

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting  
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801  
January 6, 2020**

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 Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Nick Fleming and Councilor Peter Romero. Councilor Toby Jaramillo was absent.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker and Connie Chavez-Lopez led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 6, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. December 16, 2019**

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

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Mayor Bhasker congratulated Councilor Jaramillo on his successful, 50<sup>th</sup> annual food drive.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Resolution No. 20-01-06a – Open Meetings Resolution**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 20-01-06a. Ms. Saavedra stated that the resolution follows requirements made by New Mexico State Statute for open meetings.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-01-06a. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**b. Resolution No. 20-01-06b – Governing Body Rules of Procedure Resolution**

Ms. Saavedra presented Resolution No. 20-01-06b which, if approved, reaffirms the Governing Body Rules of Procedure adopted April 7, 2014 and recognizes those rules as the method by which the Socorro City Council meetings are conducted.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-01-06b. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Agreement – Lobbying Activities – MJS Consulting**

Mayor Bhasker presented a one-year agreement between the City of Socorro and MJS Consulting for floodplain management and lobbying services. Matejka Santillanes, of MJS Consulting, stated that she has been a government and public relations consultant for 27 years for other cities, counties, the PRC and colleges. Jay Santillanes, of MJS Consulting, stated that during his time of employment with the City, he became a certified floodplain manager and was involved with the ongoing levy certification project. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's Ordinance Code, Chapter 151, states that the City will appoint a floodplain manager. Mayor Bhasker stated that the floodplain management project has been going on for over 30 years. Mayor Bhasker stated that during that time, a portion of the levy was certified but that the rest of the levy has not been certified. Mayor Bhasker stated that when the rest of the levy gets certified, the documents will have to go to the FEMA who will then update the floodplain maps. Mr. Santillanes stated that a

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floodplain manager also has to sign certificates for homes regarding their floodplain status. Mr. Santillanes stated that once the remaining portion of levy is certified, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy will maintain that portion of the levy. Mr. Santillanes stated that once the maps are updated, all of the City will be outside of the floodplain area.

Councilor Olguin asked if there was an employee in-house who could do floodplain management to which Mayor Bhasker replied no. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is down 40 employees from previous years and current employees are already “wearing several hats”. Councilor Olguin asked if there will be a succession plan to which the Mayor replied not at this time. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels this is the best and cheapest option for the City at this time. Mayor Bhasker stated that Mr. and Mrs. Santillanes have many years of experience. Councilor Olguin stated that he agrees with the work performed by lobbyists. Councilor Olguin stated that his concern is that there has been no discussion about the City having a lobbyist in years. Councilor Olguin stated that he would like to see what Mr. Santillanes has accomplished for other cities during his time as a lobbyist. Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that the Mayor has the authority to sign a contract for up to \$70,000. Mr. Monette stated that the Mayor brought the item to the City Council as an act of transparency. Councilor Dean stated that she feels like lobbying and floodplain management are two different things and should have two separate contracts. Councilor Dean stated that she feels the City Council should have been given other options.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the agreement between the City of Socorro and MJS Consulting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked what the plan will be if Mr. Santillanes is unable to continue with floodplain management. Mayor Bhasker stated that the contract is only for one year. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Council is welcome to put together a request for qualifications for a floodplain manager and advertise to the public. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City needs to continue to move forward with the certification of the rest of the levy and the City cannot afford to retain a costly engineer. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is trying to keep the City’s costs down. Mayor Bhasker stated that the certification of the levy is the big part of the contract and then there will be small steps that will have to continue after the certification. Demecio Silva, Street Superintendent, stated that the City currently maintains the parts of the levy that are already certified.

Councilor Olguin asked if there are penalties to not having a floodplain manager to which Mr. Santillanes replied no but the City will not be following its own ordinance. Councilor Salome asked where the funds for the contract will be coming from. Mayor Bhasker replied that some of Mr. Santillanes’ former salary has been used to compensate employees who took over Mr. Santillanes’ duties and that there are still funds to cover the contract. Councilor Salome stated that Ordinance 151 is a detailed ordinance and asked if the potential contractor would adhere to all of the requirements within the Ordinance. Mr. Monette stated that he had met with the NM Secretary of Transportation’s staff who suggested the City have a lobbyist. Mr. Monette stated that the levy could be certified as soon as April. Mayor Bhasker stated that he learned of Mr. Santillanes’ retirement from the City in November and only had a month to figure how to distribute some of his duties so he decided to approach MJS Consulting.

Mayor Bhasker asked for the vote. Councilor Olguin voted against approving the contract. The remaining City Council members voted in favor of approving the contract.

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**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilor Salome stated that the Senior Center Committee met and discussed the upcoming year which will be a plan and design year. Councilor Salome stated that the senior center needs a shuttle and a couple of trucks so that they can deliver meals to seniors in inclement weather. Councilor Salome stated that the senior center also needs security lights and cameras. Councilor Salome stated that the senior center's bingo night has been a big success. Councilor Salome stated that the senior center is short two staff members.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration talked to the County Manager and offered to assist with transportation services. Mayor Bhasker stated that he never heard back. Mayor Bhasker stated that since both entities have a transportation system, rather than duplicate services, the City suggested working together. Mayor Bhasker stated that he also discussed having a senior venue, with combined staff, at Finley Gym once it has been remodeled.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilor Romero asked about the status of the ceiling tiles in the Council Chambers. Mr. Monette stated that the company who checked for mold in the Administration offices did detect mold in those areas. Mr. Monette stated that the company suggested that the City clean the carpets, remove the live plants and replace all of the ceiling tiles.

Mayor Bhasker stated that there will be a dinner on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at Bodega with the Mayor of Casas Grande, Mexico and three of their City Councilors. Mayor Bhasker invited the City Council and any other interested parties to attend.

**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:

Jay Santillanes - 12-31-19 – Transportation - Retirement  
Rena Ganadonegro - 12-11-19 – Dispatch - Voluntary Resignation by Abandonment  
Jeriana Contreras - 12-31-19 - Animal Shelter - Resignation  
Cheyenne Cortez - 1-6-20 – Dispatch - New Hire (Dispatcher)\* - A-20  
Colton Wheeler - 1-16-20 – Fire - New Hire (FF/EMT Recruit)\* - A-32  
Christopher Rodriguez - 1-16-20 – Fire - New Hire (FF/EMT Recruit)\* - A-32  
Leo Peterson - 1-16-20 – Fire - Temporary New Hire (FF/EMT Recruit) - A-32

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**b. Business Registrations**

Councilor Hicks motioned to approve the Business Registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Albuquerque Asphalt Inc. - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM – Corporation - General Construction  
CC Construction - Out of Town - Belen, NM - Chris Chavez - General Construction

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Hotspot Ranch - Out of Town - Polvadera, NM - Ryan & Kerriann Hanson - Overnight Rental  
Gazelle Stay (Movement Motor Inns LLC) - C-2 - 807 Highway 85 - Erick & Karen Baer - Hotel  
CAS Enterprises Inc. - Out of Town - Roswell, NM - Clint Satterfield – Roofing

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:49 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

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

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/s/  
**Ravi Bhasker, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

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