

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
August 19, 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 Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Toby Jaramillo. Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Anton Salome and Councilor Michael Olguin were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 19, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. August 5, 2019

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Annabelle Gonzales stated that she lives on Hilltop Road and she is concerned over several issues in the area including: homeless people, abandoned vehicles, the terrible smell, no running water, no bathroom facilities and drug activity. Mike Winders, Police Chief, stated that there are two ways the City can approach the issues and they are criminal charges or administratively. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City can file a court case, with the help of the City's attorney, and cite that it is a public health and safety issue. Ms. Gonzales stated that the property is owned by "Mr. Gonzales". Ms. Gonzales stated that she hoped the owner would take care of the issues but it has gone on for too long.

Beth Cadol, race director for the 11th Annual Chile Harvest Youth Triathlon, thanked the City of Socorro for supporting the event. Ms. Cadol stated that there were 62 participants, ages 7 to 14. Ms. Cadol stated that there were 75 volunteers supporting the 62 participants.

Stacy Timmons, race director for the Socorro Chile Harvest Triathlon, also thanked the City for supporting the event. Ms. Timmons stated that there were 151 participants. Ms. Timmons stated that there were 80 volunteers supporting the event. Ms. Timmons stated that there were 50 rooms booked for overnight stays. Ms. Timmons stated that 18 of the participants had children who participated in the youth triathlon the day before. Ms. Timmons thanked everyone who sponsored the event. Ms. Cadol and Ms. Timmons gave the Mayor and City Council mugs from the event.

JC Trujillo, Socorro Consolidated School Board Member, invited everyone to attend a "100% Community" meeting on August 27th at 9:00 a.m. at City Hall. Mr. Trujillo stated that the initiative received enough grant money to fund this program in 3 counties. Mr. Trujillo stated that phase one and two, which should take one year, include the assessment of services and implementation. Mayor Bhasker asked about the public schools enrollment numbers and Mr. Trujillo stated that the number of enrolled students has declined.

Rochelle Carruthers stated that regarding the City's efforts to create a municipal electric utility, she has looked into Guzman Energy and the interest rates that they will provide the City. Ms. Carruthers stated that she gathered the information from reading the SEC's letters. Mayor Bhasker asked Ms. Carruthers if she had read the City's RFP which is on the City's website. Mayor Bhasker told Ms. Carruthers that she was

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
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August 19, 2019

getting her information from the City's competitor. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC lost their bid for rate increases. Mayor Bhasker stated that the interest rates for the City with Guzman Energy will only be for one year and then the City will convert the loan into a State loan at 2.5%.

Dr. Bill Stone, the NM Tech liaison, stated that classes had started and there are several new students in town. Dr. Stone invited everyone to the ribbon cutting for the makerspace, located on NM Tech campus, on August 27th.

Hubert Hardern, a resident who lives on Gianera Street which is next to Sarracino Middle School, stated that the traffic from the school is causing problems on Gianera Street. Mr. Hardern stated that the school changed the driving pattern from the previous year on the second day of school and now traffic is backing up on Gianera Street. Mr. Hardern stated that he and his wife, who was also in attendance, spoke to the Superintendent who stated that the traffic pattern was changed because it is what their insurance company told them to do. JC Trujillo, who was still in attendance, stated that it was recommended by Poms & Associates, who was sent by the Public Education Department, to route traffic into the school on Gianera Street and have the cars exit on El Camino Real. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City was not officially informed of the change and the City and the School District need to have a meeting to discuss the matter. Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that in the past, the buses had caused a problem on Gianera Street and they were able to be rerouted. Mr. Silva stated that another street that could be used is Newberry Road. Mr. Hardern stated that he feels the ingress and egress should both be on El Camino Real. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mr. Hardern could attend the August 26th School Board meeting and share his concerns. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the new traffic pattern is disturbing a neighborhood, it is incumbent on the school district to develop a pattern that does not impose on residents. Mayor Bhasker asked Mr. Hardern to give the City a chance to meet with the Police Chief, the Street Superintendent and the school district to discuss the matter. Councilor Hicks stated that the road itself is on "its last legs" and Councilor Fleming stated that the road is pretty narrow. Kristy Padilla, Administrative Assistant, stated that another factor is that the school district shortened the window of time during which the parents can drop off the students so everyone is going at the same time. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the school district should assist the City in maintaining roads that are used for school purposes. Mayor Bhasker stated that the school resource officer can help with traffic in the meantime and further suggested that the school district have a traffic study done. Some discussion followed.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 19-08-19 – City of Socorro ICIP

