

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GILA COUNTY, ARIZONA

Date: March 14, 2006

JOSÉ M. SANCHEZ
Chairman

STEVEN L. BESICH
Clerk of the Board

TOMMIE C. MARTIN
Vice-Chairman

By: Marian Sheppard
Chief Deputy Clerk

SHIRLEY L. DAWSON
Member

Gila County Courthouse
Globe, Arizona

PRESENT: José M. Sanchez, Chairman; Tommie C. Martin, Vice-Chairman; Shirley L. Dawson, Member; Steven L. Besich, County Manager/Clerk; Marian Sheppard, Chief Deputy Clerk; and, Bryan Chambers, 2nd Chief Deputy County Attorney.

The Gila County Board of Supervisors met in a Work Session which was immediately followed by a Regular Meeting at 10:00 a.m. this date. Steve Stratton led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Reverend Lyle Johnston of St. Paul's United Methodist Church delivered the Invocation.

Jacque Griffin, Assistant County Manager/County Librarian, presented benefits information pertaining to the Arizona Local Government Employee Benefit Trust (AZLGEBT). For the audience, Ms. Griffin explained that the Trust is self-funded and it is comprised of six Arizona counties. She stated that the AZLGEBT governing board met recently to discuss potential changes in benefits and rate increases. Ms. Griffin handed out and reviewed a bar graph of AZLGEBT's medical claims cost for the years 2000 to 2005. She advised that the County's wellness program continues to be successful due to the increasing number of employees participating in the program. She gave special thanks to the division/department managers for supporting the program and encouraging their employees' participation, especially Steve

Stratton, Public Works Division Director. The Trust currently has \$7M in the bank, which Ms. Griffin explained is enough money to cover a catastrophic illness/disease. An amount of \$500.00 is available to every employee and dependent every year to participate in wellness/prevention activities which are sponsored by AZLGEBT. Of all the participating counties, there were only 12 employees and 8 to 9 dependents that each used \$500.00 during last year. In ending her presentation, Ms. Griffin advised that the AZLGEBT governing board voted to have no change in benefits and no increase in premiums for the upcoming year. She attributed this largely in part to the increasing number of employees and dependents participating in the County's wellness program and medical screenings that are offered through the wellness program. The Board thanked Ms. Griffin for the presentation. Chairman Sanchez also thanked the employees who participate in the wellness program. Ms. Griffin stated that Stacey Espinoza, Jo Johnson and wellness ambassadors from each County department help to promote the wellness program. Vice-Chairman Martin requested that all employees receive written notification that there will be no change in health benefits and premiums for the upcoming year as well as a thank you for employee and dependent participation in the wellness program and medical screenings. Ms. Griffin assured Vice-Chairman Martin that written notification would be sent to all employees, possibly in the same envelope as employee pay stubs. **(A copy of the bar graph is permanently on record in the Board of Supervisors' Office.)**

Vice-Chairman Martin addressed agenda item number three, information and discussion regarding potential wildfire prevention, mitigation and protection measures. She recognized the following members of the audience: Mr. Martin DeMasi, Fire Chief of the Payson Fire Department; Mr. Bill Decker, Fire Chief of the Pine-Strawberry Fire Department; and, Mr. Gus Tellez, US Forest Service Helitac Commander . Before the actual presentation on this agenda item began, Vice-Chairman Martin asked for a report on the snowstorm that affected many areas of Gila County this past weekend as it directly relates

to the extreme fire situation affecting the County. Steve Besich, County Manager/Clerk; Steve Stratton, Public Works Division Director; and, Sheriff John Armer, reported on the snowstorm which caused complete power outages in the City of Globe, Town of Miami, and many other areas throughout the County. Highways from Globe to Show Low and Globe to Superior were shut down which stranded over 200 travelers during Saturday night and a lesser amount on Sunday night. Also, highways 260 and 87 out of Payson-Star Valley/Pine-Strawberry were closed stranding another nearly 200 travelers.

At 10:58 a.m. Chairman Sanchez recessed the meeting for a short break and he reconvened the meeting at 11:09 a.m.

Vice-Chairman Martin stated that the snow and runoff could stave off potential fires for the next 5-6 weeks; however, it is not going to be enough to have a major affect on the upcoming fire season. She provided a brief summary of her presentation and stated, *“The fuel loads are such that we now have catastrophic fires. There are billions of dollars of profitable product in the forests that are going to waste, burning up. My presentation is about profitable removal of product in the forests to pay for the restoration of these areas. I want to talk about fireproofing of these communities...”* She presented a handout to the Board which outlined the approach she would take in addressing this agenda item. The handout was divided into four sections entitled: 1) first strike response resources; 2) partnering and preparedness; 3) defensible urban space efforts; and, 4) defensible wildland-urban interface (WUI) efforts. She addressed item one of the handout, first strike response resources. The handout for this item reads:

1. First Strike Response Resources:

- **Help locate/map/develop/provide adequate helicopter-available water throughout Gila County for first strike response.**
 - ✓ **Strengthen existing Buckhead Pit resources: well, tank, holding ponds, and batch plant staging area.**

- ✓ **Purchase, set-up and make available ± 20,000 gallon water bladder/water pumpkin sites in a “string of pearls” from Strawberry to Young.**

She advised that many contacts have been made with state and federal officials; however, to date none of the entities have provided funding to help with fire prevention efforts. She said that it is time to make decisions on the actions that can be taken by the County. Vice-Chairman Martin asked Mr. Stratton to talk about existing County resources. He reiterated the importance of the three phases outlined in the handout; 1) first strike response resources, 2) partnering and preparedness, and 3) defensible urban space efforts. Mr. Stratton reviewed the services that were provided by the County when the February Fire occurred. He agreed with Vice-Chairman Martin that it is critical to provide adequate helicopter-available water throughout Gila County during first response efforts so there is not more than a 10 minute round trip from the fire to the water for the helicopter. He talked about taking a trip recently to Pennsylvania to look at bladders, which are portable water tanks. The 20,000 gallon bladders were initially made to hold fuel and Mr. Stratton advised that the bladder's material would be even better for holding water. He showed pictures of a bladder and stated that he ordered one bladder and the County is considering purchasing a total of ten bladders at an estimated total cost of \$27,000 which includes the freight charges. He asked Steve Sanders, Deputy Director of the Public Works Division, and Jerry Farr, Engineering Department Project Manager for the Timber Region, to review proposed sites to place the bladders and to identify other sources of water in ponds, creeks, wells, etc. Mr. Sanders reviewed each of the proposed sites on a map and showed pictures of the locations. He said that the County would work with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and fire districts to determine the best sites for the bladders. He advised that a pump test was conducted on the Buckhead well and it was found that water only went to approximately 83 feet. The Public Works Division is proposing working with Mr. Herbert Schumann, a consultant

who is an expert in the field of water, to strengthen the existing Buckhead Pit resources. Mr. Sanders said that the County has identified numerous locations for the bladders on public and private lands; however, further discussion must take place to determine if those sites can actually be used. Mr. Sanders and Mr. Stratton advised that it is critical for the County to continue discussions with the USFS and the local fire districts. Vice-Chairman Martin addressed item two of the handout, partnering and preparedness. The handout for this item reads:

2. Partnering and Preparedness:

- **Beef up wildland severity patrol with the Sheriff's Posse.**
- **Work with the fire districts to adapt apparatus for standardized connections; coordinate resources.**
- **Coordinate as-necessary strategy/informational meetings with all agencies, fire districts, municipalities, etc. through the fire season.**
- **Arrange for appropriate training – gear – communications for County truck drivers, equipment operators, etc. offered to the USFS for resource support**

Vice-Chairman Martin stated that when the forests are closed or put on restrictions, there are not enough people to monitor the forests and suggested using the Sheriff's Posse to help in the severity and visibility patrols. In addition, she said that these are the times where "partnering" comes into play and she suggested conducting weekly meetings between the Gila County Sheriff's Office, Gila County Sheriff's Posse, Gila County Public Works Division, USFS, and fire districts so there is a collaborative plan in place when a fire occurs and everyone is "*on the same page.*" She briefly talked about the need to regulate hose fittings/connections so there are no problems in transporting or accessing the water. She emphasized the need to have county employee wildfire training and gear, communications, etc. in place in county equipment in advance of a fire. Vice-Chairman Martin said that at this time she is unsure

of the cost for said training and equipment and which entity would be responsible for payment. She addressed item three of the handout, defensible urban space efforts. The handout for this item reads:

3. Defensible Urban Space Efforts:

- **Organize neighborhood clean-ups.**
- **Provide roll-offs and free dumping for yard slash/weeds/brush.**

Vice-Chairman Martin would like to organize neighborhood clean-up efforts in the next 60 to 90 days and provide roll-offs and free dumping for yard slash/weeds/brush throughout Gila County. She was unsure of the cost for this effort. She then addressed item 4.A. of the handout, defensible wildland-urban interface (WUI) efforts. The handout for this item reads:

4. Defensible Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Efforts:

A. Offer match money for municipalities within the County [Payson, Star Valley (hereinafter referred to as the Town of Diamond Star), Globe, Miami] in their wildland urban interface clearing/ fireproofing/defensible space efforts.

- **Help them (municipalities) coordinate efforts with the USFS [NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act of 1969) ready areas, modeling for prioritization].**
- **Help procure DOC (Department of Corrections) labor.**
- **Work with the USFS to help determine municipalities' eligibility for and garner additional match dollars from Resource Advisory Committee/State Forestry/others.**

Fire Chief DeMasi advised that last week he approached the Payson Town Council with a request to appropriate \$50,000 in order to develop a forest break around the community which encompasses approximately 350 acres. The Town Council agreed to appropriate the money and Fire Chief DeMasi advised that private citizens also agreed to contribute to this effort in the amount of \$40,000. Fire Chief DeMasi also advised that he will be meeting with the Tonto Apache Tribe to ask for monetary support to clear about 30

acres. He will approach a private developer for funding to clear about 8 acres. Fire Chief DeMasi referred to a map of the subject area and stated that the USFS has allowed some property owners who own property that borders the USFS to clear Forest Service land. He will also apply for an additional \$50,000 and he stated, *“This will kick start the process, but it won’t pay for everything. This is all on federal property and everyone agrees that it is a federal responsibility. The fuel break is not the total answer. Private property owners have a stake in this as well. The County has been good in supporting brush disposal pits and weekends free to take excess vegetation. There is a cost to maintain those pits. There are volunteers that staff those pits. The landfill (Buckhead Mesa Landfill) has also been a key player especially when the pits get full. Also, the Forest Service hasn’t done much to get work done on the ground. Everything is ready to go; we just need to add the money.”* He complimented Vice-Chairman Martin’s efforts and reiterated the importance of all entities working together. Vice-Chairman Martin proposed that the County and the municipalities work together on this effort. She stated, *“I would like the County to match municipalities’ amount they contribute to these efforts. When that is done, then we can go to the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) for help. We want \$6 million out of the \$660 million that has been budgeted for fires this year by the USDA. I propose to match up to \$50,000 with municipalities.”* Mr. Bill Decker, Fire Chief of the Pine-Strawberry Fire Department, stated, *“Pine-Strawberry has made amazing strides in the last two years. We spent a lot, approximately \$250,000 on firewising. We secured a grant again for over a \$300,000 project. We are not involved in this project, only as a supporter. We approached the community and the Take Pride Project and they said they will take this on. We raised \$50,000 to improve the fire break. As of yesterday, \$62,000 was collected with more promises coming in. We knew if we did it this way, this would get done to get the federal government to come on board. Let’s embarrass the federal government. Our program is a model for Arizona and other*

western states. We have 16 full time people in our department. We will take all the help the County will offer. I fully support the initial attack of dip sites.”

Vice-Chairman Martin stated that she wanted to turn the attention to item 4B (as stated above in bold lettering) of her handout.

4. B. Establish and direct projects to strengthen existing fire breaks and strategically create new ones in the NEPA-ready acres surrounding Strawberry and Pine within the next 60 to 90 days.

- **Enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the USFS to clean strategic areas in the WUI around Pine-Strawberry between now and June 1.**
- **Use USFS modeling and wildland fire fighter expertise to identify and prioritize strategic areas.**
- **Hire existing wood-cutting timber crews and their equipment as a temporary County workforce to cut and remove woody materials.**
- **Stage all potentially marketable wood products at Buckhead Pit for merchandising and repaying County coffers.**
- **Partner with various fire districts to make fire apparatus and crews available during the project for potential fire control/suppression with backup from fire service helicopter and filled bladders.**
- **Partner with our local Forest Service with help from State agencies (Arizona Game and Fish, State Parks, etc.) to fast track NEPA process in WUI not NEPA'd.**
- **Partner with our local Forest Service and launch a public relations campaign directed at the USDA and Congress for match money to complete the fire-proofing/defensible space creation surrounding all of our communities within the wildland-urban interface of Gila County.**

- **Organize a public information effort to fully inform our citizens that includes an information contact person and a “project page” on our website for available up-to-the-minute information.**

Vice-Chairman Martin advised that she and Mr. Ed Armenta, Payson District Ranger for the Tonto National Forest, discussed the idea of utilizing the Department of Corrections labor force for this cleanup effort with off-duty Sheriff’s deputies guarding the DOC labor crews. Mr. Armenta suggested using DOC labor crews in Globe rather than transporting them to the Payson area. Martin discussed that this last item would need to be followed up with an organized trip to Washington D.C. to enlist the financial help of the US Department of Agriculture and the Congress to fireproof our communities. The US Forest Service estimates it would take +/- \$5,000,000 to do this. Supervisor Dawson spoke briefly about a meeting she had last week in Washington, D.C. with Mr. Mark Ray, Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She was advised that money will be released by the federal government for forest cleanup. She stated, *“He was acting like that would happen immediately.”*

At 12:44 p.m., Chairman Sanchez recessed the meeting for lunch and at 2:14 p.m., he reconvened the meeting.

Steve Besich stated, *“In order to do what we need, we need approximately four to five million dollars. I am recommending we entertain a proposal. I have been talking with Mandy Metzger and Joanne Keene. They have a direct upper contact with the Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, etc. I have a bio on them. We didn’t bother to ask them to submit a proposal because I am not sure the Board is into taking an approach to the federal government with people who have and do deal with them. There are a lot of connections between these two ladies.”* He handed out a biography on Ms. Metzger and Ms. Keene who formed a business together in February 2006 which is called Metzger Keene, LLC. Vice-Chairman Martin provided additional information regarding Ms. Metzger and Ms. Keene. Mr. Besich also presented a written proposal from

Joel Wright of Wright Consulting Services. He presented a history of Mr. Wright's professional experience and proposed having Mr. Wright conduct a citizen survey in Gila County to gain an understanding of the issues that are important to the public such as water, forest cleanup, college, economic development, etc. Mr. Besich provided the details of how the survey would be conducted. Vice-Chairman Martin also expressed her support to contract with Mr. Wright. The Board entered into a discussion with Mr. Besich to obtain more information on the proposed public survey. Supervisor Dawson expressed her concern at hiring a consultant to conduct a public survey as she is unsure if a survey would bring about the results that are needed for the Board to move forward. Mr. Besich continued to detail the cost and proposed timeline for conducting the survey. In concluding the conversation he said, *"Are you giving me some direction to bring both proposers back to another work session?"* Chairman Sanchez replied that agenda item 3 of the regular meeting allows the Board to take action, if needed, on work session agenda items 3 and 4.

