

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
September 16, 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 Anton Salome, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Toby Jaramillo. Councilor Nick Fleming was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 16, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. September 3, 2019

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

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamation – Manufacturing Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation declaring October 2019 as Manufacturing Month in the City of Socorro.

PUBLIC FORUM

Luisa Lopez, with the Tularosa Basin Downwinders, invited everyone to a candlelight vigil to be held at 6:00 p.m. on October 26th at the Plaza. Ms. Lopez stated that the vigil is to honor those who have passed away from cancer. Ms. Lopez stated that other New Mexico legislators will also be invited. Ms. Lopez stated that during the vigil, Tina Cordova will explain where the bill is in the legislative process.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Consideration of Special Use Permit – 834 US Highway 60 West – SMJ International o/b/o SmartSky

Mayor Bhasker stated that SMJ International o/b/o SmartSky is requesting a Special Use Permit in order to allow the company to do maintenance on an existing antenna. Mayor Bhasker stated that at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting of August 21, 2019, the P & Z Commission unanimously approved a recommendation to the City Council that the Special Use Permit application from SMJ International o/b/o SmartSky be approved. Mayor Bhasker stated that his only issue with the approval is that the company does not believe they need a business registration. Mayor Bhasker stated that he called the company and left a message informing them that they do need a business registration because the registration ensures that gross receipts tax on their project is paid in the City of Socorro.

Councilor Romero made a motion to postpone consideration of the Special Use Permit for SMJ International o/b/o SmartSky at 834 US Highway 60 West until such time as the company has obtained a City business registration. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

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b. Tyler Software Contract

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, presented a contract between the City of Socorro and Tyler Technologies. Ms. Lopez stated that the contract is for new software for the Finance Department. Ms. Lopez stated that the new software will allow the City to do more and help the department move towards being paperless. Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that Socorro is the only municipality in the state that uses our current software, 4gov, and most other communities in New Mexico use the Tyler software. Ms. Lopez stated that the \$240,000 software will be paid for over two fiscal years. Ms. Lopez stated that the City will be asking the NM Legislature for capital outlay for the software.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the contract between the City of Socorro and Tyler Technologies. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jim Dewey Brown, Tourism & Rodeo Director, stated that the NM Chile Taste-Off will be held September 21st at the rodeo arena and gates open at 12:30 p.m. Mr. Brown stated that there will be a parade up to the rodeo arena followed by food vendors, fireworks, music and other activities. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Lieutenant Governor would be attending the Chile Taste-Off. Mr. Brown stated that next weekend there will be a World Series of Team Roping event held at the arena and the weekend after that is Socorrofest. Mr. Brown stated that the county fair rodeo was very well-attended. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is still considering an application for a municipal liquor license for the rodeo arena. Mr. Brown stated that there are events at the arena 42 out of 52 weeks this year.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill & Recycling Superintendent, stated that the City has received 100 new commercial dumpsters which are slowly being distributed and that 50 more new dumpsters have been ordered. Mr. Lucero stated that the 3 yard dumpsters are blue and the 4 yard dumpsters are brown. Mr. Lucero stated that the City is still recycling cardboard from businesses and people can still recycle aluminum and paper on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month. Councilor Salome stated that he recently went on a tour of the landfill and learned how a landfill is operated. Councilor Salome stated that Socorro is lucky to have the facility and commended the staff on a job well done.

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons stated that some of the lighting fixtures at the library will be changed and the windows in the upstairs bathrooms will be replaced with vents/fans. Ms. Lyons stated that programs at the library include preschool story and craft time, family yoga, Reading is Fundamental, battle of the books and the teen science café. Ms. Lyons stated that fall amnesty will be from October 7th through 18th where all overdue fines will be waived.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout with Police Department stats from August 2019. Chief Winders stated that the department made drug-related arrests on August 26th and 27th. Chief Winders stated that there was a school threat last week and that three students were taken into custody. Chief Winders stated that the District Attorney will now decide whether or not to press charges.

Mayor Bhasker stated that there is a state statute that says municipalities can eliminate municipal courts. Chief Winders stated that animal control citations and traffic citations go to municipal court but most crime-related items go to Magistrate Court.

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Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the installation of the new electrical vault at the airport is still ongoing. Mr. Santillanes stated that there have been some larger planes landing at the airport. Mr. Santillanes stated that the hangar that was in disrepair has been removed but that there are still some older hangars that need some repairs. Councilor Hicks stated that one of the hangars contains items other than airplane equipment and he believes that is not allowed. Mayor Bhasker asked if the Transportation Department office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Santillanes replied that it is unless the department is short-staffed. Mayor Bhasker asked if messages can be left on an answering machine. Mr. Santillanes stated that messages can be left but not messages for rides. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the answering machine at the Transportation Department should be updated to reflect current information and should include Jay's cell phone number.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that in regards to the Socorro Electric Cooperative's proposed rate increase, the Public Regulation Commission voted 4-1 to uphold the recommendations by the examiner (which basically results in the SEC's rate increase being denied). Mayor Bhasker congratulated the protestors who saved users \$1,250,000 this year. Mr. Pineda stated that there were some minor recommendations made by the examiner.

Mayor Bhasker stated that Guzman Energy will send a letter of intent soon which should include a solar element. Mayor Bhasker stated that Jimmy Capps, from the SEC, published a letter in the Catron County newspaper which tried to intimidate users. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has written a rebuttal letter and it can be found on the City's website.

Councilor Hicks stated that the DAV received a scam phone call which stated their electricity was going to be turned off. Mayor Bhasker stated in regards to the DAV, City crews did a great job cleaning in that area.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, stated that the Finance Department is busy reorganizing offices, working on several loans and working on utility connections. Ms. Lopez stated that work with the auditors has been completed.

Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that crews are finishing work on Dolores Drive and are currently "pot-holing" on Cuba Drive to find the turn points. Mr. Angel stated that the CNG pump station is up and running again.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that two units have been repaired and the fleet is now all up and running. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training and testing is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that there are two employees being deployed in October and the department will hire several previous employees (as emergency-hire temporaries), who are fully certified, to work in their place until they return. Chief Gonzales stated that the department once again hosted the annual fire school barbecue. Councilor Hicks stated that the people at fire school complimented our department and the people of Socorro.

Mr. Santillanes stated that the Transportation Department can arrange for transportation between the Pow-Wow and the Chile Taste-Off this weekend, if needed.

Mayor Bhasker sent best wishes to Cindy Rivera, Recreation Director, who is currently out on medical leave.

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Mr. Monette stated that Glen Duggins, a local Chile farmer, is going to be giving a hay ride from Sedillo Park to the Chile Taste-Off at the rodeo arena.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

Zach Pinnick – 8-5-19 – Fire – Resignation

Kathy Spring – 9-1-19 – Library – Completed Probation – A-31 to A-33

Temporary New Hires: Daniela Rivera

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

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

Referees (3)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

None.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 148562 to 148832 in the amount of \$664,290.94, plus Payroll Transfers (\$321,120.58), for a total of \$985,411.52. Seconded by Councilor Salome, 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, October 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:56 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

