

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 5, 2018

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Deborah Dean, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez and Councilor Toby Jaramillo. Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Nick Fleming were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 5, 2018 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Councilor Jaramillo made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. October 15, 2018

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamation – World Diabetes Day/ National Diabetes Awareness Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation declaring November 14, 2018 as World Diabetes Day and November 2018 as National Diabetes Awareness Month in the City of Socorro. Mayor Bhasker, who is also a medical doctor, added his thoughts on the high costs of medicines, such as insulin, and how they have become unaffordable for the people who need them.

Councilor Olguin arrived at the meeting.

b. Proclamation – Americas Conference of Universities in STEM Education Day

Mayor Bhasker postponed reading the proclamation until Van Romero, Vice-President of Research and Economic Development at NM Tech, arrived at the meeting (Mr. Romero was coming in from out of town).

PUBLIC FORUM

Scott Turner, Editor-in-Chief of the local newspaper, stated that he would be leaving the El Defensor Chieftain to work for the Albuquerque Journal. Mr. Turner thanked City staff for supporting him and always being available to answer questions. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Turner for doing a great job and for running a quality newspaper. Mr. Turner introduced Wanda Moeller as the new Editor-in-Chief of the El Defensor Chieftain. Ms. Moeller stated that she was very excited to be in her new position and is looking forward to working with the City.

Mr. Turner also introduced the new Executive Director of the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association, Kirsten Kellar. Ms. Kellar stated that she has been the new director for just under a month and has been focused on writing grants including a rural health development program grant. Ms. Kellar stated that the Best in the West Film Festival will be held next week.

Bill Stone, the NM Tech Liaison, stated that the incoming freshman class and retention rates are increasing but overall enrollment is down due to record-setting graduates in the previous three years. Mr. Stone stated that the election is November 6th and he hopes the higher education bond does well. Mr. Stone stated that both candidates for governor have named higher education as one of their issues.

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
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November 5, 2018

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY

a. Ordinance No. 18-11-05 – Animal Control Ordinance Update

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 18-11-05. Mayor Bhasker stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to update the existing City's Animal Control Ordinance. Donald Monette, City Administrator, thanked the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, Kenneth Greenwood from the Police Department and Lupe Tarango and Marcia Amaro from the Animal Shelter for helping to update the ordinance which has been a 2-year long process. Mr. Monette stated that the City's attorney has read and approved the final draft of the ordinance.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance is on the agenda for approval for publication only.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 18-11-05 for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING & CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Ordinance No. 18-10-01a – Uniform Traffic Ordinance Update

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 18-10-01a which, if approved, adopts the 2018 amendments to the State of New Mexico Uniform Traffic Ordinance.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

There were no comments from the public.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 18-10-01a. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jaramillo. A roll call vote was taken, motion passed unanimously.

b. Ordinance No. 18-10-01b – Updating Penalty Assessments

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 18-10-01b which, if approved, adopts the updated fines associated with the State Penalty Assessment statute.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

There were no comments from the public.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 18-10-01b. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jaramillo. A roll call vote was taken, motion passed unanimously.

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 5, 2018

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 18-11-05a – Fire Department Salaries

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 18-11-05a, which, if approved, increases the base salaries of certified City of Socorro Fire Department firefighters and EMT's. Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that this is an attempt to improve the benefit package for firefighters/EMT's as the City keeps losing staff to area departments that have higher salaries. Chief Gonzales stated that the funds for the changes are already in the budget as the administrative assistant recently resigned and his duties will be absorbed by the current staff.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Resolution No. 18-11-05a. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution No. 18-11-05b – Loan Agreement for the Purchase of a Wheel-Tractor Scraper

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 18-11-05b which, if approved, authorizes a loan agreement between the City of Socorro and the New Mexico Finance Authority in the amount of \$327,244 for the purchase of a wheel tractor scraper with an extended warranty. Michael Lucero, Landfill Superintendent, stated that the lease on the scraper is almost up and since the scraper is in good mechanical shape and has low hours, it is better to keep the current scraper. Mr. Lucero stated that the purchase of the current scraper at \$289,000 is more cost effective than the purchase of a new \$1 million scraper.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Resolution No. 18-11-05b. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Local Election Act - Discussion

Mayor Bhasker explained that House Bill 98 became effective July 1, 2018 which repeals the municipal election code and allows municipalities to opt into, or out of, the Local Election Act. Mayor Bhasker stated that by opting in, municipal elections would be conducted by the County Clerk in November of odd numbered years and the ballot may include other elections including school board and special districts. Ms. Saavedra stated the City would have to pay an assessment to the Secretary of State should the City opt in. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City can opt out of the Local Election Act and the traditional municipal election dates will remain the same (March of even numbered years). Mayor Bhasker stated that at the next City Council meeting, he will provide more detailed information so that the City Council can decide whether to opt in or out of the Local Election Act.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Olguin congratulated the Socorro Warrior football team for recently winning the district championship. Councilor Olguin stated that this season has also been very successful for soccer and cross country. Councilor Olguin, who is the girls head soccer coach, thanked the City for being supportive of student sports.

Councilor Jaramillo stated that the annual turkey bingo event (November 16th) will once again be a collection site for food for his annual food drive. Councilor Jaramillo stated that this is the 49th year of the food drive and invited everyone to participate.

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 5, 2018

Councilor Salome stated that the Senior Board would like to thank the City for allowing the use of the Teen Center to conduct bingo nights which will start in December.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that from November 7-12, there will be construction on the Finley Gym floor and gym users can still use the facility but not the gym floor. Ms. Rivera stated that the Halloween carnival and haunted house were well attended.

Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that as part of the ongoing reconstruction project in that area, Texas Street will be paved on November 8th and 9th.

Mayor Bhasker stated that at the next City Council meeting, he would like Chief Gonzales and Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, to discuss fireplace maintenance and carbon monoxide dangers.

Jim Dewey Brown, Tourism Director & Events Manager, stated that upcoming events include mounted shooting competitions and barrel racing.

a. Reporting on Personnel Changes

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve the personnel changes as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Michael Perrault - 11-5-18 – Police - New Hire*(Police Officer) - A-35

Luis Carlos Lara - 11-5-18 – Police - New Hire*(Police Officer) - A-35

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

Councilor Chavez-Lopez motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Haddock & McFadden dba Socorro Springs Restaurant - C-2 - 1012 N. California Street - Kacey & Pamela McFadden - Full-Service Restaurant

Brothers Construction - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Adam Giron - Roofing Construction

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Van Romero arrived and Mayor Bhasker read the proclamation:

b. Proclamation – Americas Conference of Universities in STEM Education Day

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation declaring November 14, 2018 as Americas Conference of Universities in STEM Education Day in the City of Socorro.

Dr. Romero stated that NM Tech is starting a Latin America initiative to increase economic development and recruit students to study areas such as mining and petroleum recovery. Dr.

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
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November 5, 2018

Romero stated that the conference mentioned in the proclamation will include members from eight universities in Mexico as well as elected officials from Mexico. Dr. Romero stated that NM Tech will explain how NM Tech addresses STEM education and learn how the other universities address STEM education.

c. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be held on Monday, November 19, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:48 p.m., Councilor Chavez-Lopez motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk