

**City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**October 6, 2014**

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pat Salome, City Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Ernest Pargas and Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez. Councilor Donald Monette and Councilor Gordy Hicks were absent.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 6, 2014 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. September 15, 2014**

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

**PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS**

**a. Retirement from Socorro Public Library – Paula Mertz**

Mayor Bhasker presented a retirement plaque to Paula Mertz who retired as the City's Library Director on September 30, 2014. Mayor Bhasker read the plaque which recognizes Paula's 24 years of service to the City of Socorro. Ms. Mertz thanked the City for providing her the opportunity to work for the City. Ms. Mertz's son, brother and sister-in-law also attended the meeting. Mayor Bhasker, the City Councilors, Pat Salome and Mable Gonzales thanked Ms. Mertz for her service at the library.

**b. Proclamation – National Manufacturing Day**

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation which proclaimed October 1, 2014 as National Manufacturing Day in the City of Socorro.

**c. Proclamation – National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week**

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation which proclaims October 5-11, 2014 as National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week in the City of Socorro.

**d. Proclamation – Lights on After School Day**

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation which proclaims October 23, 2014 as Lights on After School Day in the City of Socorro. Cindy Rivera, Youth Center Director, stated that the Youth Center is participating in Lights on After School Day with educational games for the students.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

John Mann stated that after his last complaint regarding speeding in school zones, he has witnessed more traffic stops by City police officers and thanked the City for their effort. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration put information in the City utility bills regarding traffic safety.

Greg Miller provided a handout to the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Miller stated that he lives in the Florida area and that he has two complaints. Mr. Miller stated that there is an issue with loose dogs in the area and feels the owners should be cited. Mr. Miller stated that there is also an issue with enforcement regarding refuse, derelict housing/cars and questionable construction. Mike Winders, Police Chief, stated that over the past several days, Animal Control has been able to catch several loose dogs in that area. Mayor Bhasker stated that the judicial process is also a part of enforcement regarding the loose animal citations. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would send Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, to review the other issues regarding property. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Miller for his community involvement.

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Dave Finley stated that the recent M Mountain Fly-In was a successful event. Mr. Finley thanked the City and the many volunteers who helped make the event a success.

Deb Caldwell, Chamber of Commerce Director, stated that Socorrofest would be held the following weekend. Ms. Caldwell thanked everyone for their assistance in planning the event. Ms. Caldwell stated that Simone Armijo created the design for the t-shirts. Ms. Caldwell stated that there will be bands, food, arts and crafts and beer and wine at the event.

Isaac Burleigh, of Healthy Kids Socorro County, thanked the City for placing "Share the Road" signs around the City for bicyclists. Mr. Burleigh also thanked the City for encouraging alternate transportation. Mr. Burleigh stated that October 15<sup>th</sup> is National Bike to School Day.

**a. United Blood Services – Battle of the Badge Trophy Presentation**

Monica Herrera, from United Blood Services, thanked the City for participating in the annual Battle of the Badge Blood Drive where donors can vote for a winner between the Fire Department and Law Enforcement. Ms. Herrera provided a plaque and asked Police Chief Winders to present the plaque to the Socorro Fire Department, who were the winners of the event. Ms. Herrera stated that the plaque is a traveling award for the friendly competition that encourages people to donate blood and vote for a department. Ms. Herrera stated that the next blood drive will be held January 19<sup>th</sup> at the City's Youth Center. Ms. Herrera asked if the City could once again give 2 hours of personal holiday time to City employees who donate as there were more donations when it was given in the past. Mr. Salome stated that the City Administration can update the previous resolution to approve the personal holiday hours for City employees who donate. Mr. Salome and Ms. Rivera also thanked Carol Palmer who assisted with the blood drive and provided t-shirts.

**FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY**

**a. Ordinance No. 14-10-06 – Land Exchange – Highlands Pond**

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 14-10-06 which, if approved, agrees to the exchange of 3.795 acres of City property for 3.898 acres of property owned by Bursum Family Trust, LLC (the two properties have been appraised at equal value). Mayor Bhasker stated that when the City built the berm for the Highlands Pond drainage project, the City encroached on private property and the owners of the property feel they can no longer use the property for development. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City could purchase said property or exchange a piece of City property equal in value. Mayor Bhasker stated that there were appraisals of both properties done. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City property that is proposed to be exchanged is located along the northern border of Rodeo Access Road. Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance is on the agenda for approval for publication only.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 14-10-06 for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Resolution No. 14-10-06a – CDBG Policies (Citizen Participation Plan, Section 3 Plan, Fair Housing Plan, Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance Plan)**

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, explained that the CDBG Program requires that entities have a Citizen Participation Plan, a Section 3 Plan, a Fair Housing Policy and a Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance Plan in place in order to be able to apply for funds. Mr. Santillanes stated that the resolution presented has been approved by the City Council in previous years and CDBG requests that municipalities periodically reconfirm their approval of the resolution. Mr. Santillanes briefly described each policy presented under the resolution.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-10-06a. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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**b. Resolution No. 14-10-06b – Sewer Line Extension Project**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 14-10-06b which, if approved, authorizes Mayor Ravi Bhasker as the signatory and Bobbi Gonzales and Pat Salome as the official representatives for the sewer line extension project. Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, gave an update on the status of the project.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-10-06b. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

**c. RFP Award – Comprehensive Plan with an Affordable Housing Component**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City received RFP's for a comprehensive plan with an affordable housing component. Mr. Salome stated that it was the Administration's recommendation that the RFP be awarded to Sites Southwest who received 286 points (second place received 283 points and third place received 276 points). Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the comprehensive plan is needed in order to bring more affordable housing and an assisted living facility into Socorro. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the NM Mortgage Finance Authority is providing the funding for the comprehensive plan.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to award the RFP for the comprehensive plan with an affordable housing component to Sites Southwest. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Budget Resolutions**

**1. No. 1 – Community Transformation Grant Fund**

Resources are Department of Health Grant – Requirements are Other Adm Expense & Contractual Services – The amount is \$40,000 – The increase is need to allow for the grant award.

**2. No. 2 – Wastewater Improvement Fund**

Resources are Transfer from Joint Enterprise-Wastewater & Transfer to Joint Enterprise-Wastewater – The amount is \$100,000 – The transfer is needed to allow for cash balance available during the project.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Budget Resolutions 1 and 2. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilor Pargas provided three handouts to the Mayor and Council. The handouts contained information regarding the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board (history, activities, vision, mission and purpose) and a fiscal agent flow chart showing the City's relationship with SCOPE, Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board, Health Kids Socorro County, Socorro County Prevention Coalition and the Mayor's Drug Task Force. Councilor Pargas stated that when he was campaigning for City Council, he heard that there was a significant drug problem in Socorro and the solution would be a treatment facility. Councilor Pargas gave an update of activities he has participated in since 2002 to address the issue of drugs and other health, safety and quality of life issues. Councilor Pargas stated that the stats regarding binge drinking and current use of painkillers (among other things) have gone down in the last two years. Councilor Pargas stated that he would like to bring a treatment professional to a future City Council meeting to discuss whether a treatment facility would benefit Socorro. Councilor Pargas stated that he would like to end his report with the question "What are we doing as role models for our children?"

Mable Gonzales, Treasurer, stated that the Utility Committee has not met recently as she is currently working extensively on water and wastewater rates. Ms. Gonzales stated that she hopes to meet the following week to propose the rates to the committee.

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Councilor Olguin stated that the Economic Development Committee has been assisting with the Socorrofest event. Councilor Olguin stated that he will be getting a focus group together to identify where the committee would like to go. Councilor Olguin asked if the City had passed a local economic development act. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has not passed the act. Councilor Olguin stated that he would like to revisit the issue. Mayor Bhasker stated that the committee is welcome to present the matter but administratively he is against passing the act. Mayor Bhasker stated that committee can make the presentation and lay the groundwork and let the City Council know how the committee feels regarding the act. Mr. Salome stated that the matter has been discussed in the past. Councilor Olguin stated that he would like to see the minutes where the matter has been discussed in the past.

Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to rate increases, Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC) customers will soon be experiencing a rate increase. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC general manager, Joseph Herrera, was invited to the City Council meeting to discuss the increase but that he refused the invitation and wanted to meet only with the City Clerk. Mayor Bhasker stated that the public has a right to know why the rates are increasing and that it would have been reasonable for the general manger to attend the City Council meeting to discuss the rate increase openly. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels Mr. Herrera had an obligation, as stated in the seven cooperative principles under community involvement, to attend the City Council meeting and report on the rate increase. Mr. Salome stated that the general manager provided him with a date and time to meet at the SEC to which Mr. Salome's reply was an invitation to the general manager to have the discussion at the City Council meeting. Mr. Salome stated that the general manager was not interested in addressing the City Council and that he would like to meet on another date and that Mr. Salome could give the information to the City Council.

Mayor Bhasker expressed his feelings regarding a recent Letter to the Editor from Gary Jaramillo in the El Defensor Chieftain and the newspaper's willingness to print the letter without checking the facts in the content of the letter. Eric Heinz, from the El Defensor Chieftain, stated that the newspaper does not edit the letters for content unless it is obscene or an unsubstantiated claim is being made. Mayor Bhasker stated that the letter contained unsubstantiated, false, libelous and salacious information. Mr. Heinz suggested Mayor Bhasker meet with the newspaper's editor, Anthony Welch, and stated that he would bring Mr. Welch to the next City Council meeting. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would be happy to share the many letters the City has received from Mr. Jaramillo. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the items that the El Defensor Chieftain prints in the newspaper regarding the City of Socorro are irrelevant to actually what goes on in the City. Mayor Bhasker stated that the newspaper is an instrument and contributor to Mr. Jaramillo's libelous and salacious statements. Mayor Bhasker stated that it would have been a courtesy for the newspaper to contact the City to ask if the content in the letter had any merit.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Salome reported out of executive session the discussion of two personnel matters. No action was taken.

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**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Lease Purchase of Rear-Load Garbage Truck**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would like to enter into a lease purchase from MCT Industries for a rear-load garbage truck. Mayor Bhasker stated that the lease purchase is for the amount of \$132,342.00 and will be financed by Kansas Bank of Manhattan for 60 months (\$2,435.49 per month with an interest rate of 3.970%). Mayor Bhasker stated that the funds are in the budget and City Council approval is required.

Councilor Jaramillo made a motion to approve the lease purchase from MCT Industries for a rear-load garbage truck. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**b. October 22, 2014 – Levy Construction Groundbreaking Ceremony**

Mayor Bhasker stated that there will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the levy construction project on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and invited everyone to attend. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Army Corps of Engineers awarded the project to Kirtland Construction. Mayor Bhasker stated that the \$20 million project consists of reconstruction of 12 miles of the levy.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to honor Subhas Shah who is retiring from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Mayor Bhasker stated that Mr. Shah has done a tremendous job for the Socorro area and he would like to honor him with a proclamation at the next City Council meeting.

**c. Reporting on Personnel Changes**

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

Salvador Rodarte – 9-26-14 – Police – Resignation

Bert Padilla – 10-6-14 – Landfill – Promotion to Equipment Operator II – B-23 to B-36

Reyes Rosas – 10-6-14 – Auto Maintenance – Salary Adjustment – X-42 to X-44

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Business Registrations**

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Positive Energy Solar – Out of Town – Not Listed – Corporation – Selling, Designing & Installing PV Solar Systems

New Mexico Concrete Cutting Co. Inc. – Out of Town – Rio Rancho, NM – Randy Nelson – Concrete/Asphalt Drilling & Sawing

RR Trash Service – Out of Town – San Acacia, NM – LeAnn Freyer – Trash Pickup Service

O'Connor Brothers Design Build – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Brian & Sean O'Connor - Construction

Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

**e. Next City Council Meeting Announcement**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting would be held on Monday, October 20, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:46 p.m., Councilor Fleming motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

