

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 18, 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 Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Anton Salome and Councilor Michael Olguin. Councilor Toby Jaramillo and Councilor Gordy Hicks were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 18, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. March 4, 2019

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

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY

a. Ordinance No. 19-03-18 – Hemp Farming

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 19-03-18. Mayor Bhasker stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to license and regulate hemp growth and prohibit the use of non-feminized hemp seeds and plant. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration met with hemp farmers who would like the assurance of this ordinance in order to have a safe haven to grow hemp.

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

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 19-03-18 for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Joint Resolution No. 2019-01 – 2020 United States Census – Socorro County, Village of Magdalena & City of Socorro

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 2019-01 which, if approved, will create, along with Socorro County and the Village of Magdalena, a countywide Census 2020 Complete Count Committee to plan and conduct local educational initiatives and publicity/promotional activities to increase community awareness and participation in Census 2020.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2019-01. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution No. 19-03-18a – Replacement of Water Meters

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-03-18a which, if approved, will approve \$40,000 in funding for the purpose of replacing 557 residential and commercial water meters. Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Director, stated that the Water Department has applied for a grant to fund this project.

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Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-03-18a. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 19-03-18b – Establish Account for Wastewater Collection System Improvements

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-03-18b which, if approved, will establish a new bank account to receive funds for the wastewater collection system improvements project.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-03-18b. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 19-03-18c – Establish Account for Water Reclamation Facility Improvements

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-03-18c which, if approved, will establish a new bank account to receive funds for the water reclamation facility improvements project.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-03-18c. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Fleming stated that the Budget Committee will start meeting this month.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration is considering a change in City Hall's software.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that all equipment and vehicles are up and running. Chief Gonzales stated that funds from a fire grant were used to purchase new bunker gear, radios and pagers. Chief Gonzales stated that the Fire Department will be losing four employees and that he is reviewing applications for those positions.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from February 2019. Chief Winders stated that the department is currently down five employees. Chief Winders stated that the increase to the Law Enforcement Protection Fund did not get approved at the Legislative Session.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill and Recycling Superintendent, stated that operations are normal in the Sanitation, Recycling and Landfill departments. Mr. Lucero stated crews continue to collect cardboard, bale tires and grind tree limbs.

Demecio Silva, Street Director, stated that the South California Street and Western Hills projects are ongoing. Mr. Silva stated that the department has some equipment down and that Socorro County and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District have assisted the City until the equipment can be repaired. Mr. Silva stated that the department continues to work on pothole repairs.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Director, stated that the Parks Department has been aerating/fertilizing the Plaza, working on the baseball fields and repairing the track at Sedillo Park. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department removed and stored rock from the old tanks, is helping the Street Department on Western Hills and will demo the two old tanks at the WWTP. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department

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completed the annual sanitary survey. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department will be rehabbing the 2nd Street lift Station and visiting businesses to review the requirements of the grease trap ordinance. Mr. Martinez stated that crews at the WWTP finished the drain in the belt press room and continue to do lab testing and EPA reporting.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the last planning and zoning meeting was postponed as the computer system is down at the County Assessor's Office and the City was unable to retrieve data needed for the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Romero stated that he recently attended an equestrian event at the rodeo arena. Councilor Romero stated that it was an impressive event which was well-attended.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Lodger's Tax Committee Appointments

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to appoint Rebecca Moeller, Diedre Vinson and Stephanie O'Toole to the Lodger's Tax Committee.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Mayor Bhasker's appointment of Rebecca Moeller, Diedre Vinson and Stephanie O'Toole to the Lodger's Tax Committee. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that at the next City Council meeting, the Administration will announce the company that will help finance municipal electricity services. Mayor Bhasker stated that there will be several options and the City Council will need to decide how to move forward. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would utilize professional advisors while developing the new system.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would like to hold a public hearing regarding the proposed rate increases by the Socorro Electric Cooperative. Mayor Bhasker stated that the PRC is concerned about the increase of residential rates. Mayor Bhasker stated that the PRC will hear written protests but protestors should be aware that they could be cross-examined by the SEC's attorney.

b. Personnel Changes

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

Amanda Torres – 3-8-19 – Animal Shelter – Resignation

Jorge Sedillo – 3-18-19 – Landfill – Completed Probation – A-21 to A-23

Temporary New Hires: None.

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Eva Chavez, Dustin Armijo, Alexis Montoya, Taylor Saavedra, Zach Anaya, Enrique Robles, Rena Benavidez, Veronica Boyd, Dwight Dow, Joe Lopez

Student Workers: Lucas Madril, Darrian Greenwood, Ashlyn Aguilar

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Referees (2)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Socorro Community Radio – Out of Town – Dubuque, IA – Steve Edmonson – Radio Station

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve vouchers 147218 to 147448 in the amount of \$629,794.02 plus Payroll Transfers (\$291,311.69), for a total of \$921,105.71. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, April 1, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:43 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