

APPROVED MINUTES OF
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
9:00 AM, THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026
TEAMS ONLINE MEETING

OFFICERS PRESENT: Derek Rapier, Vice-Chair, Greenlee County
Jesus Valdez, Secretary, Santa Cruz County
Heath Brown, Treasurer, Thatcher

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vernon Batty, Pima
Eric Bejerano, Safford
Cindy Blackmore, Clifton
Terry Hinton, Duncan
Robert Kirschman, Willcox
Christine McLachlan, Cochise County
Steve Pauken, Nogales
Jeff Pregler, Sierra Vista
Ron Robinson, Patagonia
Ana Urquijo, Douglas
Greg Volker, Benson
Dustin Welker, Graham County

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Vertrees, Executive Director/Transport Prog Manager
John Merideth, IT Manager
Dina Curtiss, Finance Manager
Will Osborne, CDBG Manager
Carrie Vaughn, AAA Deputy Program Director
Angelica Novoa, Technical Services/ Training Coordinator
Maria Valles, Community Coordinator
Heather Glenn, Administrative Assistant

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INTRODUCTIONS

A quorum was confirmed, Secretary Jesus Valdez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and requested Heather Glenn to call roll.

II. MEMBER ENTITIES' DISCUSSION

Eric Bejarano stated that Safford is finalizing city manager interviews tomorrow and expects a council decision after Monday's executive session. **Christine McLachlan**, advised Cochise County is updating its building codes with planned adoption in mid-July; the County will host a public meeting on its first affordable housing plan on June 11 at 5:30 PM; and that

the County has contracted BEC Environmental Inc. to administer a brownfield revolving loan fund; the contract is active May 19 and site nomination forms are available. **Steve Pauken** reported he is interim Nogales city manager through mid-June; Nogales is operating with multiple interim or vacant department head positions and experienced a delayed budget process that is now being rolled out to the mayor and council. **Jeff Pregler** advised Sierra Vista's general plan update is anticipated for ballot placement in November—and noted recent completion of several multi-use paths and pending grant applications for further path projects. **Derek Rapier** reported Greenlee County is in process of rewriting its planning and zoning ordinance with outside consultants provided updates on park and pavement projects. **Ana Urquijo** provided extensive Douglas updates: the two-port utility corridor with \$19M raised and a \$30M funding gap, ADOT/RAISE grant activity for \$23.5M in commercial road work and safety improvements, Chino Road realignment tied to Highway 191, annexation efforts to the west, new commercial developments under construction, and a schedule of community events for Douglas's 125th anniversary that she will circulate. **Jesus Valdez** reported that Santa Cruz County is working on its budget and will start public outreach next week for a comprehensive plan and that a spring chip seal program is underway for road maintenance. **Greg Volker** shared that Benson adopted the 2024 building code and is actively recruiting a city planner. **Dustin Welker** reported that Graham County received CDBG support and opened bids for an 18,000 sq ft ADA sidewalk and parking project at the fairgrounds. **Vernon Batty** advised Pima is pursuing multiple funding sources, including SBRC and a \$1M allocation from Juan Ciscomani's office, for a school road and stoplight project. **Cindy Blackmore** reported that budget season is underway, that a CDBG senior center upgrade and a bridge project are progressing toward bidding after easement resolution, the town replaced extremely outdated servers and procured new phones and professional IT support, refurbished the splash pad for Memorial Day weekend, and plans to begin a planning and zoning rewrite in July after budget season. **Robert Kirschmann** said Wilcox is advancing affordable housing on city-owned land and is using a brownfield grant to evaluate a capped landfill for potential parking expansion.

III. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No one from the public was present.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of February 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Cindy Blackmore

SECOND: Derek Rapier

ACTION: Unanimous

2. Election of Officers

Chris Vertrees provided an overview about the election, stating that all current officers are willing to continue in their current positions, with the exception of Chair because Steve Pauken retired. He then reviewed the two options for the election. Steve Pauken stated he supports Greg Volker as Chair, as recommended in Option One.

