

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 16, 2020 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. March 2, 2020

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that due to COVID-19, the public has been encouraged to watch the City Council meeting online. Mayor Bhasker stated that if anyone has questions about the meeting, they can contact (by phone or e-mail) City Hall and staff will be happy to assist.

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamations – Socorro Financial Literacy Day

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation regarding the importance of financial literacy. In the proclamation, Mayor Bhasker proclaimed April 6, 2020 as Socorro Financial Literacy Day in Socorro.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Coronavirus Precaution Discussion

Mayor Bhasker provided a handout with information about how to determine if you have the coronavirus, the flu, allergies or a common cold. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration had a meeting with City Department Heads earlier in the day to determine which departments will be closed and which departments will provide limited contact with the public. Mayor Bhasker stated that the symptoms of coronavirus include a fever, cough and shortness of breath. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has been working with the hospital to address the issue. Mayor Bhasker stated that there are now tests for coronavirus but people should call ahead before they seek medical attention. Mayor Bhasker stated that he also met with the President of NM Tech, Dr. Wells, to discuss what will happen when their students return to school. Mayor Bhasker suggested that NMT send their students information now so they can self-check and self-quarantine if needed. Mayor Bhasker also suggested that upon their return, the students take a five question test to see if they can attend class or if they need to self-quarantine. Councilor Dean stated that she heard students may be finishing their classes for the semester online. Mayor Bhasker stated that the coronavirus does not attach to dust rather it settles on surfaces and stays there. Mayor Bhasker stated that masks have been downgraded from the N95's to surgical masks. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will place an ad in the newspaper letting them know about closures and other changes. Mayor Bhasker stated

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that road projects are ongoing and emergency services are still operating. Mayor Bhasker stated that the transportation van will give local residents a ride to the store or to a medical appointment but all the other routes have been suspended. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Recreation Department has a fogger (that will be shared with other departments) to disinfect buildings and vehicles. Mayor Bhasker stated his biggest concern is to prevent City staff from being exposed to the virus. Mayor Bhasker stated that employees with children at home have been allowed to go home.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Governor signed off on the \$1.4 million in funding for Socorro's 911 Upgrade, Finley Gym remodel and Eagle Picher fencing but did not sign off on the two road projects.

b. Guzman Energy – Letter of Intent – Discussion Only

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City and Guzman Energy are prepared to move forward but must wait for the court to make a ruling on the SEC's case. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is ready to move forward with the ten-year fixed rate and the City doing the financing. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the court says the City can proceed, the City will repeal the franchise agreement. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will then speak with the US Department of Agriculture to see if the City can renegotiate the loan and take over the entire city. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the USDA does not agree, the City will move forward with the Industrial Park area. Mayor Bhasker stated that Guzman has agreed to spend \$100,000 on legal fees if the City spends \$100,000 as well. Mayor Bhasker stated that Guzman will not expect payment back for their \$100,000. Councilor Hicks asked about outside the City limits to which the Mayor replied the City has no leverage outside the City limits right now and it depends on what the court rules.

c. Resolution No. 20-03-16 – NMDOT Cooperative Agreement – Route Modification

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented Resolution No. 20-03-16 which, if approved, modifies the route of Cooperative Agreement Project CN L100442 with the New Mexico Department of Transportation to include "Bullock Avenue from California Street to Lopezville Road". Mr. Monette stated that this is funding not spent on Fairgrounds Road and that the City will also apply for a MAP project for Bullock Ave.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-03-16. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 2020 – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

1. *Citizen Participation*
2. *Fair Housing*
3. *Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance*
4. *Section 3*
5. *Procurement*

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 2020 which, if approved, approves the annual Community Development Block Grant policies.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approved Resolution No. 2020. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
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March 16, 2020

e. CDBG Project Selection

Mr. Monette stated that the City Administration is recommending the continuation of Cuba Road as the CDBG project. Mayor Bhasker stated that Cuba Road may need two more CDBG awards to complete the project.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Cuba Road as the CDBG project. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Hicks stated that there were 152 racers at the recent motorcycle races at Gordy's Hill. Councilor Hicks had photos of the event.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

The Department Heads were excused from the meeting due to COVID-19 precautions.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker stated that both Lodger's Tax and the Convention Tax will be going down but that the City will still need to make any existing loan payments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

Daniela Rivera - 3-2-20 - Animal Shelter - Resignation by Abandonment

Jerry Griego - 3-4-20 – Airport - Resignation

Aidan Aragon - 3-1-20 – Fire - FF I & II Certification - A-35 to A-40

Michael Benavidez - 3-16-20 - Street to Gas - Transfer to Gas Department Crewman II - L-30 to L-30 (No change.)

Temporary New Hires: Jordan Robles, Alvaro Alvarado, Tim Herrera

Temporary Renewals: Paul Foulenfont, David Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Taylor Saavedra, Enrique Robles, John Armijo, Steven Chavez, Jilberto Chavez, Sheree Torres, Casandra Trujillo, Scott Crespín, Leo Petersen, Alfredo Alvarado, Ryan Lopez, Melaine Gutierrez

Student Workers: Matthew Guzman, Autumn Martinez, Brandon Esquivel, Carlos Gonzales
Referees (3)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

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

Arcadis US Inc. - Out of Town - Highlands Ranch, CO – Corporation - Environmental Consulting

