

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**February 3, 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 Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Nick Fleming and Councilor Peter Romero. Councilor Gordy Hicks was absent.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 3, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. January 21, 2020**

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

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**a. Festival of the Cranes - Update**

Julie-Anna Blomquist, Festival of the Cranes Coordinator, gave an update of the 32nd Annual Festival of the Cranes event. Ms. Blomquist thanked the City for supporting the event annually with Lodger's Tax funds. Ms. Blomquist thanked the City's Police Department, Transportation Department and any other City staff that assisted in the event. Ms. Blomquist stated that this year, the event was 4 days long and there were 871 registered participants. Ms. Blomquist gave the Mayor and Council each a Festival of the Cranes mug. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City gave the event \$10,000 in funds this year. Mayor Bhasker thanked Ms. Blomquist for her update.

Dr. Bill Stone, the NM Tech liaison, stated that the president of NM Tech is reorganizing his administration in order to centralize both academic and student matters. Dr. Stone stated that NM Tech continues to work on recruiting students from surrounding states. Dr. Stone stated that today was NM Tech Day at the NM Legislature. Dr. Stone stated that enrollment numbers look steady for the new year.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with the City's lobbyist and the NM Department of Transportation (NMDOT) who believe the City will be able to secure funding for reconstruction and landscaping of Bullock Avenue. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like Bullock Avenue to be a nice boulevard to NM Tech. Mayor Bhasker stated that it will be a \$4 million project. Mayor Bhasker asked Dr. Stone to pass along the information to the president at NM Tech.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the NMDOT started a sidewalk project along California Street. Mayor Bhasker stated that the NMDOT plans to repave California Street. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to see better highway signage showing what Socorro has to offer and the NMDOT has agreed to work together to make that happen.

Councilor Romero stated that this would be the last City Council meeting that Mike and Sherry McGuire would be attending. Councilor Romero stated that the McGuires are local residents who have attended many Council meetings and other community events. Councilor Romero thanked the McGuires for being good citizens. Mr. McGuire stated that he and his wife would be moving to Lincoln, Nebraska in two weeks.

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**b. Inventors & Entrepreneurs Workshop at NMT – Dr. Peter Anselmo**

Dr. Peter Anselmo did not attend the Council meeting so Mayor Bhasker asked Dr. Stone if he knew any information about the event. Dr. Stone stated that he believes the Annual Inventors and Entrepreneurs Workshop will be held on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at NM Tech. Dr. Stone stated that it has been a very successful event in prior years. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will continue to provide a scholarship for community residents who are interested in participating.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Grants Presentation**

Kirsten Kellar provided several handouts including information about The HUB, MRGEDA, Mental Health Services in Socorro and Food Resources in Socorro County. Ms. Kellar gave a brief update on the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association. Ms. Kellar stated that MRGEDA meets regularly regarding the following topics: Agribusiness, Arts, Entertainment & Tourism, Healthcare, Renewable Energy, Technology and Workforce/Education. Ms. Kellar stated that MRGEDA is developing a new economic development guide and a birding brochure for Socorro. Ms. Kellar stated that on March 13<sup>th</sup>, MRGEDA will host a Spaceport tour. Ms. Kellar stated that the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board's past and current events include: Annual Fall Festival, Active Shooter training, Toys for Tots Drive, community garden, Teen Division Program and Girl's Circle.

Samantha Winter stated that the Socorro County Prevention Coalition recently received a new shipment of drug disposal bags and safety lock boxes. Ms. Winter stated that Savannah Morris will be stepping down as the SCPC director and Jill Bratton will be taking over. Ms. Winter stated that Ms. Bratton, through the Students Offering Solutions Program, held two successful suicide prevention days. Ms. Winter stated that they just received their 501C3 which will allow them to do more with their programs. Ms. Winter stated that the summer/winter farmer's market is still ongoing. Ms. Winter stated that in winter, the market is held inside the Teen Center and in the summer, it is at the Plaza.

Ms. Kellar and Ms. Winter provided the Mayor, City Council and City staff with Certificates of Appreciation for continuing to act as the fiscal agent and supporting the programs. Mayor Bhasker asked where the HUB is located to which Ms. Kellar stated it is a community resource building located at the corner of Manzanares Street and California Street.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Chamber of Commerce office appears to have moved and asked if anyone knew where. It did not appear that anyone knew of the new location.