At this time Chairman Sanchez moved to the first regular meeting agenda item. Sheriff John Armer requested the approval of an Intergovernmental Purchase Agreement between the Gila County Sheriff's Office and the State of Arizona Counter-Drug Procurement Program whereby the Sheriff's Office may procure qualifying law enforcement equipment through the Arizona Counter-Drug Procurement Program. Sheriff Armer advised that Joseph M. Arpaio, Maricopa County Sheriff, has been designated by the Governor of the State of Arizona as the State Point of Contact for the United States' State and Local Law Enforcement Equipment Procurement Program (the 1122 Program), which Program permits local law enforcement agencies to purchase through federal procurement channels law enforcement equipment for use in the performance of counter-drug activities. Supervisor Dawson asked Sheriff Armer whether police vehicles could be purchased under this Program. Sheriff Armer affirmed that they could be purchased. Supervisor

Dawson stated that she is agreeable to approving this Agreement; however, she expressed a concern that local vendors would be given consideration. Sheriff Armer acknowledged her concern and stated, *"I don't disagree at all, but you will have an opportunity before any money changes hands."* Upon motion by Supervisor Dawson, seconded by Vice-Chairman Martin, the Board unanimously approved the Intergovernmental Purchase Agreement.

Steve Craig, Sheriff's Office Task Force Commander, requested approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Gila County Sheriff's Office and the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families, Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention, whereby up to \$20,000 will be provided to the Sheriff's Office for the period January 23, 2006, to December 30, 2006, to be used for drug education and prevention. Supervisor Dawson entered into a discussion with Mr. Craig as to the specific use of this money by the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Craig advised that he didn't know the specifics of how the funds will be used; however, he reiterated that the focus will be to provide education on the use of methamphetamines. Supervisor Dawson shared some information she obtained on a program that has been implemented in the state of Montana, which is directed at children ages 12 and up. She stated that \$20,000 will not go far in this effort. Supervisor Dawson also clarified that she is not opposed to accepting this money; however, she will be contacting the Governor's Office to express her concern about the small amount of money being offered and to generate interest in bringing the Montana project to Arizona. Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Dawson, the Board unanimously approved the Intergovernmental Agreement.

Chairman Sanchez addressed regular meeting agenda item 3, which reads: possible Board action pertaining to Work Session agenda item numbers 3 and 4 as stated above. A very lengthy conversation ensued among Board members and Mr. Besich as to the direction that needed to be taken by the Board. In summary, the following was agreed upon:

Upon motion by Supervisor Dawson, seconded by Vice-Chairman Martin, the Board unanimously agreed to offer a match amount up to \$50,000 to the Town of Payson and the non-profit Take Pride Project for the unincorporated community of Pine, Arizona, and to provide \$50,000 to the Town of Diamond Star. (This approval is addressed in 4A of Vice-Chairman Martin's handout, which was previously outlined in these minutes.)

Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Dawson, the Board unanimously approved to instruct staff to pursue items 1 through 3 of Vice-Chairman Martin's handout, as follows:

1. First Strike Response Resources:

- **Help locate/map/develop/provide adequate helicopter-available water throughout Gila County for first strike response.**
 - ✓ **Strengthen existing Buckhead Pit resources: well, tank, holding ponds, and batch plant staging area.**
 - ✓ **Purchase, set-up and make available ± 20,000 gallon water bladder/water pumpkin sites in a "string of pearls" from Strawberry to Young.**

2. Partnering and Preparedness:

- **Beef up wildland severity patrol with the Sheriff's Posse.**
- **Work with the fire districts to adapt apparatus for standardized connections; coordinate resources.**
- **Coordinate as-necessary strategy/informational meetings with all agencies, fire districts, municipalities, etc. through the fire season.**
- **Arrange for appropriate training – gear – communications for County truck drivers, equipment operators, etc. offered to the USFS for resource support**

3. Defensible Urban Space Efforts

- **Organize neighborhood clean-ups.**
- **Provide roll-offs and free dumping for yard slash/weeds/brush.**

Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Supervisor Dawson, the Board unanimously agreed to table action pertaining to work session agenda item 4, which reads:

- **Information/Discussion pertaining to a scientific assessment of public attitudes regarding the commitment of local public funds to major regional issues such as forests, water, community college and economic development.** Within the same motion, the Board voted to table any action on item 4B of Vice-Chairman Martin's handout

Upon motion by Supervisor Dawson, seconded by Vice-Chairman Martin, the Board unanimously approved Consent Agenda items 4A through 4 E.

Upon motion by Vice-Chairman Martin, seconded by Chairman Sanchez, the Board approved Consent Agenda item 4F. Supervisor Dawson voted against the approval of this item.

Consent Agenda items are as follows:

- A. Approval to adopt Resolution No. 06-03-02 naming a road in Tonto Basin to be called Chalk Canyon Drive. **(A copy of the Resolution is permanently on file in the Board of Supervisors' Office.)**
- B. Approval to reappoint the following members to the Public Safety Personnel Retirement System local governing board: James Eskew to serve a term of office until December 31, 2008, and Jose Sanchez to serve a term of office until December 31, 2009.
- C. Approval to appoint Peter Kettner to the Gila County Personnel Commission to serve a term of office until December 31, 2007. This appointment fills the vacancy created by David Christensen.
- D. Approval of the March 7, 2006, BOS meeting minutes.
- E. Approval of personnel reports/actions for the week of March 13, 2006, as follows:

Departure from County Service:

1. Field Trainer – Superior Court – 02-27-06 – Cost of Prosecution/Field Trainer Funds – Judy Waggoner – Hire 01-21-97 – Resigned for other employment

Hire to County Service:

2. Attorney – County Attorney – 03-06-06 – General Fund
Jillian Bachman – replaces Abe Muallem
3. Court Reporter – Superior Court – 03-06-06 – General Fund
Glinda Fabok – replaces Barbara Shepherd

Position Review:

4. Correct hire date – Sanitarian II – Health – 03-20-06 – Health Services Fund
Shane Stuler
5. Anniversary Date Increase – 03-06-06 – Lara McGee, Debbie Stevens, Beverly Puhara
6. Anniversary Date Increase – 03-20-06 – Marian Sheppard, Deborah Whisler, Ron Watts, Mistey Gray, Terri Powell, Robert Cotton, Austin Jones, Glen Farnham, Wesley Wilson

Request Permission to Post:

7. Deputy Constable – Payson Constable – New part time position

SHERIFF'S PERSONNEL ACTION ITEMS

Departure from County Service:

8. Dispatcher II – Payson S.O. – 03-11-06 – General Fund
Susan Hornung – Hire 03-14-05 – Resigned for personal reasons
9. Dispatcher II – Payson S.O. – 03-01-06 – General Fund
Kristie Martin – Hire 02-20-06 – Failure to complete probationary period

Hire to County Service:

10. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-06-06 – General Fund
Sherry Damiano – replaces Lee Alexander
11. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-06-06 – General Fund

- Brandi Kriley – replaces Christine Duarte
12. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-06-06 – General Fund
Patricia Salcido – replaces Eric Kenney
 13. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-06-06 – General Fund
Kevin Cassadore – newly assigned position
 14. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-20-06 – General Fund
Cindy Salas – replaces Martin Spitler
 15. Detention Officer – Globe S.O. – 03-20-06 – General Fund
Juliana Craig – New position
 16. Clerk/Secretary – part time – Globe S.O. – 03-20-06 – General Fund
Gwen Potthoff – New position – 19 hours per week

Temporary Hire to County Service:

17. Dispatcher (on call) – Payson S.O. – 03-12-06 – General Fund
Susan Hornung – replaces Patrice Havey

F. Approval of finance reports/demands/transfers for the week of March 13, 2006, as follows: \$336,857.44 was disbursed for County expenses by voucher numbers X149952 through X150058 and X381325 through X381580.

At this time each Board member and the Chief Administrator presented a brief summary of current events as allowed by A.R.S. §38-431.02(K). No action was taken on any items that were presented.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors,
Chairman Sanchez adjourned the meeting at 4:24 p.m.

José M. Sanchez, Chairman

ATTEST:

Steven L. Besich, County Manager/Clerk