

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
June 17, 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 Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Deborah Dean, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Anton Salome and Councilor Peter Romero (telephonically). Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Nick Fleming and Councilor Toby Jaramillo were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 17, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. May 20, 2019 - Amended

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

a. June 3, 2019

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

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamation – Immigrant Heritage Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation recognizing immigrants and the important role they play in communities across the United States. In the proclamation, Mayor Bhasker proclaimed June 2019 as Immigrant Heritage Month in Socorro.

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Recognition of Walmart Grant

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that the City received a grant from Walmart in the amount of \$30,000 to be used to encourage health and fitness for families in Socorro. Gwen Valentino, grant writer for the South Central Council of Governments, stated that this was one of only 10 grants that were awarded in New Mexico, Alabama and Louisiana and the City can apply for the grant again next year. Greta Aragon, Socorro Walmart Manager, stated that Walmart awards numerous grants to communities and she encouraged local businesses/programs to apply for these grants. Ms. Rivera stated that Socorro Walmart is very generous to the Recreation Department and donates supplies for all of the holiday events. Mayor Bhasker stated that a certificate of appreciation will be given to Socorro Walmart.

b. Senior Center – Linda Murillo

Linda Murillo, Senior Center Director, stated that everything is going well at the Senior Center and the number of participants has increased. Ms. Murillo stated that the Senior Center is trying to be more self-sufficient which is why the once a month bingo event was created. Ms. Murillo stated that she will be seeking capital outlay monies for the construction of a new building. Ms. Murillo stated that she will write the grant and she hopes next year, she will be able to move forward with planning and design. Ms. Murillo stated that she is seeking permission from the City to construct the new building on the land where the existing Senior Center is located. Ms. Murillo stated that

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she would like to construct a multicultural center which would include the Senior Center. Ms. Murillo stated that she would like the center to also include child and adult day care. Mayor Bhasker stated that he does not feel there will be any issues with using the land where the existing Senior Center is located. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would need clarification as to where the funding would come from as the City also has facilities listed on the City's ICIP that need to be maintained and he wouldn't want the projects competing for funds. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will do a letter of support regarding using the land where the existing Senior Center is located. Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that the City will approve their ICIP in August. Mr. Monette stated that the State prefers the projects on the ICIP be "shovel ready" and suggested that the project be added to the ICIP next year rather than this year since it is still in the beginning stages. Ms. Murillo stated that she will keep the Mayor and the City Council updated on the project. Mayor Bhasker thanked Ms. Murillo for the information.

Tom Aldrich, stated that there is a State Police office located next to Eagle Picher which is a designated superfund site. Mr. Aldrich stated that he feels the office should be relocated, possibly up the hill that is near the office, in order to remove it from the site. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Aldrich for the suggestion and stated that the City would look into the matter.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 19-06-17 – NMDOT Cooperative MAP Agreement

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented Resolution No. 19-06-17 which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative MAP Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, pavement rehabilitation, construction management, drainage and miscellaneous improvements to Fairgrounds Road beginning at State Road 1 to Rodeo Road. Mr. Monette stated that the total project cost is \$293,256 with the NMDOT funding 75% and the City funding 25%. Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that there is approximately 2,000 feet of road left to finish the project. Mr. Silva stated that approximately \$939,000 is needed to complete the project to the top of the hill.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-06-17. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

b. City of Socorro Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP) – Public Input

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

Mr. Monette stated that the City is currently working on its ICIP and asked anyone who would like a project added to the ICIP to present their information to the City for consideration. Mr. Monette asked the Mayor and City Council to consider which projects they would like to see as the top five priorities. Mr. Monette stated that the request will also be sent to residents with their utility bills. Mr. Monette stated that this agenda item will also be on the next two agendas.

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

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c. Resolution No. 01A-001 – Ambulance Billing Write-Offs

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, presented Resolution No. 01A-001 which, if approved, removes uncollectible ambulance accounts from 2013, in the amount of \$209,211.27, from the City's list of accounts. Mayor Bhasker stated that Emena Gonzales has worked in ambulance billing for over 20 years and has been very successful in collecting ambulance payments.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Resolution No. 01A-001. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 01A-002 – Banking Resolution

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 01A-002 which, if approved, allows the City to close the Wells Fargo Money Market Account and open a Wells Fargo Commercial Account (CD). Ms. Lopez stated that the monies are investments that the City has had for many years.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Resolution No. 01A-002. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

e. Budget Resolution No. 11A – Street Improvement Fund

Resources are MAP Project – Amount is \$472,500 – The increase is needed to allow for the FY 19 MAP Project award. Ms. Lopez stated that this budget resolution is being amended from previously approved Budget Resolution No. 11.

Councilor Dean made a motion to approve Budget Resolution No. 11A. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to the City's protest of the SEC's proposed rate increase, the hearing will be held on June 24th at the old PERA building in Santa Fe. Mayor Bhasker stated that the hearing may take 3 to 4 days. Mayor Bhasker stated that his statements have already been sent to the hearing officer and the SEC will have a chance to ask him, and the City's other witness, Polo Pineda, questions. Mayor Bhasker stated that the hearing officer will ask why the City is protesting, how the rate increase will affect the City and how the rate increase will affect businesses in the City.

Mayor Bhasker stated that Donald Wolberg wrote a letter to the editor of the Defensor Chieftain and referenced City Council minutes from 1944. Mayor Bhasker stated that in these minutes, Mayor JO Gallegos and the City Council decided to buy the Light & Power Plant owned by the NM Public Service Company for \$150,000. Mayor Bhasker stated a petition was then turned in, signed by 581 people, who were against the City buying the power plant and who supported an REA program. Mayor Bhasker stated that ultimately, the City Council did not buy the power plant. Mayor Bhasker stated that Mr. Wolberg suggested that if the City did not buy it then, the City should not buy it now. Mayor Bhasker stated that 75 years ago, the City was mostly farms and ranches which is no longer the case today. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC is \$60 million in debt but is showing \$80 million in assets and want to raise rates. Mayor Bhasker stated that he mentioned all of this as a response to the letter to the editor.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons stated that the summer reading program was "kicked off" with a summer bash on June 6th which had over 600 attendees. Ms. Lyons stated that the program has 141 youth and 30 adult participants. Ms. Lyons stated that there

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were no water leaks in the library roof during the recent rain. Ms. Lyons stated that one of the air conditioner units is down and will be repaired July 1st. Ms. Lyons stated that 5 people participated in the Libraries as Launchpads course. Ms. Lyons reviewed library grants and donations. Ms. Lyons provided a calendar showing all of the upcoming events at the library.

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the Transportation Department had its annual NMDOT review which they do to help keep the department in compliance should the USDOT decide to review. Mr. Santillanes stated that rides have slowed down in the summer. Mr. Santillanes stated that one of the buses and one of the vans were in the shop for repairs. Mr. Santillanes stated that the new bus will arrive in July. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Transportation Department is short-handed and a part-time driver may need to be hired after July 1st. Mr. Santillanes stated that the annual fly-in and barrel race will be held on August 10th. Mr. Santillanes stated that work on the electric box at the airport will start any day. Mr. Santillanes stated that about a month ago, a small plane went off the end of the runway, the plane sustained damage and there were no injuries. Mr. Santillanes stated that operations are normal in the Auto Maintenance Department.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout with Police Department stats from May 2019. Chief Winders stated that the department received a 65/35 grant for two police cars. Chief Winders stated that all of the equipment for the cars has been ordered and the City is just waiting to receive the cars. Chief Winders stated that he spent \$11,000 to purchase body camera systems for the officers. Mayor Bhasker stated that today there was a march and a rally against bullying in Socorro. Chief Winders stated that the department provided an escort for the march.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer stated that she is working on final budget and she is available if anyone has questions about the budget.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Division Director, stated that the Parks Department has been busy watering, cutting weeds and planting plants in the medians and on School of Mines Road. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department has been assisting with Street Department projects, took out the clarifier at the WWTP, extended the sewer line on Fairgrounds Road and is working on water leaks. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department has been working on compliance with the grease trap ordinance, testing for water quality at the pool and getting ready to rehab the Ivy Street lift station. Mr. Martinez stated that the Wastewater Department has been busy with daily operations, landscaping at the plant and organizing old sewer parts. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has also been doing mosquito control around the City and spraying in the manholes for cockroaches.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that there are 2 units in for maintenance (one struck a culvert and one struck an antelope). Chief Gonzales stated that the new recruits are taking classes. Chief Gonzales stated that one employee recently got deployed for the next 3 years and there are two more employees that could possibly be deployed. Chief Gonzales stated the employee with the 3 year deployment will be replaced with a new hire and the other two positions would be filled with emergency hires.

