

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
August 5, 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 Anton Salome, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez and Councilor Deborah Dean. Councilor Nick Fleming and Councilor Toby Jaramillo were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Bhasker asked for a moment of silence to honor the victims of recent mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 5, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. July 22, 2019

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Cheri Lerew stated that there will be an EPA Community Information Meeting on August 8, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Ms. Lerew stated that the NMED will present results from new tests taken in 2019. Ms. Lerew stated that the NMED will also present a new record of decision. Ms. Lerew stated that the new decision was made due to dioxins being found in the new test results. Ms. Lerew thanked the City for including the meeting information in the utility bills. Steve Torres, a local realtor, stated that he has had to cancel 64 listings due to the Eagle Picher issue. Mayor Bhasker stated that the NMED has not been as transparent to the community as they should be.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY

a. Ordinance No. 19-08-05 – Loan Agreement for Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements & Improvements to the Wastewater Collection System

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 19-07-08 which, if approved, authorizes a loan agreement between the City of Socorro and the New Mexico Finance Authority for the purpose of 1) acquiring, extending, enlarging, bettering, repairing and improving the wastewater treatment facility and 2) acquiring, extending, enlarging, bettering repairing and improving the City's wastewater collection system.

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

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 19-08-05 for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING & CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Ordinance No. 19-07-08 – Loan Agreement for Convention Center

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 19-07-08 which, if approved, authorizes a loan agreement between the City of Socorro and the New Mexico Finance Authority for the purpose of designing, constructing, installing, equipping and improving the convention center.

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

There were no comments from the public.

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that there is an asbestos issue that will cost \$38,000 to \$48,000 to resolve. Mayor Bhasker stated that the plans have been finalized. Mayor Bhasker stated that construction has gone out to bid and the bidding process closes on August 29, 2019.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 19-07-08. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Public Hearing – Liquor License Application – Restaurant Beer/Wine Liquor License – Desert Diamond Restaurant

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

There were no comments from the public. Teresa Funke, the owner, attended the meeting. Ms. Funke stated that she reopened the restaurant two years ago and obtaining the liquor license is the next step for the restaurant.

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

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Restaurant Beer/Wine Liquor License for Desert Diamond Restaurant. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Public Hearing – Liquor License Application – Transfer of Ownership and Change of Location of Dispenser Liquor License No. 0275 – Circle K #2741295

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

There were no comments from the public. A representative from Circle K attended the meeting. The representative explained that Circle K purchased the property (which is located in front of the old Smith's building) two years ago. The representative explained that Smith's is transferring ownership of the liquor license to Circle K. Mayor Bhasker stated that he thought there was a waiting period before a liquor license could be sold. Mayor Bhasker also stated that he is unsure how Smith's can sell the liquor license to Circle K after it has been dormant for two years.

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

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Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Transfer of Ownership and Change of Location of Dispenser Liquor License No. 0275 for Circle K #2741295. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 19-08-05A – NMDOT Cooperative Agreement – Street Improvements

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-08-05A which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative MAP Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the design, construction management, reconstruction and drainage improvements to the following streets:

- Western Avenue from Neel Avenue to Stallion Circle
- Park Street from Garfield Avenue to Spring Street
- Church Street from Park Street to Center Street
- Neel Street from Leroy Place to Fisher Avenue
- School of Mines Road from Leroy Place to Terry Avenue
- Hilton Hill Place from Lopezville Road to dead end
- Lewis Drive from Lopezville Road to Hilton Hill Place
- South California Street from Spring Street south approximately 735' to the railroad tracks.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that there was \$12,000 left after the Western Hills Project and this resolution allows the City to repurpose those funds towards improving additional streets.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-08-05A. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 19-08-05B – 5311 Rural and Small Urban Public Transportation Program

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 19-08-05B which, if approved, allows the City to request funding for a public transportation system through the 5311 Rural and Small Urban Public Transportation Program. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may need to look into the transportation system and either make it smaller or try to combine systems with Socorro County. Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked if the City will expand the system County-wide. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has already done so by adding the Magdalena route. Councilor Dean stated that the City may need to adjust the time the system is available to include rides outside of 8 am to 5 pm. Mayor Bhasker agreed that the times may need to be adjusted.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-08-05B. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution No. 19-08-05C – NMDOT Cooperative Agreement – Capital Outlay

Mr. Monette presented Resolution No. 19-08-05C which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative MAP Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the planning, design and construction of City streets within the City of Socorro. Mr. Monette stated that these funds will be used to complete the reconstruction of Fairgrounds Road and possibly chip seal Vermont Street and Hilltop Street.

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Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-08-05C. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

f. Bid Award – Municipal Airport Sweeper Equipment Acquisition

Kent Freier, from Molzen Corbin, stated that the City has tried to acquire a sweeper for the airport for several years. Mr. Freier stated that FAA approval is still needed for the acquisition. Mr. Freier stated that the City will need a Type 3 waiver of the “Buy American” act. Mr. Freier stated that the sweeper will be funded 90% by the FAA, 5% by the NMDOT Aviation Division and 5% by City of Socorro.

The bids for a municipal airport sweeper were opened on July 30, 2019. Molzen Corbin recommended that the bids be awarded to H & E Equipment.

Councilor Salome made a motion to award the bid for a municipal airport sweeper to H & E Equipment. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Bhasker stated that City staff, and consultant Ed Reyes, met with Guzman Energy and approved a preliminary engineering agreement for the entire City including the Industrial Park (but not the whole SEC reach). Mayor Bhasker stated that a feasibility study will show what electricity will cost and what the City should charge.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he and Mr. Monette attended an energy summit. Mayor Bhasker stated that a map showed New Mexico as 29th with 10 cents per kilowatt hour for residential electricity. Mayor Bhasker stated that New Mexico was 32nd for industrial electricity. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC is at 17 cents per kilowatt hour for residential electricity. Mayor Bhasker stated that there was a breakout session on solar. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Department of Energy, by federal standard, has to be 5 cents for residential. Mayor Bhasker stated that Silver City has solar on their wastewater treatment plant and they have a power purchase agreement for 20 years at 6.5 cents. Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with Senator Heinrich and the Senator is interested in helping the City of Socorro.

Mayor Bhasker stated that City staff also met with Sacred Wind and they will be applying for the Reconnect Grant in December. Mayor Bhasker stated that broadband will be offered as a utility. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will be competitive with Century Link. Mayor Bhasker stated the utility could take two years to develop. Mayor Bhasker stated that the broadband should be offered Countywide. Mayor Bhasker stated that Senator Heinrich is also interested in helping the City of Socorro with broadband.

Councilor Salome asked about the meeting with the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that Joseph Herrera, SEC manager, and Mr. Monette had a meeting. Mr. Monette stated that the meeting was approximately 45 minutes and Mr. Herrera felt that that even if approached by the City and the SEC, the two entities were not large enough to scare Tri-State. Mr. Monette stated that Mr. Herrera also suggested that a new, large user, along with their rate, could offset other user rates. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Cedar Edge/Delta/Montrose, Colorado area made a new agreement with Guzman Energy and they were previously with Tri-State. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC is telling residents that if the City creates a municipal electric utility, their rates will be raised. Mr. Monette stated that only new businesses can get an economic development rate. Councilor Olguin asked if the City and SEC could meet with Tri-State. Mr. Monette stated that Mr. Herrera feels the two entities are too small. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that an

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invitation to a meeting should be sent to Tri-State. Mayor Bhasker stated that there are a lot of complaints about Tri-State. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC has a fund to fight the City. Mr. Monette stated that in the discussion with Guzman Energy, they are offering a 10-year locked rate.

Councilor Salome stated that the Senior Center would be having a desk audit on August 6th and that he will attend. Mayor Bhasker suggested Councilor Salome open a discussion about the transportation systems and budget.

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that the health fair at the gym will be August 9th from 10 am to 12 pm and students will receive school supplies and a backpack. Ms. Rivera stated that on the same day, from 12 pm to 2 pm, Finley Gym will be honoring veterans. Ms. Rivera stated that Gabby Vocello has finished putting together the music room at the gym and that she paid for all of the instruments and other items herself. Ms. Rivera stated that Ms. Vocello will offer lessons twice a week and she will be doing a small concert on August 7th.

Mayor Bhasker stated that City staff met with the architects who planned the convention center to see what could be done at Finley Gym. Mayor Bhasker stated that the architects met with the City and created a preliminary design free of charge. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will have a public meeting to get input from the community on what they would like to see at Finley Gym. Mayor Bhasker stated one idea brought forward was to have a makerspace.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bhasker thanked the City staff at the rodeo arena for a job well done during a recent wrestling event in the rodeo arena. Mayor Bhasker stated that the event has the possibility to become very large. Mayor Bhasker stated that there will be a "chile" event coming up. Councilor Olguin stated that City staff also did a great job during a recent scrimmage at the soccer fields. Mayor Bhasker stated that the triathlon was also a great event.

a. Appointment to Planning & Zoning Commission

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to appoint Steve Torres to fill a vacant position on the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Mayor Bhasker's appointment of Steve Torres to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Seconded by Councilor Salome, Motion passed unanimously.

b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Zach Anaya – 8-5-19 – Youth Center – New Hire*(Youth Center Aide) – A-17

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Chris Carrillo – 7-22-19 – Landfill – Certification – B-27 to B-29

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Socorro OHM LLC - C-2 - 1009 California Street - Mayur Patel - Motel
Victoriam Kickboxing - C-2 - 213-215 Fisher - Elizabeth Roberts - Kickboxing Gym
Naudia's Hair & Nail Shop - C-2 - 402 6th Street - Naudia Baca - Hair & Nail Shop
Studio Z, Salsa Fit LLC - C-2 - 805 California Street - Peggy Lopez - Dance
FAM LLC - C-2 - 211 Highway 60 - Michaela Marquez - CBD Sales

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be held on Monday, August 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:56 p.m., Councilor Hicks 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