Mr. Monette presented Resolution No. 19-08-19 which, if approved, authorizes the submittal of the City's 2021-2025 Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP). The top five priorities are listed as such: 1) Community Center Remodel 2) Bullock Avenue/Franklin Avenue/Park Street 3) 911 Emergency Radio Equipment 4) Administration & Billing Software 5) Sewerline and Treatment Plant Upgrades. Mr. Monette stated that Mr. Hardern had requested that Gianera Street be added to the list.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 19-08-19 and add Gianera Street to the ICIP. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Monette read a report on behalf of Councilor Salome: On August 6th, Linda Murillo and Linda Mares, from the senior center, and Councilor Salome participated in a conference call with Deidra Sandoval from the NM Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Sandoval's role is to assess the effectiveness of senior programs

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
August 19, 2019

around the state focusing on the monitoring of federal funds, program quality and senior citizen advocacy. Socorro County (Socorro, Veguita and Magdalena) completed a self-assessment tool for Ms. Sandoval to review. Ms. Sandoval will review the programs submission and respond. Programs include meal home delivery, lunch on site, transportation, outreach and activities such as puzzles, pool, computers, tai chi, dances and yoga. Lastly, the senior center would like to meet with the City of Socorro regarding transportation as the senior center has reached maximum allowable ridership.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the City currently provides on-call transportation to seniors. Mr. Santillanes stated that the new bus is not online yet and that the department has hired a part-time driver. Mr. Santillanes stated that the two employees in the Auto Maintenance Department are traveling to Indiana where they will receive two days of training on CNG vehicles. Mr. Santillanes stated that the fly-in was held August 10th and was well-attended by the public.

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons stated that there were leaks in the roof during recent rains but that Queston Construction came out and made repairs (as per the warranty). Ms. Lyons announced the winners of the bicycles for the summer reading program: Tyler Katsch, Sophia Zhang, Rafael Morales-Brindle and Rodrigo Morales-Brindle.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout with Police Department stats from July 2019. Chief Winders stated that on August 5th, the Police Department participated in emergency bus drivers training with Socorro Schools. Chief Winders stated that on August 14-15, he attended leadership training. Chief Winders stated that he went to each school and introduced himself to the principals. Chief Winders stated that the department will be providing security for a movie shoot on the Plaza on August 26th.

Jim Dewey Brown, Tourism & Rodeo Director, stated that upcoming events include a soccer tournament, the community yard sale at Sedillo Park, barrel racing and mounted shooting. Mr. Brown stated that tickets are on sale for the Socorro County Fair's rodeo. Mayor Bhasker stated that Socorro will host a chile taste-off on September 21st.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that there was a recent resignation and that a new hire was on the agenda tonight to replace him. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that there have been minor repairs on the ambulance. Chief Gonzales stated that the department will be applying for a grant for a new vehicle.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, stated that gross receipts revenue is up but is still slightly lower than this time last year. Ms. Lopez stated that she has been working with auditors. Ms. Lopez stated that employee training is ongoing.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Division Director, stated that a pre-bid conference was held for the convention center and that the bids will be opened next Thursday. Mr. Martinez stated that there will be a vactor truck in town "camera-ing" the lines. Mr. Martinez stated that the Parks Department has been busy watering and mowing. Mr. Martinz stated that sewer line was installed on Franklin Street and Tafoya Lane. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department will start a water line replacement project on Bullock Avenue in the fall. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department has been maintaining the lift stations and have closed down the pool. Mr. Martinez stated that the SBR at the WW Treatment Plant has been drained and cleaned and will now be inspected. Mayor Bhasker stated that Mr. Martinez and his crew were able to bring back 33 panels from the El Camino Real Heritage Center.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
August 19, 2019

Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that the Gas Department installed a new main line on Melody Loop, did new connections on Duggins Lane and did a line replacement on Dolores Drive. Mr. Angel stated that the main CNG pump station is down.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that the hearing officer for the SEC rate increase protest has made her recommendations, the SEC has until August 22nd to file an exception and the City would have to provide an answer to the exception by August 28th. Mr. Pineda stated that the hearing officer will have a final recommendation by September 19th and the Public Regulation Commission will have to vote on the recommendations by that date unless the hearing officer files for an extension. Mr. Pineda stated that the SEC's rate increase was denied. Mr. Pineda stated that a proposed \$5 fee for having a meter but using no electricity was thrown out. Mr. Pineda stated that SEC wanted residential service rates to go from \$15.00 to \$22.75 and the officer recommended \$16.50. Mr. Pineda stated that SEC requested an irrigation fee of \$10 and the officer stated it would be \$5. Mr. Pineda stated that the SEC will be required to provide an economic development rate. Mr. Pineda stated that the SEC requested that lighting service rates go from \$16.26 to \$17.84 and the officer decided on \$16.15 (which is lower than existing rates). Mr. Pineda stated that he will post the recommendations on the City's website and will provide a copy to the City Council. Mr. Pineda stated that when the hearing officer makes her final recommendation, everything will be reviewed by the PRC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City was approached by Kit Carson Co-op who wants the City to join in a possible protest against Tri-State. Mayor Bhasker stated that Tri-State is now trying to come under FERC rules and would no longer be required to follow NM state laws. Mayor Bhasker stated that any protestors would have to use FERC lawyers. Mr. Pineda stated that Guzman Energy will present a letter of intent to the City after the assessment, which is being paid for by Guzman.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill & Recycling Superintendent, stated that everything in the Sanitation Department is normal. Mr. Lucero stated that the crew at the landfill continues to bale cardboard, bale tires and pick up litter. Mr. Lucero stated that the tub grinder was in for repairs.

Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, stated that the Recreation & Youth Center departments had a great summer. Ms. Rivera stated that youth and adult volleyball will start soon. Ms. Rivera stated that to date, there are 27 kids registered in the after school program. Ms. Rivera thanked the other department heads for assisting her any time she needs help with something.

Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that his crew also helped bring the panels back from the El Camino Real Heritage Center. Mr. Silva stated that the Street Department is doing work on the dip on South California Street and should be done by Wednesday. Mr. Silva provided pictures of the work being done on South California Street.

Mayor Bhasker asked Ms. Saavedra how many kids worked in the summer youth program and how much they made. Ms. Saavedra stated that approximately 75 kids worked this summer with the potential of earning \$900.00 each.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
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August 19, 2019

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Job Description Update – Street Department Light Equipment Operator I

Mayor Bhasker presented an updated job description for the position of Street Department Light Equipment Operator I. Mr. Silva stated that the position has been changed to require a CDL driver's license and to reflect that there may be some after hours or weekend work required in emergencies. Mr. Silva stated that he would like the current employees in this position to have 6 months to acquire their CDL.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the job description for Street Department Light Equipment Operator I. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

b. Personnel Changes

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

Sophia Perez - 7-29-19 - Animal Shelter - Termination

Ignacio Chavez - 8-16-19 – Fire - New Hire*(FF/EMT Recruit) - A-28

Temporary New Hires: Janessa Trujillo

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Eva Chavez, Taylor Saavedra, Enrique Robles, Veronica Boyd, John Armijo, Joseph McGaha, Cheyenne Cortez, Victor Contreras, Steven Chavez, Jilberto Chavez

Student Workers: Matthew Guzman, Autumn Martinez, Bryan Peters, Brandon Esquivel, Carlos Gonzales

Referees (3)

Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

None.

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 148562 to 148832 in the amount of \$701,942.89, plus Payroll Transfers (\$327,930.29), for a total of \$1,029,873.18. 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 Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road). Mayor Bhasker asked Councilor Hicks to chair this meeting as he will be out of town.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:34 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