Ms. Saavedra stated that there were 71 students hired in the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that the Gas Department has been working on extending a 4 inch gas line 1,000 feet on Fairgrounds Road. Mr. Angel stated that due to warmer weather, gas pressures were lowered last month. Mr. Angel stated that the staff has been busy working on updating their qualifications. Mr. Angel stated that the staff has also been working on connections on Cuba Road.

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Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill and Recycling Superintendent, stated that landfill crews have been busy handling materials collected during the City's free cleanup month which will end June 29th. Mr. Lucero stated that Marvin Magee, the City's landfill engineer, will be in Socorro on June 19th to stake for the new cell. Mr. Lucero stated that the current cell still has a life span of 3 years. Mr. Lucero stated that crews continue to grind tree limbs, pick up litter and pick up cardboard recycling. Mr. Lucero stated all sanitation trucks are working. Mr. Lucero stated that commercial dumpsters will be ordered soon. Mr. Monette stated that the dumpsters are being purchased on a reimbursement basis.

Demecio Silva, Street Department Director, stated that crews are working hard to pick up all of the orders for the City's clean up month and that his department is being assisted by the Gas and Water departments. Mr. Silva stated that the Street Department will shoot the final oil on Western Hills next week and then the project will be finished. Mr. Silva stated that crews will be striping all of the recent road projects. Mr. Silva stated that the Street Department is using a new mix to fill potholes and the new mix has worked very well. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Street Department will be repairing the dip on South California Street. Mr. Silva stated that his summer kids are busy painting school crosswalks and curbs at the Plaza and City Hall.

Mr. Monette stated that Polo Pineda, It Director, was in Santa Fe going over the City's current CDBG application and closing out last year's CDBG application. Mr. Monette stated that the upcoming MAP project could require an easement and the City may have to trade property in order to acquire the easement.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will be requesting proposals for a wireless internet provider. Mayor Bhasker stated that the methodology and the ability to support it is available in New Mexico and ready to use. Mayor Bhasker stated that there is a grant called Reconnect Grant that is available and the grant could be in the millions of dollars. Mayor Bhasker stated that there are internet providers interested who would charge \$40 for 25 mbps. Councilor Olguin asked if they City would terminate the month to month franchise agreement with CenturyLink. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would not terminate the agreement but another service provider would be competition to them. Mayor Bhasker stated that a new provider could partner with the City as a private/public partner. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration is working with USDA in Phoenix and Senator Heinrich regarding the Reconnect Grant.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Dean asked if the City had applied for the Tourism Grant or the Keep Socorro Beautiful Grant. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Chamber of Commerce, and not the City, has traditionally applied for the Keep Socorro Beautiful Grant. Mayor Bhasker stated that he will be meeting with staff from the Tourism Department to find out the status of the Tourism Grant. Mayor Bhasker stated that he noticed the Chamber of Commerce shared an advertisement on their Facebook page for police officer job openings in Valencia County. Mayor Bhasker stated that it was surprising the Socorro Chamber would advertise for another County as Socorro is struggling to keep police officers in Socorro.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

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Mariah Jaramillo – 6-1-19 – Finance – Completed Probation – A-26 to A-28
Rena Benavidez – 7-1-19 – Finance – New Hire (Switchboard Operator) – A-19
Alexis Montoya – 7-1-19 – Finance – New Hire (Cashier) – A-21

Temporary New Hires: Morgan Guernsey
Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Eva Chavez, Alexis Montoya, Taylor Saavedra, Zach Anaya, Enrique Robles, Rena Benavidez, Veronica Boyd, Joe Lopez, John Armijo, Joseph McGaha, Elizabeth Dunning, Briana Lara, Cheyenne Cortez, Victor Contreras
Student Workers: Matthew Guzman
Summer Youth (71), Lifeguards (12), Referees (3)

Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

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

Klinger Construction - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Ray Smith - Construction
Outside Agitator Coffees - C-2 (Community Kitchen) - 407 Center - William Bird - Coffee Roasting & Capping
Planet Fireworks - C-2 - 400 California Street - Jimmy Nevarez - Fireworks Sales
2 Cold Ninjas - C-2 (Transient) - Transient Vendor - David Gaytan - Ice Cream Truck

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve vouchers 147977 to 148262 in the amount of \$561,563.13 plus Payroll Transfers (\$316,039.46), for a total of \$877,602.59. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, July 8, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk