

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JULY 22, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. July 8, 2019

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

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Socorro Stingray Swim Team

Diedre Vinson, Socorro Stingray Swim Coach, presented the swimmers of the 2019 swim team. The many trophies and ribbons won by the swimmers for the NM Games (placed 3rd overall) and the championship meet (placed 8th overall) were displayed on a table.

Councilor Peter Romero arrived.

Ms. Vinson thanked the City for continuing to support the swim team each summer. Ms. Vinson stated the Socorro Stingrays are a part of the Sundance organization which is an all-volunteer organization. Mayor Bhasker congratulated the team and the parents for a great summer. Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, congratulated the team and coaches. Ms. Rivera stated that on the swim team's behalf, the City is going to pay the invoice from Socorro Schools for the transportation to and from the swim meets. Mayor Bhasker stated that the costs for kids to swim in Socorro is very reasonable compared to teams in Albuquerque. Ms. Vinson stated that swimming on a team in Albuquerque could cost \$300-\$400 a month. Ms. Vinson stated the cost in Socorro is a one-time \$75 charge and the swimmer gets a suit, swimming cap and goggles. The Mayor and City Council once again congratulated the team on their accomplishments.

Bill Stone, the NM Tech liaison, stated that NMT is continuing to track the number of incoming students for the fall. Mr. Stone stated that several members of NMT faculty are conducting summer research projects both in and out of the United States. Mr. Stone stated that there will be some faculty vacancies but the school is not sure of how many. Mr. Stone stated that NMT has some concerns about food insecurity for students. Mr. Stone stated that NMT is working with local churches, food banks, etc. to ensure that students have access to food. Mr. Stone stated that NMT is looking into participation in the "Swipe Away Hunger" program which allows students to donate unused meals to other students.

Donald Wolberg and Luis Aguilar, members of the Socorro Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees, attended the meeting. Mr. Wolberg stated that the board president is happy that the City has agreed to meet with members of the SEC board. Mr. Wolberg stated that the SEC's committee will consist of three board members and the president hopes that the City's committee will also consist of three City Council members

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and the Mayor. Mr. Wolberg stated that he feels this is an opportunity to exchange and explore ideas, correct misconceptions and do constructive, creative work. Mr. Wolberg stated that the SEC maintains 3,300 miles of line and SEC employees drive 40,000 miles a month to maintain the system. Mr. Wolberg stated that co-ops exist in small communities because large companies did not want to service small areas. Mr. Wolberg stated that the SEC is rated 1st in the state for reliability. Mr. Wolberg stated the City and the SEC need to understand each other.

Councilor Hicks stated that he feels all this information should be discussed at the committee meeting.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he and the City Council are not students but rather member owners and consumers. Mayor Bhasker stated that he attended an SEC board meeting in June of 2017 and requested a similar meeting. Mayor Bhasker asked why the SEC waited until the City approved an RFP to provide municipal electricity to request a meeting - two years from the date the Mayor requested a meeting. Mayor Bhasker stated that this is 2019 and the City will decide who is sent to the meeting on the City's behalf.

Councilor Olguin stated that having a meeting is a good start. Mayor Bhasker reminded Councilor Olguin he voted against the RFP award. Councilor Hicks asked for a point of order and requested that the person who was speaking, Mayor Bhasker, be allowed to continue.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is also looking into providing broadband to the Socorro community which is something the SEC would not consider. Mr. Wolberg stated that the issues surrounding broadband are federal. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Wolberg for coming and stated the library would be open at 9:00 a.m. for the upcoming meeting. Councilor Hicks stated that this public forum item had taken more than the allotted three minutes. Mayor Bhasker stated that he, Councilor Dean and Councilor Olguin would see Mr. Wolberg on Wednesday. Mayor Bhasker suggested that the board members stay at the Council meeting to hear a discussion about broadband – Mr. Wolberg and Mr. Aguilar left the meeting.

Councilor Hicks introduced Sergeant Daniel Chavez of NM State Police. Sergeant Chavez stated that he started out as a rookie in Socorro. Sergeant Chavez stated that he would be happy to hear concerns from the community.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Broadband Presentation – Sacred Wind

Mayor Bhasker stated that with the approval of the RFP award for broadband, the Council will be presented with different options and prices moving forward. Misti Willock, from Sacred Wind, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Willock stated that Sacred Wind was founded in order to provide broadband to rural New Mexico and tribal lands. Ms. Willock stated that Sacred Wind has been providing this service for 13 years and serves over 8,000 customers. Ms. Willock stated that the Grants/Milan area was in the same situation as Socorro and Sacred Wind was able to come in and provide broadband services to those communities. Ms. Willock stated that Sacred Wind is partnered with the major providers in New Mexico. Ms. Willock stated that the Pueblo of Laguna received a grant from USDA to access broadband. Ms. Willock discussed the eight sections in her handout: fiber construction, tower construction (build or mobile), construction on an existing site (such as a water tank), point to point access (the radio equipment), a map of the infrastructure network, electronic equipment, customer equipment and operating expenses (backhaul, internet access, system maintenance, tech support, staff). Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is trying to locate funding for a feasibility study. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will get a credit if the City pays for the feasibility study. Mayor Bhasker stated that USDA feels that Socorro meets the

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requirements for a Reconnect grant. Mayor Bhasker asked Ms. Willock if she had a “ballpark” figure for costs to which Ms. Willock replied it is much too early and the feasibility study will ultimately have that information. Ms. Willock stated that Sacred Wind has a great relationship with USDA. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is also looking at how the NM Finance Authority may help.

