

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
January 22, 2019

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 Deborah Dean, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Anton Salome and Councilor Michael Olguin. Councilor Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez and Councilor Gordy Hicks were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 22, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to move Item 7 (Public Hearing & Consideration of Approval – Ordinance No. 18-12-17) to the end of the meeting as the matter requires five votes and there were only four Councilors present. Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. January 7, 2019

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamation – NM Tech for Holm Bursum III

Dr. Stephen Wells, President of NM Tech, read a proclamation which supports the City's declaration of January 2019 as Holm Olaf Bursum III Month in the City of Socorro. Mr. Bursum recently passed away and the proclamation recognizes his many contributions to NM Tech. Mr. Bursum's son, Holm Olaf Bursum IV (Cuatro), accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Bursum family.

Councilor Romero arrived at the meeting.

b. Recognition of Retirement – Matilde Acosta and Benjamin Marshall

Mayor Bhasker congratulated City employees Matilde Acosta (Parks) and Jody Marshall (Sanitation) on their retirement. Mayor Bhasker thanked the employees for their many years of hard work and dedication to the job. Mayor Bhasker stated that the employees could not be at the meeting but will receive a retirement plaque.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING & CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Ordinance No. 18-12-17 – Utility Rate Changes

With Councilor Romero's arrival at the meeting, Mayor Bhasker moved forward with this item in its original place on the agenda.

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 18-12-17. Mayor Bhasker stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to change the base rate charges and the basis for charges for gas, wastewater and commercial sanitation. Mayor Bhasker stated that the increase is needed to fund the replacement of

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natural gas lines, purchase of commercial dumpsters and the extension of sewer lines to the areas of the City that do not currently have sewer services.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

There were no comments from the public.

Councilor Romero made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 18-12-17. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. A roll call vote was taken, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Eagle Picher Superfund Site – Cheri Lerew

Cheri Lerew stated that she is a Socorro resident and currently lives in the “red zone” of the Eagle Picher Superfund site (just north of the City of Socorro). Ms. Lerew stated that contamination of the site happened over 30 years ago and is expanding south. Ms. Lerew stated that there is not enough awareness regarding the contamination. Ms. Lerew stated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not informed people who live in the area about the contamination. Ms. Lerew stated that she has vapors coming out of the ground at her home, the soil is contaminated, she cannot get a home equity loan, she cannot sell her home and her neighborhood is in decline. Ms. Lerew stated that neither the EPA or the NM Environment Department (NMED) have done anything in regards to cleanup but rather state that they are looking for funding for the cleanup. Ms. Lerew provided a handout showing the timeline of the site from 1964 to present date. Ms. Lerew stated that her reason for attending the meeting is to increase awareness about the site in order to get the cleanup started. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration would be happy to provide a letter of concern/support and provide it to the appropriate legislative parties. Mayor Bhasker thanked Ms. Lerew for attending the meeting.

b. Project Acceptance & Funding Program(s) Closeout – Texas Area Street & Drainage Improvements

Steve Williams, from Dennis Engineering, explained that the Texas Area Street & Drainage Improvements Project has been completed. Mr. Williams stated that Dennis Engineering is recommending that the City Council accept the project as complete and issue the final payment to Albuquerque Asphalt Inc.

Councilor Romero made a motion to accept the Texas Area Street & Drainage Improvements Project as complete and issue the final payment to Albuquerque Asphalt Inc. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 19-01-22a – Extension Request for MAP Project

Mr. Williams explained that if approved, Resolution No. 19-01-22a will allow the City Administration to request an extension for the NMDOT Map Project (Fairgrounds Road).

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-01-22a. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

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d. Resolution No. 19-01-22b – Transfer of Land for Housing Development

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-01-22b which, if approved, allows the City Administration to transfer approximately 5 acres of land in the City's Industrial Park to Socorro Vista LLLP for the purpose of developing a 32-unit affordable housing project. Donald Monette, City Administrator, provided a copy of the plat and stated that the plat and legal description were not received until after the packets had already gone out.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-01-22b. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution No. 19-01-22c – Loan Resolution for Wastewater Infrastructure (Treatment Plant)

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, presented Resolution No. 19-01-22c which, if approved, allows the City Administration to submit a loan application to the Rural Community Assistance Corporation for the purpose of engineering and design services for improvements to the infrastructure at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-01-22c. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

f. Resolution No. 19-01-22d – Loan Resolution for Wastewater Collection System

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 19-01-22d which, if approved, allows the City Administration to submit a loan application to the Rural Community Assistance Corporation for the purpose of improvements to the wastewater collection system.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-01-22d. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

g. Budget Resolutions

1. No. 6 – Airport Construction Fund

Resources are FAA Grant, NM Aviation Grant & Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Engineering & Construction – Amount is \$182,340.00 – The increase is needed to allow for the grant award.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Budget Resolution No. 6. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

2. No. 7 – General Fund – Fire Department

Resources are Miscellaneous Income – Requirements are Capital Outlay – Amount is \$92,100.00 – The increase is needed to allow for funds received for FY 18 and to allow for expenditures.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Budget Resolution No. 7. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Bhasker thanked the Utility Committee for the work they did on the ordinance for the utility rate increases.

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Mayor Bhasker stated that the Budget Committee will begin to meet in March.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's gross receipts revenues were received a week late and that it has been two months now that the funds have been received late. Mayor Bhasker stated that he believes the payments to municipalities are due by the 15th of each month and by keeping the funds for an extra week, the State is accruing interest on the funds that should have been sent to the municipalities.

Councilor Salome stated that Senior Center Bingo will be held on February 8th at the Teen Center.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Jay Santillanes, Transportation Director, stated that operations are normal in the Transportation, Airport and Auto Maintenance departments. Mr. Santillanes stated that there is one natural gas van that needs repairs. Mr. Santillanes stated that a new, gas engine van will be received after June. Mr. Santillanes stated that installation of the electrical vault at the airport will begin March 1st and should be complete within 30-45 days.

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, stated that the WIFI connection at the library is still turned off pending the installation of a firewall. Ms. Lyons stated that the Winter Reading Program ends January 31st. Ms. Lyons stated that the library will host Libraries as Launchpads which helps entrepreneurs in the community by giving them the support they need to open a new business. Ms. Lyons stated that Tax Help NM will be at the library from February 10th to April 10th to assist residents with their tax returns. Ms. Lyons stated that the library has started the Artists of the Month Club in the kid's room to promote art.

Ms. Saavedra stated that the recently passed Local Election Act has been sent to the Secretary of State's Office as required. Ms. Saavedra stated that the payroll office is busy with calendar year end tasks including the processing of W-2 forms. Mayor Bhasker asked when the discussions regarding employee medical insurance would start. Ms. Saavedra stated that a meeting should be set up soon to go over end of the year claims and what to expect for the new year.

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that general admission at Finley Gym has increased. Ms. Rivera stated that flag football will start soon. Ms. Rivera stated that the department will be distributing flyers in order to recruit youth to the after school and summer programs.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, stated that there has been some fraud using checks that were taken from the City's drop box in front of City Hall. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration is in the process of looking into different types of drop boxes to prevent this issue from happening again. Ms. Lopez stated that the Finance Department has several employees cross training. Ms. Lopez stated that she cleaned up the City Hall storage area.

Demecio Silva, Street Department Director, stated that crews have been busy fixing potholes throughout the City. Mr. Silva stated that crews have also started cleanup at the flood control. Mr. Silva stated that there were recently three local bridge inspections completed by the NM Department of Transportation.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill and Recycling Superintendent, stated that operations are normal in the Sanitation, Recycling and Landfill departments. Mr. Lucero stated that cardboard continues to be picked up from local businesses. Mr. Lucero stated that the snow caused a "mess" at the landfill but that those areas have been cleaned up.

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Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that during the recent cold weather, gas pressures were sufficient and stayed steady. Mr. Angel stated that crews have done several new gas connections. Mr. Angel stated that crews will be relocating a gas line on State Road 1 during the NMDOT's project just south of Socorro.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that he recently noticed several street lights out, so he drove through most of the City and made an inventory of the nonworking lights. Mr. Pineda stated that the Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC) has fixed most of the lights. Mr. Pineda stated that all the grant reimbursements are up to date.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the protest regarding the proposed rate increase by the SEC is moving forward and is now in discovery. Mayor Bhasker stated that the RFP's provided by power suppliers will be reviewed and the project will be awarded soon. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is not committing any funds up front and that alternative energy will be included.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that operations/equipment is normal at the Fire Department. Chief Gonzales stated that the department received a grant for the purchase of new bunker gear, handheld radios and pagers. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Division Director, stated that the Parks Department has been busy with Christmas decoration cleanup, pruning shrubs City-wide and cutting winter weeds. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department has been working on water turnoffs, reading water meters, running water lines at the rodeo complex and demolishing the old basins at the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Martinez stated that the Industrial Well went down so the Production Department has been busy with getting the booster pump running and dealing with sewer problems on Franklin Street and Chaparral Road. Mr. Martinez stated that crews at the wastewater treatment plant are busy with routine maintenance, replacing belts and lab reporting and testing.

Kristy Padilla, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that there was no P & Z meeting in January but that there will be one in February to review a home occupation permit.

Jim Dewey Brown, Tourism Director & Events Manager, stated that Cross T Construction, a local welder, is doing construction on the announcer's stand, an RV check station and the livestock alley. Mr. Brown stated that the Tourism Department will be rolling out a new advertising campaign promoting outdoor adventures in and around Socorro.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from December 2018 and for calendar year 2018. Chief Winders stated that the department recently closed a missing persons case. Chief Winders stated that he is working on a grant for police cars (50/50 match).

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch & Animal Control Director, stated that the mapping computer is not working and apologized for not being able to provide stats. Mr. Tarango stated that animal shelter staff has been working to ensure that Socorro residents are familiar with the new animal control ordinance. Mr. Tarango stated that the department has completed 15 transports in the last 30 days but there are still a large number of animals coming in. Mr. Tarango stated that there are currently issues with two of the dispatch radios and one of the consoles. Mr. Tarango stated that he has spoken with the director of McKinley County Dispatch who may be able to donate some of the pieces our dispatch needs.

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NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

Jeremiah Gonzales - 1-22-19 – Parks - New Hire*(Parks Crewman) - A-17

Kathy Spring - 3-1-19 – Library - New Hire*(Youth Services Librarian) - A-30

Justin Lopez - 1-2-19 – Street - Completed Probation - A-20 to A-22

Brannun Armstrong - 1-1-19 – Fire - Certification (EMT-B) - A-27 to A-29

Stephen Jojola - 1-1-19 – Fire - Certification (FF-I & FF-II) - A-27 to A-32

Temporary New Hires: None.

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Eva Chavez, Dustin Armijo, Alexis Montoya, Taylor Saavedra, Jeremiah Gonzales, Zach Anaya, Enrique Robles, Rena Benavidez, Veronica Boyd, Dwight Dow, Joe Lopez
Student Workers: Lucas Madril, Erica Baca, Darrian Greenwood, Ashlyn Aguilar
Referees (2)

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

R.C. Motive - C-2 - 1203 Frontage Road - Richard Murillo - Automotive Repair

Roots Counseling Center LLC - C-2 - 413 California Street - Sherilyn Oberlin - Mental Health Counseling

Anywhere Dental Care LLC - C-1 - 210 Neel - Rhodie Jones - Dentistry

Ambercare Hospice Inc. - C-1 - 832 Highway 60 – Corporation - Hospice Agency

STOVEN Construction Inc. - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM – Corporation - General Construction

Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 146734 to 146971 in the amount of \$719,797.17 plus Payroll Transfers (\$199,309.65), for a total of \$919,106.82. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 4, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:05 p.m., Councilor Romero motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk