

The Board met in a Regular Meeting at the Santa Cruz County Complex, 2150 N. Congress Drive, Room #120, Nogales, AZ. Present: Rudy Molera, Chairman; John Fanning, Vice-Chairman; Luis Carlos Davis, Member; Jesus Valdez, County Manager; Mauricio Chavez, Deputy County Manager; Robert May, Civil Bureau Chief; Alma Schultz, Clerk of the Board.

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Molera called the meeting to order, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, led by Juan Balderas.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Supervisor Davis made a motion to adopt the Agenda and deviate from the Agenda sequence as necessary, seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Chris Werkhoven, a resident of Rio Rico, expressed concerns about South32 mining, appealed the Hermosa South32 permit citing ignored data warnings, discussed water discharge issues and data assessments in the Patagonia Mountains, and emphasized citizen science outreach.

Ernie Edwards, a resident of Lake Patagonia, referenced a recent announcement by South32 and questioned who would compensate for property value losses. He requested a public service announcement for realtors and raised concerns about South32's accuracy both in the past and present.

Susan Wellington, a resident of Patagonia, reported the presence of iron and lead in her water well.

Carolyn Shaffer, a resident of Patagonia, stressed the importance of protecting water resources and noted findings of antimony in water prior to state reporting.

Hunter Williams, a resident, expressed concerns about the definition of sampling and the use of averages, which could be misleading, particularly regarding high levels of antimony in water.

Chris Gardner, a resident of Patagonia, raised concerns about antimony discharge concentrations mentioned in a letter.

Wendy Islas, a resident of Rio Rico, requested that the Call to the Public be reinstated in a virtual format and expressed related concerns.

Vanessa Register, a resident of Patagonia, voiced concerns about property values, efforts to inform potential buyers, and asked the Board to direct staff to take action based on reports and to create a public website with the information.

Robin Lucky, a resident of Rio Rico, requested an ordinance prohibiting mining companies from discharging treated water from their facilities into private wells. She further stated that if a mining company must replace water in someone's well, it should come from a utility company regulated by ADWR and ADEQ.

Chairman Molera reminded the public that questions for the Study Session should be presented during the Call to the Public.

Chris Gardner submitted questions for South32, including:

An explanation of the permit reporting process, specifically what concentration of antimony was reported to ADEQ when the box was checked indicating an issue with the lab result.

What monitoring frequency would provide a better understanding?

Whether South32 has an internal laboratory.

Additional questions were addressed by South32 during the study session.

CURRENT EVENTS

1. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISOR DAVIS: Wished everyone a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year; shared that he experienced an earthquake while visiting Taiwan; noted the passing of a family member; mentioned moving back to Nogales five years ago; taught at Nogales High School; stated he decided to run before the embezzlement incident; emphasized that caring for seniors is a priority; stressed the importance of collaboration regardless of political party and expressed hopes to work with the City of Nogales; thanked county staff for working closely with him; and affirmed that embezzlement behavior will not be tolerated.

VICE-CHAIRMAN FANNING: Wished everyone a Happy New Year and a happy birthday to his mother-in-law; mentioned taking a walk with the Tubac Nature Group; expressed pride in the Rio Rico Rotary and the community members who participated in the Bikes for Tikes program; thanked law enforcement and Alma and her team for their service; and noted that he announced the sporting events primarily for Rio Rico and asked for Nogales and Patagonia sports schedule.

CHAIRMAN MOLERA: Asked Under Sheriff Castillo to share the news of the passing of retired Lieutenant Manuel Cota, who served with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office for three decades; expressed condolences to the families for their loss; emphasized the importance of collaboration; thanked staff and stated he is extremely proud of the team; announced that he will be meeting with their independent auditor to conduct independent audits; thanked Maria and Mauricio for organizing; and expressed appreciation to all department heads and elected officials.

2. MANAGER

JESUS VALDEZ, COUNTY MANAGER: Spoke about the upcoming elections being mid-cycle this year, noting the potential for the August election to move to July; and highlighted ongoing collaboration with the City of Nogales, including today's presentation at the city.

3. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

A ANA AND JOHN HOLMAN AND OSCAR PEÑA FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN ORGANIZING SANTA'S GARDEN OF LIGHTS IN RIO RICO, AN EVENT THAT BROUGHT COMMUNITY MEMBERS TOGETHER AND CREATED A FESTIVE AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE (REQ: VICE-CHAIRMAN FANNING)

Vice-Chairman Fanning introduced recognition to Ana and John Holman and Oscar Peña, and others for their outstanding efforts in organizing Santa's Garden of Lights in Rio Rico, an event that successfully brought the community together and created a festive, memorable experience.

B THERESA ASTRAIN AND LIBBY MILLER AND GINA PETER FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION IN COORDINATING THE ROTARY TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY IN RIO RICO, AN EVENT THAT UNITED THE COMMUNITY AND FOSTERED A SPIRIT OF CELEBRATION AND TOGETHERNESS (REQ: VICE-CHAIRMAN FANNING)

Vice-Chairman Fanning introduced recognition to Theresa Astrain, Libby Miller, and Gina Peter for their leadership and dedication in coordinating the Rotary Tree Lighting Ceremony in Rio Rico, an event that united the community and fostered a spirit of celebration and togetherness.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. FINANCE: CASH & INVESTMENTS, EXPENDITURES & REVENUE REPORTS

Mauricio Chavez, Deputy County Manager, reported \$23,063,709.93 in the General Fund, of which \$16,613,109.90 is invested; \$5,379,281.94 in the Road Fund, of which \$5,138,494.90 is invested; \$3,415,149.35 in the Flood Control District Fund, of which \$309,683.19 is invested;

\$6,898,149.03 in the Jail District Fund, of which \$4,413,766.28 is invested; \$62,737,842.2 total for all funds, of which \$ 28,602,594.0 is invested; \$9,496,892.13 estimated end of month balance, compared to \$13,324,795.20 cash at January 2025, a difference of \$(3,827,903.07).

2. DEPARTMENT(S) UPDATE

None.

STUDY SESSION

1. SOUTH 32 HERMOSA WATER TREATMENT BRIEFING BY PAT RISNER, PRESIDENT OF SOUTH 32 HERMOSA INC.

South32 provided an update on water monitoring results and permit compliance, including actions taken to address elevated antimony levels in groundwater and discharge. The presentation emphasized regulatory reporting, treatment improvements, expert toxicology analysis confirming no human health risk, and ongoing collaboration with ADEQ and stakeholders.

2. GOVERNMENT 101:

A ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) DEPARTMENT BY CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER JUAN BALDERAS AND STAFF

The Information Technology Department provided an update on statutory authority, organizational structure, and key operating procedures, including cybersecurity, disaster recovery, and data protection policies. The presentation highlighted core functions such as service enablement, systems reliability, infrastructure management, and customer support to ensure secure and efficient county operations.

B ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT BY DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER MAURICIO CHAVEZ AND STAFF

The Finance Department provided an overview of its statutory authority, organizational structure, and key responsibilities, including budgeting, payroll, purchasing, financial reporting, and audit compliance. The presentation also highlighted major revenue sources, federal funding, and internal controls to ensure transparency and fiscal accountability.

Supervisor Davis made a motion to recess the Regular Meeting to convene the Flood Control District Board seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

FLOOD CONTROL

1. DIRECTOR'S/PROJECT REPORT

The Flood Control District reported December rainfall was below normal, with drought conditions persisting across Santa Cruz County. The update included permit activity, ongoing major projects such as the Ephraim Canyon and Patagonia Regional Flood Control initiatives, FEMA map revisions, and planning efforts to improve flood mitigation and watershed management.

2. MONTHLY REPORT FROM CITY OF NOGALES

No report.

3. MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE TOWN OF PATAGONIA

Report included.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01 DESIGNATING THE COUNTY MANAGER AS THE APPLICANT'S AGENT FOR THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION GRANT NO. PDMC-PJ-09-AZ-2019-001/EMF-2020-PC-0014 FOR

THE EPHRAIM CANYON FLOOD PROJECT (REQ: PUBLIC WORKS)

Vice-Chairman Fanning made a motion to approve, seconded by Supervisor Davis; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

The Board adjourned as the Flood Control District Board and convened into the Regular Meeting. (Motion: Supervisor Davis; second: Vice-Chairman Fanning; motion carried unanimously) (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

ACTION ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL FOR THE APPLICATION FOR LIQUOR LICENSE FOR: (REQ: CLERK)

Supervisor Davis made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

A PIGEON'S LIQUOR STORE IN RIO RICO

B RANCHO CASTILLO LLC IN SONOITA

2. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, IN SUPPORT OF THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT GRANT PROGRAM AWARDED TO THE UNIVERSITY BY THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE MANAGEMENT, TO SUPPORT TREE PLANTING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR A FIVE (5) YEAR TERM WITH IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF UP TO \$150,000 (REQ: COUNTY MANAGER)

Vice-Chairman Fanning made a motion to approve, seconded by Supervisor Davis; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

3. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE COOPERATIVE PURCHASE AGREEMENT AND QUOTATION NO. 26964540 WITH SHI INTERNATIONAL CORP. FOR PALADIN DRONES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$153,102.78 (REQ: SHERIFF)

Mauricio Chavez, Deputy County Manager stated that they are grant funded. Juan Balderas, Chief information officer, stated that the drones would be used for Search and Rescue.

Supervisor Davis made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

4. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE LOCAL BORDER SUPPORT AGREEMENT WITH THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO ENHANCE LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES FOR BORDER-RELATED CRIMES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2025 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$444,628 (REQ: SHERIFF)

Supervisor Davis made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

CONSENT AGENDA

Supervisor Davis made a motion to approve Consent Agenda, seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried unanimously. (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)

1. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO APPROVE VACANT:

A ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF ROADS POSITION (REQ: PUBLIC WORKS)

B DEPUTY SERGEANT POSITION (REQ: SHERIFF)

C DEPUTY CORPORAL POSITION (REQ: SHERIFF)

D RECORDER/VOTER CLERK, SENIOR POSITION (REQ: RECORDER)

E TAX CLERK POSITION (REQ: TREASURER)

2. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY (2025–2029); THE CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD SHARED GOVERNANCE AGREEMENT (2025–2029); AND THE WIOA TITLE I-B INCENTIVE POLICY FOR YOUTH, ADULT, AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS (REQ: WIOA)

3. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AND RATIFY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING NO. YAI-700-220-PD1-26 WITH YOUNG AUDIENCES, INC. FOR THE RESPONSIVE ARTS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION (RAISE) PROGRAM EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 30, 2025 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60 PER HOUR OF COMPLETED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (REQ: SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT)

4. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE LOCAL JUDICIAL COLLECTION ENHANCEMENT FUND (JCEF) GRANT TO FUND CIRCLES OF PEACE/PRETRIAL SERVICES FROM JANUARY 01, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$19,000 (REQ: JUSTICE OF THE PEACE)

5. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE BOND FOR DUPLICATE WARRANT: (REQ: SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT)

A #4-688429 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$110.00 DATED 10/01/2025 PAYABLE TO MARTIN GUEVARA

B #4-688828 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$607.92 DATED 11/04/2025 PAYABLE TO OFFICE DEPOT INC.

C #4-687549 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150.00 DATED 07/29/2025 PAYABLE TO ASPAA

6. APPROVAL OF TAX VALUATION ADJUSTMENTS: (REQ: ASSESSOR)

A 120-01-121 - EMILY VAN HASSEL & PETER VAN HASSEL, RESOLUTION NO. 57326

B 112-11-041A - DONALEE DITTENHOEFER, RESOLUTION NO. 57327

C 112-11-041A - DONALEE DITTENHOEFER, RESOLUTION NO. 57328

D 120-02-069 - ARACELIS APONTE GONZALEZ, RESOLUTION NO. 57332

E 120-02-069 - ARACELIS APONTE GONZALEZ, RESOLUTION NO. 57339

F 120-02-069 - ARACELIS APONTE GONZALEZ, RESOLUTION NO. 57346

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 12/17/2025

8. APPROVAL OF DEMANDS were approved in the total amount of \$1,574,206.91, of which \$888,061.90 is from the General Fund. Details of these expenditures are available for inspection during working hours and are to be considered as part of these minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:11p.m. (motion: Vice-Chairman Fanning; second: Supervisor Davis; motion carried unanimously) (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)