

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**October 21, 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, Councilor Nick Fleming and Councilor Toby Jaramillo.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 21, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. October 7, 2019**

Before the Council meeting, Councilor Salome had requested that the minutes be amended. The minutes were amended and a new set of minutes was provided to the City Council. Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

None.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Quit Claim Deed – Leyla Gallegos – Postponed from the October 7, 2019 City Council Meeting**

Mayor Bhasker stated that this agenda item was postponed from the October 7, 2019 City Council meeting. Councilor Hicks made a motion to bring the matter back to the table. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that State Statute 67-2-6 (Abandonment, vacation and reverter of public roads, streets and highways) and 67-2-7 (Petition for determination of abandonment or vacation) had been provided to the Council. Donald Monette, City Administrator, read statute 67-2-7 which states:

***67-2-7. Petition for determination of abandonment or vacation.***

*Any owner of lands abutting any highway, street or road, his heirs or assigns may petition the state or any commission, department, bureau, agency or political subdivision thereof, who believes a section of any public road, street or highway is not [no] longer needed for public purposes, [and] may petition the state or any commission, department, bureau, agency or political subdivision thereof for a formal determination of abandonment or vacation.*

Councilor Salome stated that he might not have been clear but the way the statute reads is the point he was trying to make during the last Council meeting. Councilor Salome stated that he would like to see the request for vacation made to the City Administration by an interested party, the City Administration follow some sort of process and the City Administration decide whether or not the vacation should be brought to the City Council. Councilor Salome stated that he feels the “formal determination of abandonment or vacation” means an investigation of the property should take place because it is inherent that the City know the value of the property and what type of asset the

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City may be giving up. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the “formal determination” should come from the City Council to which Councilor Salome stated that he feels the City Administration should determine if a certain property should be vacated. Councilor Olguin stated that he feels Councilor Salome is saying that the process should be that a person asks the City to vacate property and the City Administration, based on valuation of the property to the City, brings a “formal determination” to the City Council. Councilor Salome reiterated that he thinks the City Administration should decide whether or not to vacate property and make a “formal determination” to the City Council. Mayor Bhasker stated that he understands the statute to read that the City Council is the “formal body” or “political subdivision” as the entity to make the decision. Councilor Salome stated for the current matter at hand, he has not seen a reason or “formal determination” in order to be able to make a decision.

Mr. Augustine Gallegos, the person who requested the vacation, stated that originally, the property was annexed to the City to create a road. Mr. Gallegos stated that the property, which is located next to their property, was never developed into a road by the City. Mr. Gallegos stated that he has been maintaining the property by keeping it clean of syringes and trash. Mr. Gallegos stated that he has had items stolen from his house and it is a matter of time before something worse happens.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City can get a legal opinion on what “a formal determination of abandonment or vacation” means and to see if it means the City Administration must forward a letter to the City Council so that they can make a determination. Mayor Bhasker pointed out that Councilor Salome wants a value of the property to which Councilor Salome replied that the City should know the value. Mayor Bhasker then stated that there is nothing about value in the statute. Mayor Bhasker stated that the statute is not clear on how to come up with a “formal determination”. Councilor Salome stated that a “formal determination” is more than putting the item on a City Council agenda for a vote. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration would not have brought the item to the City Council if they didn’t already feel the property should be vacated. Councilor Hicks stated that he feels this matter is easy to vote on based off the size of the property, the “non-use” of the property and the other issues stated by Mr. Gallegos. Mr. Monette stated that after the last time the issue of vacation of property came up, he developed a form but the only issue is that everyone would value the property differently. Councilor Olguin stated that in this case, a process has been done and reasons have already been provided. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is willing to write a letter that says “in the opinion of the City Administration, the land can be vacated”. Mayor Bhasker mentioned that Councilor Salome would like the land appraised but he feels it is a waste of money. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the City Council should put together a committee to decide what the letter should say (appraisal, cost to maintain, uses, etc.). Councilor Hicks called for the question, however, there was not a motion on the floor. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that once a policy is developed, the policy has to be used every time with every request. Councilor Salome stated that the matter of people on the property and the misuse of the property is a separate issue. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City still has to address those issues. Mayor Bhasker stated that ownership of City property was determined by a land grant – all the property abandoned after the land grant became the City’s. Mayor Bhasker stated that a lot of the property left to the City has been of no use to the City and in some cases, has been a liability. Mayor Bhasker stated that any interested parties should be willing to do a survey. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the City Council wants specifics in the “formal determination” letter, the Council will have to let him know what specifics to include. Councilor Salome stated that the City must do its due diligence before giving City property to an individual.

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Councilor Olguin made a motion to postpone the quitclaim deed for Leyla Gallegos to the November 4, 2019 City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that at the November 4, 2019 City Council meeting, the City Administration will present a letter to the City Council declaring if the property in question is or is not ready to be vacated. Councilor Salome stated that the City Administration should get a legal opinion of what the state statute means.

**b. Bid Award – Convention Center Remodel**

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that eleven bids for remodeling the convention center were opened on August 29, 2019. Mr. Pineda stated that he is recommending that the bid be awarded to C.C. Construction in the amount of \$1,367,304.50. Mayor Bhasker stated that due to clerical errors, the low bidder withdrew their bid. Mayor Bhasker stated that for the first time, the next two low bidders tied. Mayor Bhasker stated that the two companies were interviewed and asked for a post-bid. Mayor Bhasker stated that the post-bid would have the City doing the demo and the external courtyard, floor covering and partitions removed. Mayor Bhasker stated the facility is also undergoing an asbestos removal project which is a separate project and separate contractor. Mayor Bhasker stated that the funds for the remodel are being repaid from the convention center fees paid by the hotels.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to award the bid for remodeling the convention center to C.C. Construction in the amount of \$1,367,304.50. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons reviewed ongoing and upcoming events including: Preschool Story & Craft Time, Battle of the Books, Teen Science Café, Adult Book Club, Socorrofest, Dia de Los Muertos, Anna Age Eight Survey, Census Hiring, Family Yoga, First Born Playgroup and Reading is Fundamental.

Jay Santillanes, Transportation Director, stated that the installation of the new electrical vault at the airport is near completion. Mr. Santillanes stated that the airport is waiting on delivery of the sweeper. Mr. Santillanes stated that traffic at the airport has increased due to hunting activities. Mr. Santillanes stated that the auto maintenance crew is busy with daily work. Mr. Santillanes stated that the new fiscal year for the Transportation Department started October 1, 2019 and the overall budget had a 6% increase. Mr. Santillanes stated that there is a new bus in circulation which has updated decals. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Transportation Department has been very busy with rides.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout with Police Department stats from September 2019. Chief Winders stated that Officer Michael Perrault graduates from the police academy on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Chief Winders stated that the department received one new police car and is waiting on the other new car to come in. Mayor Bhasker asked what the procedures are for citing someone to municipal court. Chief Winders stated that an officer giving a citation will ask if the person wants to pay the fine or go to trial. Chief Winders stated that the person will then either pay the fine or have a trial date set by municipal court.

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Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill & Recycling Superintendent, stated that operations are normal in the landfill and sanitation departments. Mr. Lucero stated that survey stakes have been placed for the new cell at the landfill. Mayor Bhasker stated that a letter had been sent to local businesses requesting that a corral be built for their dumpster. Mayor Bhasker stated that a corral is helpful in keeping trash from blowing all over.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that all of the Fire Department equipment is up and running. Chief Gonzales stated that two department employees were deployed for 400 days. Chief Gonzales stated that their positions have been filled with full-time, temporary people who are fully-certified. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that the department will be applying for a grant for a new ambulance.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with County Manager Michael Hawkes and one item discussed was a ten-year analysis of the City's ambulance service which also serves Socorro County. Mayor Bhasker stated that over ten years, the County has given the City \$346,000 but that \$316,000 of that has been reimbursed to the County. Mayor Bhasker stated that the County has helped the City with costs of ambulance service with \$30,000 over ten years.

Polo Pineda, IT Director, stated that he has been busy submitting reimbursements for the State appropriations the City received. Mr. Pineda urged residents to sign up for the City's alert system in order to receive important notifications from the City.

Councilor Dean stated that she will be meeting with Felipe Romero, the City's Tourism Office Manager, the following morning to discuss the coordination of events in the Socorro area.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, gave a review of the following departments:

Parks – finished aerating all the parks, tilled and reseeded Sedillo Park, installed two benches with canopies at the tennis courts, painted two pickle ball courts, continues to do trash and weed cleanup around the City.

Water – cleaned the ponds, work on water leaks, will replace a pipe at Reservoir tank, will replace a water line on Bullock Avenue and providing traffic control for the company working on the sewer line.

Production – cleaned all of the lift stations, addressing sewer calls, weekly maintenance. There was a manhole that collapsed and the cost of repairs was \$32,000.

WWTP – cleaned sand out of the equipment that came in due to the manhole collapsing, making daily rounds.

Mr. Martinez also reported on Finley Gym and Youth Center as the director of those departments is currently out on leave. The report includes:

-there were 19 youth participants in volleyball.

-there were 23 youth registered in flag football camp.

-youth basketball registration forms were sent to students through the school system.

-the haunted house will be on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> at Finley Gym.

-Finley Gym staff will be assisting with the Toby Jaramillo's annual food drive and will host Turkey Bingo.

Mr. Martinez stated that there will be a public input meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. to gather information from the public regarding the Finley Gym renovations.

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Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's Rodeo Arena won the "top footing" award given by the Turquoise Barrel Racing Circuit. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City won out of the 21 arenas used by the circuit. Mayor Bhasker stated that the award will be given on December 4<sup>th</sup> during the Nationals Final Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mayor Bhasker stated that the award is sponsored by Justin Boots.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Changes**

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

Robert Serna - 10-21-19 – Administration - Resignation  
Natasha Otero - 10-21-19 – Dispatch - New Hire\*(Dispatcher) - A-20  
Rena Ganadonegro - 10-21-19 – Dispatch - New Hire\*(Dispatcher) - A-20  
Michael Padilla - 11-1-19 – Fire - Completed Probation - A-28 to A-29  
Aidan Aragon - 10-1-19 – Fire - Certification (EMT-B) - A-28 to A-30  
Aidan Aragon - 11-1-19 – Fire - Completed Probation - A-30 to A-31

Temporary New Hires: Sheree Torres

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Paul Foulenfont, Jerry Griego, David Chavez, Deekota 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**

Mayor Bhasker read the business registrations:

Sara Demorest – C-2 – 101 Manzanares St. – Sara Demorest – Teaching Yoga

There was discussion regarding the actual location of the business which comes back as the HUB which is a center for non-profit organizations. Mayor Bhasker stated that it would be best for the owner to speak to the City Administration or City Council to provide an explanation of the location. The item died for lack of a motion.

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**c. Voucher Run**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 149043 to 149344 in the amount of \$815,809.57, plus Payroll Transfers (\$330,327.64), for a total of \$1,146,137.21. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, 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, November 4, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:23 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

**THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Ravi Bhasker, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Stephanie Saavedra, City Clerk**