**b. Resolution No. 20-02-03 – Transfer of Land to Socorro Vista LLLP for Multifamily Rental Housing Development**

Councilor Chavez-Lopez, who is also the Director of the El Camino Real Housing Authority, presented Resolution No. 20-02-03 which, if approved, allows the City Administration to transfer approximately 5 acres of land in the City's Industrial Park to Socorro Vista LLLP for the purpose of developing a 32-unit affordable housing project. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the funding has been secured and the units will be serving special needs residents. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the location will have several services including a food pantry and mental health services. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that it is a \$5-6 million project.

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Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-02-03. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously with Councilor Chavez-Lopez abstaining.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Councilor Romero asked again if anyone knew where the Chamber of Commerce is now located. Again, it did not appear that anyone knew the location. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City no longer provides funding for the Chamber of Commerce. Ruby Lopez, Finance Officer, stated that she has been trying to contact Colleen Gino, Chamber of Commerce president, and has been unable to do so.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Bhasker reported on the current legislative session. Mayor Bhasker stated that he testified on behalf of the City and the Friends of the El Camino Real. Mayor Bhasker stated that Representative Romero from Albuquerque had a bill that would fund some of the interpretation and grant that might be coming from different communities along the El Camino Real. Mayor Bhasker stated that there was a meeting with the secretary of DCA who was also asking for increased funding (up to \$5 million) for buildings. Mayor Bhasker stated that he also met with Vince Martinez who is the secretary of DoIt and they have monies for wi-fi. Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with Larry McGraw, who is the USDA representative who works with the SEC and their loans, and made it very clear to him where the City is headed with its electric initiative. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is waiting for the court system to make a decision on the Declaratory Judgement filed against the City by the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the letter of intent from Guzman Energy will be presented at the next City Council meeting for consideration. Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with the NM Finance Authority who were receptive to the City applying for a loan with them. Mayor Bhasker stated that the NMFA wanted some guarantees from GRT's. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has not raised GRT's other than one raise for environmental GRT for the landfill. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has approximately \$800,000 left on .6125%. Mayor Bhasker stated that the GRT's are no longer separated out by type (economic development, environmental, police, etc.) but are now combined as one GRT. Mayor Bhasker stated that the NMFA suggested activating some of the leftover GRT to help with the loan. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is initially looking to construct a 10 megawatt station costing \$7.5 million (\$500,000 will be for engineering and a business plan). Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would have to meet NMFA's criteria including a 1.25 margin to be able to get a \$7 million loan for the remainder. Mayor Bhasker stated that Guzman Energy had offered 8% and 14% but that NMFA would be less than 3%. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may have to go with the 8% to get started on the \$500,000 but will later switch to a NMFA loan. Mayor Bhasker stated that another alternative is to offer electricity to the whole City. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City must get the court's decision on the filings prior to moving forward with the project.

Councilor Salome asked if the loan will be approved if the amount the City will charge per kilowatt hour is above the cost to produce the kilowatt hour. Ms. Lopez stated that it will be based on the revenue in a one-year period. Councilor Salome asked if the rate will be significantly less than what people are paying

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today. Mayor Bhasker stated that it will be significantly less. Mayor Bhasker stated that if you are selling 10 megawatts, there are 730 hours per month times 12 times the rate that you're selling it, it is the amount of money you would generate for those 10 megawatts. Mayor Bhasker stated that NMFA will want to know the cost of electricity, the cost of the wheeling, the cost of operating and maintenance and the debt service which are the four items that will go into the rate. Mayor Bhasker stated that the rate will be set for ten years at the rate of 3.9 (the SEC is paying 8.3). Mayor Bhasker stated that SEC is charging 15 to 17 cents per kilowatt. Mayor Bhasker stated that this is without their proposed rate increase. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would then have to go to NM Tech, Socorro General Hospital, Socorro High School, Good Sam Nursing Home and Dicaperl to show them what the City can offer them. Mayor Bhasker stated the City would have to get a contract with them, put the whole packet together and show it to NMFA.

**a. Personnel Changes**

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the Personnel Changes as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Joe Lopez - 1-16-20 - Wastewater/Production - Termination  
Stephen Jojola - 2-1-20 – Fire - Certification (EMT-B License) - B-38 to B-40  
Dylan Coslin - 2-3-20 – Police - New Hire\*(Police Officer) - A-43

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

**b. Business Registrations**

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

Simply About Movement Dance – C-2 – 420 California Street – Samuel Vivian Jr. – Dance Studio

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

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

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

**ATTEST:**

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