

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; Christopher Young, Deputy County Manager; Robert May, Civil Bureau Chief; Alma Schultz, Clerk of the Board.

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, led by Carlo Garcia and Chairman Molera officially called the meeting to order.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Chris Werkhoven, a resident of Sonoita, commented on ADEQ allowing antimony mobilization to remain unaddressed in the Hermosa Mine's water permit.

Susan Faubion, a resident of Rio Rico, spoke about her septic line not being cut by Rio Rico and expressed that she is seeking justice and accountability.

Ben Lomeli, a resident of Rio Rico, spoke about the challenges and importance of natural resources, stating that there is no such thing as sustainable mining.

Robin Lucky, president of Calabasas Alliance, thanked the Board and others for transparency and stated that South32 has not properly addressed the high levels of antimony in the water.

J. Thompson, a resident of Rio Rico, raised concerns about unsafe conditions caused by hunting activity in neighborhoods and requested a study session with Game and Fish.

Ernie Edwards, a resident of Lake Patagonia, asked ADEQ to answer questions regarding Arizona Aquifer Protection Permit (APP) standards.

Alex Johnson, a resident of Patagonia, spoke about the need for effective environmental protections and holding organizations accountable for not valuing water, emphasizing that water must be protected and not poisonous.

Chris Gardner, a resident of Sonoita, presented questions to ADEQ regarding concerns about high levels of antimony in the water.

Rebecca Myers, a resident of Patagonia, expressed concerns about water quality and reported that her animals may become sick due to antimony levels in the water.

CURRENT EVENTS

1. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISOR DAVIS: Participated in the one-year celebration of Senator Ruben Gallego in the senate; met with Mark Sanders from ADOT; attended a lunch with Emerging Leaders; discussed the Film Ready program that the County is involved in; noted that Midland Band filmed Marlboro Man music video in District 3; visited the provisional college with Arizona State University and other partners collaborating on new programs; and asked Chris Young to speak briefly about the meeting. Chris mentioned that we have a shortage of secondary education and appreciated ASU for visiting. Also attended a meet-and-greet with Mayor Gallego and Mauricio Chavez, Deputy County Manager.

VICE-CHAIRMAN FANNING: Spoke about the Midland band's Marlboro Man music video showcasing beautiful parts of the county; met with Mark Sanders from the Arizona Department of Transportation; participated in the Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District #35 Spelling Bee as a pronouncer; met with the Health Department to review their programs; met with Robin, Anna, and Jay to discuss water concerns with the Governor's Office; attended a session with the Arizona Department of Public Safety regarding sex offenders; assisted with transportation for Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA); participated in the Hawk Platform meeting; and congratulated the Rio Rico High School Wrestling team for their river cleanup efforts.

CHAIRMAN MOLERA: Thanked the community for their communication regarding water issues; attended the WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Board meeting; congratulated Berenice Arellano, who was sworn in recently as Chief Probation Officer; thanked ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation) for cleaning the medians from Nogales to Rio Rico; participated in a meet-and-greet with Senator Kelly alongside the County Manager; and noted plans to attend a legislative reception at the County Supervisors Association (CSA) and the CSA Board of Directors meeting the following day.

2. MANAGER

JESUS VALDEZ, COUNTY MANAGER, provided an update on Fiscal Year 2024, noting that the legislature awarded funding and a SMART grant for ADOT's Stage 2 project, which includes cost estimates for improvements to the Frontage Road, Ruby Road, and Rio Rico Drive traffic interchanges, with modifications planned for a later phase. The initial phase involves extending the West Frontage Road to connect to Yavapai Drive and addressing the East Frontage Road project, which will convert the current one-way section to two-way traffic. He provided an estimated cost of \$27 million for these projects and explained that the County will be applying for funding for projects that began in 2016 with assessments of various alternatives. He also noted that the County currently has approximately \$2.1 million available for construction purposes and that additional right-of-way acquisitions may be necessary. Chairman Molera asked about the status of the Ruby Road bridge, and Jesus responded that it is currently in the clearance process and in its final phase, and he will provide the cost to construct within a few months.

3. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

A RECOGNITION OF CROSSROADS NOGALES MISSION FOR ITS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN ORGANIZING THE 2ND ANNUAL HOLIDAY OF MIRACLES EVENT, WHICH BROUGHT JOY AND ESSENTIAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND FOR ITS CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING VITAL SERVICES YEAR-ROUND, INCLUDING DAILY LUNCH AND DINNER FOR THOSE IN NEED, WITH SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO ALEJANDRA MARTINEZ, DAISY SOTO, AND MARTIN G. FELIX FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION (REQ: SUPERVISOR DAVIS)

Supervisor Davis spoke about CrossRoads Nogales Mission and recognized their contributions.

B RECOGNITION OF JESUS M. CORDOVA MEMORIAL FOUNDATION FOR ITS OUTSTANDING EFFORTS IN ORGANIZING SUCCESSFUL TOURNAMENTS IN MEMORY OF OFFICER JESUS M. CORDOVA, WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN THE LINE OF DUTY, AND FOR ITS CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO HONORING HIS LEGACY AND FOSTERING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, WITH SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO CARLO GARCIA, PRESIDENT, AND WENCES RUIZ, VICE PRESIDENT, FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION (REQ: CHAIRMAN MOLERA)

Chairman Molera spoke about the Jesus M. Cordova Memorial Foundation and recognized their contributions, including assistance to community members.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

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

Maria Martinez, Assistant Finance Director, reported \$22,828,641.01 in the General Fund, of which \$16,667,266.93 is invested; \$5,770,427.91 in the Road Fund, of which \$5,155,245.86 is invested; \$3,340,815.40 in the Flood Control District Fund, of which \$310,692.73 is invested; \$7,527,159.09 in the Jail District Fund, of which \$4,428,154.70 is invested; \$63,700,013.6 total for all funds, of which \$28,695,835.4 is invested; \$10,825,245.53 estimated end of month balance, compared to \$13,763,208.84 cash at January 2025, a difference of \$(2,937,963.31).

Mauricio Chavez, Deputy County Manager, reported that the County is at the mid-cycle of the budget year and is analyzing expenditures. He reviewed major revenue sources, noting that property tax collections are at 55%, vehicle license tax and half-cent sales tax are also at 55% of the budgeted amount. Year-to-date revenues have increased by 21%, with retail sales trending higher than last year, indicating overall positive financial performance for the County.

Supervisor Davis asked for an update on internal audits. Mauricio explained that the Board hired an auditor to review policies for departments that handle cash. He added that the Treasurer's Office will also undergo review by an external auditor.

2. DEPARTMENT(S) UPDATE

None.

STUDY SESSION

2. ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (ADEQ) UPDATE REGARDING SOUTH32 BY RANDY MATAS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, WATER QUALITY DIVISION

Randall Matas from ADEQ reported on South32's antimony discharge limit exceedance in October 2025 and related compliance issues. The exceedance was caused by suspended solids and clarifier inefficiency; corrective actions include treatment upgrades and real-time monitoring, expected by March 2026. ADEQ also addressed a previous gross alpha exceedance and emphasized improvements in reporting accuracy and permit clarity.

1. CONSERVATION OF SANTA CRUZ RIVER HABITATS IN TUBAC BY SETH AUSUBEL, VICE PRESIDENT TUBAC NATURE CENTER (REQ: VICE-CHAIRMAN FANNING)

The Tubac Nature Center, a volunteer-run nonprofit, presented its mission to conserve and restore habitats along the Upper Santa Cruz River, highlighting projects such as wetland, riparian forest, and grassland restoration, invasive species control, and the development of a conceptual general plan for a Tubac Nature Preserve. The presentation also emphasized community engagement through events like the Hawk Watch Festival, partnerships for land preservation, and ongoing efforts supported by over \$120,000 in grants.

3. GOVERNMENT 101:

A ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) DEPARTMENT BY PRIMITIVO ROMERO AND STAFF

Primitivo "Tivo" Romero, Human Resources Director, presented an overview of HR functions, statutory authority, and new services, including employee orientation, professional development, and

risk mitigation efforts. As of January 1, 2026, the County employs 403 staff members, with turnover decreasing from 23.5% in 2024 to 18.9% in 2025, and noted increases in applications processed and new employee orientations.

ACTION ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION FOR DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING COORDINATION WITH THE CITY OF NOGALES FOR A JOINT MEETING WITH THE CITY COUNCIL (REQ: SUPERVISOR DAVIS)

Supervisor Davis emphasized the importance of working with the City of Nogales, noting opportunities to apply for grants and suggesting a discussion on developing a strategic plan. Chairman Molera agreed, stating that quarterly meetings with the City would be beneficial and that he has always been open to meetings. Vice-Chairman Fanning also supported collaboration, citing Pima County and Tucson as examples, and suggested meeting at least twice a year if quarterly is not feasible. Supervisor Davis requested that the County Manager contact the City Manager to organize meetings and provide an update at the next Board meeting. County Manager Jesus Valdez responded that he would schedule at least two meetings and asked what topics should be discussed, specifically mentioning flood control. Supervisor Davis stated that he would like to sit down with the City to understand their perspective, stressing that the County's role is to assist, not oversee, and that economic development remains a key factor. Vice-Chairman Fanning asked about holding workshops without violating Open Meeting Law. Mr. Valdez confirmed he will reach out to the City Manager, identify priorities, and bring back a proposed date and time for a meeting.

Supervisor Davis made a motion to give direction to County Manager to setup a meeting with the city seconded by Vice-Chairman Fanning; the motion carried. (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 FILL VACANT PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE POSITION (REQ: HEALTH SERVICES)

2. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CREATE AND FILL COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER POSITION (REQ: HEALTH SERVICES)

3. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE REFUND TO ROSS NOON IN THE AMOUNT OF \$800 (REQ: HEALTH SERVICES)

4. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE A RIGHT-OF-ENTRY AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FOR PARCEL NO. 111-14-005 FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE (12) MONTHS (REQ: COUNTY MANAGER)

5. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AGREEMENT WITH FI SERVICES LLC FOR FORENSIC INTERVIEW SERVICES FROM JANUARY 13, 2026 THROUGH JANUARY 13, 2027 AT A RATE OF \$250 PER INTERVIEW AND/OR ARIZONA STATE RATE FOR CANCELLATIONS (REQ: COUNTY ATTORNEY)

6. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE RENEWAL OF WESTLAW SUBSCRIPTION ORDER #Q-11145798 WITH THOMSON REUTERS FOR 10 SEATS FOR A

TERM OF FIVE (5) YEARS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,120 PER MONTH WITH A 7% ANNUAL INCREASE (REQ: COUNTY ATTORNEY)

7. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO RETAIN PIERCE-COLEMAN AS LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE COUNTY AND SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN THE APPEAL BY A.F. TO THE EMPLOYEE MERIT SYSTEM COMMISSION (REQ: COUNTY ATTORNEY)

8. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF TUCSON FOR BASIC PEACE OFFICER TRAINING FOR RECRUITS AT THE SOUTHERN ARIZONA LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER (SALETC) AS AUTHORIZED BY CITY OF TUCSON RESOLUTION NO. 23978 AND CONTRACT NO. 19693 (REQ: SHERIFF)

9. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE LETTER AGREEMENT WITH EXPERIAN INFORMATION SOLUTIONS, INC. AND PROCESSED THROUGH MILLER MENDEL, INC. FOR ESOPH SYSTEM FOR CONSUMER CREDIT REPORT BACKGROUND CHECKS (REQ: SHERIFF)

10. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO AGREEMENT NO. CTR077322 FOR PROJECT FELT-FAMILY ENGAGEMENT LITERACY HUBS, FUNDED THROUGH THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO EXTEND FROM JANUARY 1, 2026 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026 (REQ: SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT)

11. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AGREEMENT NO. EV26-0022 WITH THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY THROUGH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (HMEP) GRANT NO. 693JK32540019HMEP FOR ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING THE HMEP GRANT PROGRAM FROM OCTOBER 1, 2025 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2026 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$44,127 (REQ: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT)

12. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF STATE FISCAL YEAR 2026 EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (ERF) AWARD FROM THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (ADEQ) FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRAINING EQUIPMENT (REQ: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT)

13. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF THE EAGLE II GAS MONITOR TO THE RIO RICO FIRE DISTRICT TO ENSURE CONTINUED USE AND PROPER MAINTENANCE IN SUPPORT OF COUNTYWIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE (REQ: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT)

14. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL FOR THE APPLICATION FOR LIQUOR LICENSE FOR REX RANCH IN AMADO (REQ: CLERK)

15. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY REPORTS

16. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: 01/07/2026

17. APPROVAL OF DEMANDS were approved in the total amount of \$1,037,212.17, of which \$342,169.97 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 12:01p.m. (motion: Vice-Chairman Fanning ; second: Supervisor Davis; motion carried) (Ayes: Davis, Fanning, Molera)