Steve Pauken recommended approval of Option One with the following slate of nominees:

Chair	Greg Volker, Benson, representing Cochise County
Vice Chair	Derek Rapier, Greenlee County, representing Greenlee County
Secretary	Jesus Valdez, Santa Cruz County, representing Santa Cruz County
Treasurer	Heath Brown, Thatcher, representing Graham County

MOTION: **Steve Pauken**

SECOND: **Robert Kirschmann**

ACTION: **Unanimous**

3. SEAGO Member Assessments

Chris Vertrees presented required dues adjustments following the mid-decade 2025 population estimates and explained the resulting changes to the member assessment schedule, noting Graham County experienced the largest increase while most changes were limited. He also explained how RTAC assessment changes affect member agency obligations and how SEGO will subsidize a portion through transportation planning funds.

Derek Rapier recommended approval of the Fiscal Year 2027 Assessment Schedule to the SEAGO Executive Board.

MOTION: **Derek Rapier**

SECOND: **Ana Urquijo**

ACTION: **Unanimous**

4. FY27 Sustainability of Fund Balance

Chris Vertrees provided background on the SEAGO budget reserves showing a year-end balance slightly over \$2.4 million, operating expenditures from the prior year of a little over \$2.5 million, and a potential usable fund balance around \$1.144 million. He noted they did not expect to use reserves this year and highlighted pending grant awards that could change the budget.

5. FY27 SEAGO Budget

Dina Curtiss provided information on reserves showing a year-end balance slightly over \$2.4 million, operating expenditures from the prior year of a little over \$2.5 million, and a potential usable fund balance around \$1.144 million; staff noted they did not expect to use reserves this year and highlighted pending grant awards that could change the budget.

Steve Pauken recommended approval of the Fiscal Year 2027 SEAGO Budget to the SEAGO Executive Board.

MOTION: Steve Pauken

SECOND: Ana Urquijo

ACTION: Unanimous

6. Classification Plan Update

Chris Vertrees recommended consolidating the standalone economic development program into a combined Community and Economic Development Program Manager role to improve efficiency, reduce duplication, strengthen grant competitiveness, and better align project timing. This requires eliminating the current economic development program manager position, adjusting salary grade, and is expected to yield salary and benefit savings.

Ana Urquijo moved to recommend approval of the proposed classification plan update to the Executive Board.

MOTION: Ana Urquijo

SECOND: Derek Rapier

ACTION: Unanimous

7. Approval of IGA with Santa Cruz County

Chris Vertrees described the regional pavement assessment contract with Vaisala and explained Santa Cruz County's request to collect additional local miles under the existing contract; the proposed IGA covers 400 miles for \$9,200 for 12 months, shifts only driving cost to the county, adds no extra cost to SEGO under the vendor contract, and has been reviewed by both attorneys.

Cindy Blackmore made a motion to recommend approval of the intergovernmental agreement between SEAGO and Santa Cruz County to the Executive Board.

MOTION: Cindy Blackmore

SECOND: Steve Pauken

ACTION: Unanimous

8. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the proposed representatives for appointment to fill Advisory Council on Aging vacancies

Carrie Vaughn reported two interested nominees, Betty “Ann” Peschka from Nogales and Jorge Maldonado, Santa Cruz County Unincorporated, for Advisory Council on Aging vacancies and the committee voted to recommend their appointments.

Steve Pauken moved to approve Betty “Ann” Peschka for appointment to the vacant City of Nogales seat and Jorge Maldonado for appointment as the Santa Cruz County Unincorporated representative on the Advisory Council on Aging, and to forward these recommendations to the SEAGO Executive Board.

MOTION: Steve Pauken

SECOND: Derek Rapier

ACTION: Unanimous

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Future Meeting Dates

Chris Vertrees announced the next meeting is scheduled for August 6, 2026.

B. Quarterly Finance Report

Dina Curtiss gave an update on the quarterly finance report and answered questions.

C. IT Updates

John Merideth provided an update on IT and answered questions.

D. AAA Area Plan on Aging

E. AAA Program Updates

Carrie Vaughn gave an update on AAA programs and legislation and answered questions.

F. CDBG Updates

William Osborne gave an update on community development block grant projects answered questions.

G. Community Development Report

William Osborne gave an update on community development and answered questions.

H. SEAGO Economic Development District Report

Chris Vertrees gave an update on economic development and answered questions.

J. Transportation Program Updates

Chris Vertrees gave an update on Transportation and answered questions.

VII. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS / CURRENT EVENTS

Chris Vertrees reminded members to let him know if they had any items for the agenda for the upcoming meeting.

VIII.FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chris Vertrees announced that the next Administrative Council meeting would be held Thursday, August 6, 2026 via TEAMS.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Volker adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m.