police

Department, which was approved through an Intergovernmental Agreement. He highlighted several incidents that the helicopter was used for and discussed the two crash incidents.

Supervisor Searle asked why the program was going from contracted to ownership.

Commander Genz said that the new program would be different in that the County would own the helicopter, donated by the benefactor, but the benefactor would contract all other costs associated for three years.

Chairman Call asked about the liability associated with the program.

Commander Genz said that there was liability associated with the program, but there is no increased liability as deputies are always in danger whether it is on the road or in the air.

Chairman Call asked if the benefactor had considered funding additional deputies instead of the helicopter service.

Commander Genz said that the foundation had not offered to fund more deputies, and has only focused on equipment.

Supervisor Searle said that the County's insurance through the Arizona Counties Insurance Pool (ACIP) did not cover aircrafts.

Commander Genz said that the liability cost would also be covered as well as other unexpected costs that might come along with the helicopter program.

Vice-Chairman English said that she could not support the helicopter program because of the great risk of having a helicopter.

Chairman Call said that it would be the responsibility of the Sheriff's Office to discuss liability and ensure only authorized personnel use the helicopter for public safety missions. He added that if other organizations wanted access they would have to enter into an Intergovernmental agreement.

Commander Genz said that it was understandable that there was a concern and there would be public use rules for the helicopter program, as well as a declaration to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that the helicopter would be used for mission purposes. He added that the Sheriff's Office would accept guidance from all parties involved.

Chairman Call said that the agreements should preclude the County from taking reporters, staffers, or politicians just to show them around as they did not fall in line with mission oriented purposes.

Mr. Hanson said that one of the main preclusions should be access to regular citizens.

The Board has some reservations about continuing a helicopter program with recent accidents, but if more information was provided regarding liability, some of the members would support a program.

Vice-Chairman English said that she had not determined the need for a helicopter that would justify the additional liability to the County.

Commander Genz said that the formal acceptance of the helicopter and the entire program would be brought before the Board soon, as they wanted the program to be implemented by January of 2016.

Chairman Call adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

APPROVED:

Patrick G. Call, Chairman

ATTEST:

Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board