Councilor Romero asked how long it would take to start providing service to customers to which Ms. Willock stated that six months is reasonable. Joe Franklin, from NM Tech, stated that the idea is great and he would be interested to see how NM Tech can participate in this venture. Dan Lunceford, from NM Tech, stated that he is also excited for this project. Mayor Bhasker stated that Senator Heinrich and USDA are sympathetic to Socorro’s situation. Mayor Bhasker thanked Ms. Willock for her presentation.

Councilor Michael Olguin left the meeting.

b. Budget Resolutions

1. No. 25 – High School Road Intercept/Road Improvement & Reserve Fund

Resources are Investment Income-Reserve & Reserve-Loan – The amount is \$24,307.44 – The resolution is needed to set up the refunding loan as per the Road Improvement loan requirement.

2. No. 26 – Road Improvement Fund

Resources are NMFA Loan Proceeds – Requirements are Construction, NMFA Refunding, NMFA Administrative Fee & NMFA Debt Service Fee – The amount is \$314,920.25 – The resolution is needed to set up the new loan as per the Road Improvement loan requirement.

3. No. 27 – Joint Enterprise Fund – Solid Waste Department

Resources are NMFA Loan Proceeds – Requirements are NMFA Administrative Fee & Capital Outlay – The amount is \$150,000.00 – The resolution is needed to set up the new loan as per the Dumpster Equipment Loan requirement.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Budget Resolutions 25, 26 and 27. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of DFA Quarterly Report – Resolution No. 19-07-22

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, presented Resolution No. 19-07-22 which, if approved, adopts the 4th quarter financial report for fiscal year 2018-2019. Ms. Lopez stated that approval of the resolution is a requirement from DFA. Ms. Lopez stated that the report shows that the ending cash balance for the prior year matches the beginning cash balance for the new year.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-07-22. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Final Budget Approval FY 2019-2020 – Resolution No. 001B

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 001-B which, if approved, adopts the final budget for the City of Socorro for FY 2019-2020. Mayor Bhasker stated that included in the new budget is a minimum of 2.5% salary increase for all permanent City employees and he feels the increases are long overdue.

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Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 001-B. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

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

Councilor Hicks 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.

Beth Wells and Sharon Sessions attended the meeting. Ms. Wells stated that in speaking to multiple people, the idea that kept coming up was a makerspace that is open to the whole county. Ms. Wells stated that there are a lot of activities to do in Socorro and a makerspace would be a place where parents and children could engage. Ms. Sessions stated that the group Stormforce was created to organize the community and the goal is to come up with ways to provide educational opportunities. Ms. Sessions stated that Stormforce was awarded two Americorps positions, both which will help in building infrastructure and organizing groups. Ms. Wells stated that there were 3 brainstorming sessions with approximately 23-24 attendees. Ms. Wells stated that all parties were interested in a makerspace and Finley Gym was brought up as a possible location, amongst other locations. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to the brainstorming sessions, he does not agree with ad hoc committee meetings and deciding how Finley Gym will be used. Mayor Bhasker stated that Finley Gym has been placed on the City's ICIP for improvements and the intent was to continue to use the gym for the programs that currently exist. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City cannot bear additional recurring costs at the gym in addition to the programs that already exist. Mayor Bhasker stated that the bathrooms are being remodeled. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City received funds to hire an engineer to look at heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical systems at the gym. Mayor Bhasker stated that Socorro Schools may be abandoning one of the school buildings and that may be a place that can be used for a makerspace. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is willing to work with NM Tech and the Socorro County on a possible makerspace. Mayor Bhasker listed many of the activities happening at Finley Gym and offered Ms. Wells a tour of the gym. Ms. Wells stated that she sees at least two years of research into the makerspace.

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

Mr. Monette stated that the State prefers only shovel-ready projects on the ICIP. Mr. Monette asked the Mayor and City Council to consider which projects they would like to see as the top five priorities.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, showed the Council a baseball helmet and stated that the department ordered 30 new helmets for the youth baseball kids. Ms. Rivera asked the Council to please come to Finley Gym and see the programs that are going on. Ms. Rivera stated that the upcoming bathroom remodel is very much needed. Ms. Rivera stated that one of the newly remodeled rooms will be used as a music room.

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Ms. Rivera stated that Gabby Vocello, the music teacher, has purchased a lot of different instruments for the classroom.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Division Director, stated that Water Department has been busy watering, cutting weeds and cleaning up streets every Friday. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department will be re-doing the east field at Sedillo Park so that it doesn't flood anymore. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department has been busy repairing water leaks and running sewer line on Mesa Drive. Mr. Martinez stated that there have been a lot of problems with electricity outages which have been burning out pumps in the wells. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department continues to work on the grease trap ordinance and a backwash system issue at the arsenic treatment plants. Mr. Martinez stated that parts have come in for the No. 1 digester and crews at the Wastewater Treatment Plant are draining SBR No. 1.

Demecio Silva, Street Department Director, stated that there is \$12,000 left after the Western Hills reconstruction project and the funds will be used to stripe roads. Mr. Silva stated that crews will be working on rebuilding the dip on South California Street. Mr. Silva stated that crews have also been mowing at the airport. Mr. Silva stated that a speed bump and signs were installed on Memory Lane. Mr. Silva stated that crews continue to mow and also fix potholes throughout the City.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that the City is currently out for bids for construction of the convention center. Mr. Pineda states that the webcast software has been upgraded and will now work on all platforms.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill & Recycling Superintendent, stated that there a residential garbage truck that is in for repairs. Mr. Lucero stated that the repair company will come to Socorro and try to repair it. Mr. Lucero stated that 150 commercial dumpsters will be here in four weeks.

Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that crews have been replacing a gas line on Cuba Road, installing new connections and completing the mid-year check on the main line.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that one ambulance is in the shop for repairs. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing and the new hire will start in August. Chief Gonzales stated that the department received a grant and has purchased new equipment with the grant funds. Chief Gonzales stated that out of 15 employees in the department, 7 of them have one year or less of work until they can retire.

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the fly-in at the airport will be held August 10th. Mr. Santillanes stated that the electrical vault at the airport is being built. Mr. Santillanes stated that next week bids will be opened for an FAA-funded sweeper for the airport. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Transportation Department received a new 14-passenger bus which is getting the equipment installed. Mr. Santillanes stated that the oldest bus will now be taken out of service. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Railrunner route is being cancelled for the next few weeks (as there were no riders using the route) and will resume when NM Tech starts the school year.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, stated that Officer Perrault is currently attending the police academy. Chief Winders stated that the department received two new cars which are currently getting equipment installed. Chief Winders stated that there are two officers who will be attending instructor development classes. Chief Winders stated that there have been several burglaries committed by the same person and those court cases are currently pending.

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Lupe Tarango, Dispatch & Animal Control Director, stated that operations are normal in the Dispatch Department. Mr. Tarango stated that there is one dispatcher position open. Mr. Tarango stated that the animal control officers are busy writing citations. Mr. Tarango stated that there is also a position open at the Animal Shelter.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. City Employee Salary Increases

Mayor Bhasker stated that included in the new budget is a minimum of 2.5% salary increase for all permanent City employees. Mayor Bhasker presented the Council with the list of employees and their salary changes.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve the list of salary changes. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Personnel Changes

Councilor Chavez-Lopez motioned to approve the personnel changes as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Alexis Montoya - 7-25-19 – Finance - Resignation

Jeremiah Gonzales - 7-22-19 – Parks - Completed Probation - A-17 to A-19

Temporary New Hires: Jilberto Chavez

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Eva Chavez, Taylor Saavedra, Zach Anaya, Enrique Robles, Veronica Boyd, John Armijo, Joseph McGaha, Briana Lara, Cheyenne Cortez, Victor Contreras, Morgan Guernsey

Student Workers: Matthew Guzman

Summer Youth (71), Lifeguards (12), Referees (3)

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Southwest Vascular - C-2 - 715 California Street - Chandran Vedamanikam - Medical Clinic

Papa John's Pizza - C-2 - Transient Vendor - 901 California Street - Sameer Merchant - Pizza Place

Eze's Auto Sales LLC - Out of Town - Lemitar, NM - Ezequiel Rojas - Auto Sales

Advantage Therapy Services Inc. - Out of Town - Lemitar, NM - Marlys Kiehne - Allied Health

Hospitality Network LLC - Out of Town - Las Vegas, NV - Stephen Rowley - Wifi Equipment - Support Services

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Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro has won the right to have the State Chile Taste-Off in Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that the event will be held September 21st at the rodeo arena and is open to all chile farmers whether they farm one acre or 500 acres. Mayor Bhasker stated that the NM Chile Farmer's Association will run the event and the City of Socorro and County of Socorro will host the event. Mayor Bhasker stated that a giant red and green chile will be burned and there will be food stands and fireworks.

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 148263 to 148438 in the amount of \$523,223.38 plus Payroll Transfers (\$181,790.95), for a total of \$705,014.33 AND vouchers 148439 to 148561 in the amount of \$512,983.79 plus Payroll Transfers (\$170,225.98), for a total of \$683,209.77. Seconded by Councilor Romero, 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, August 5, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

Mayor Bhasker stated that there may be a large wrestling tournament at the rodeo arena.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:02 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk