

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**July 20, 2020**

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Bhasker took roll call.

Members physically present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker

Members remotely present at roll call were: Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr., Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Deborah Dean, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Nick Fleming. Councilor Toby Jaramillo passed away July 6, 2020.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bhasker stated that this City Council meeting is in compliance with the standards set forth by the NM Attorney' General's Office for teleconference meetings held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**APPROVAL OF JULY 20, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. June 15, 2020**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. After ensuring the amended minutes were acceptable to the Council, Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

None.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Request for Alley Abandonment/Vacation – Veronica Chavez**

Mayor Bhasker stated that Veronica Chavez has made a request to the City to vacate an alley located on her property at 212 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Ms. Chavez previously made a request to the City Council for vacation of this alley as well as additional piece of property at the same address but the request was denied.

Kristy Padilla, Planning and Zoning Manager, stated that Ms. Chavez is only requesting the alley within her property and not the additional piece previously requested. Ms. Chavez stated that the alley has never been used and is already fenced off. Ms. Chavez stated that she would like to remove the old fence and replace it with a new one (part of the existing fence is located within the alley). Ms. Chavez stated that there are no utilities on the property that the City would need access to. Councilor Salome asked Ms. Chavez for what purpose the City Council should approve the request. Ms. Chavez stated that she would like to make the property one whole property. Councilor Salome stated that previously, Betty Houston requested the vacation of an alley south of the KOA for the purpose of building a commercial building. Councilor Salome stated that the construction of a commercial building is a purposeful and meaningful reason. Councilor Salome stated that there are spaces for a trailer park and asked how utilities would get there. Councilor Salome asked what would happen if the City abates the property and then someone wants to install a trailer park there. Ms. Chavez stated that there is no room for trailer spaces and there is no access to the alley.

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Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ms. Chavez's request. The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero.

Councilor Hicks asked if the City can "kill" the property's future use as a trailer park and add that as an amendment to the motion. Councilor Hicks then withdrew the amendment.

After some discussion, Mayor Bhasker called for the question on the original motion and second. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion failed by a unanimous vote.

Ms. Chavez asked if she could still install new fencing around the property. Mayor Bhasker stated that Ms. Chavez can install a new fence on her property but not on the alley because the City Council denied her request.

**b. Legislative Update – MJS Consulting**

Matejka and Jay Santillanes, lobbyists for the City, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Santillanes stated that the handout includes a list of capital outlay projects for Socorro and a bill tracking list. Mr. Santillanes reviewed some of the bills that were heard during the recent special legislative session. Mr. Santillanes stated that some of the funds awarded to the City for Eagle Picher might be withdrawn. Mr. Santillanes stated that the funding awarded for dispatch and Finley Gym were not cut but the City needs to have their agreements for these projects in place by January. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is still waiting for funds to pave California Street and Bullock Avenue. Mr. Santillanes stated that those two streets should still be on the list. Mr. Santillanes discussed the new law enforcement "body cam" law. Mayor Bhasker stated that his biggest concern is the use "all the time and for all conversations" and gave the example of when he and the police chief have private conversations.

Mr. Santillanes stated that in regards to the levy, he has not heard anything back yet. Mr. Santillanes stated that he will follow-up and see if there is any updated information.

**c. Puerto Seguro Lease**

Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that the property in the lease is currently being utilized by Puerto Seguro. Mr. Monette stated that the original lease with NM Tech was approved at a previous council meeting and this is a sublease from that lease.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the lease renewal between City of Socorro & Puerto Seguro. The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome.

**d. Resolution No. 20-07-20a – Cooperative Agreement with NMDOT – Spring Street**

Mr. Monette presented Resolution No. 20-07-20 which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative MAP Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, pavement rehabilitation/improvements, construction management, drainage and miscellaneous improvements to Spring Street from US 60 to Park City Drive. Mr. Monette stated that the total project cost is \$40,000 with the NMDOT funding 75% and the City funding 25%.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20a. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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**e. Resolution No. 20-07-20b – South Central Council of Governments 20-21 Participation**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 20-07-20b which, if approved, would allow the City to participate in the South Central Council of Governments for FY 20-21. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SCCOG agreed to have a full-time grant writer in Socorro.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20b. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**f. Resolution No. 001A – Final Budget Approval for FY 20-21**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 001A which, if approved, adopts the final budget for the City of Socorro for FY 2020-2021. Mayor Bhasker stated that the budget does include salary increases that are listed under Personnel Changes later in the meeting.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Resolution No. 001A. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hicks.

Councilor Salome stated that in his opinion, this budget doesn't reflect the current economic conditions that the citizens of Socorro are working under during the COVID-19 pandemic. Councilor Salome stated that it is difficult to fund a budget without the certainty of knowing what the future holds. Councilor Salome stated that this pandemic has caused an economic downturn. Councilor Salome stated that this budget, and the expending of the funds without knowing how the City will continue to fund things, may result in the City raising gross receipts tax, property taxes and utility rates. Councilor Salome stated that the City has to be careful about where the pandemic is leading us. Councilor Salome stated that in order to be prudent, he feels the budget should be revisited with the current, extreme and negative effects of this pandemic in mind. Councilor Salome stated that there are temporary workers who were laid off due to COVID so additional compensation seems questionable. (Councilor Salome is referring to a large list of pay increases that are included in the packet.) Councilor Salome stated that residents are receiving less and orders regarding the pandemic are being sent down hand over fist. Mayor Bhasker asked Ms. Lopez what the proposed increases will cost. Ms. Lopez replied it would cost the City \$123,000 per year and the budget also accounts for the minimum wage increase in January. Councilor Salome stated that the City may need those additional funds in the future so the City should be very conservative about how it moves forward. Councilor Salome stated that residents are receiving less but having to pay more. Councilor Salome stated that the City government needs to look and feel like the community it serves.

Ms. Lopez stated that there were items that were cut on the preliminary budget but as revenue came in, the City has slowly been trying to reopen services. Ms. Lopez stated that one employee needs to be given a raise so that he doesn't leave for another position. Councilor Salome stated that he has no problem with that matter. Ms. Lopez listed several items included within the City's proposed budget. Ms. Lopez stated that she has to utilize the budget she made.

Councilor Romero stated that he agrees that it is a scary time and a second look should be taken at the proposed budget. Councilor Fleming stated that some of the raises were for employees taking on additional duties. Councilor Dean stated that she is on the Budget Committee and some of the raises have been discussed for some time and some of them are justified. Councilor Dean stated that there are a few raises that she is not comfortable with and there are a few raises that need to be revisited. Councilor Olguin stated that nobody has any idea what the future will look like. Mayor

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Bhasker stated that Jim Dewey Brown was laid off because there is no cash flow into Jim's department and the City also stopped the convention center remodel. Mayor Bhasker stated that gross receipts revenue is up 25%. Councilor Chavez-Lopez suggested that the City Council postpone the matter and revisit it at a special council meeting which will give the City Council more time to go over the budget. Ms. Lopez stated that the budget is due to the State by July 31<sup>st</sup>. Councilor Hicks stated that he has mixed feelings about the proposed budget. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is willing to discuss the increases with anyone.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Budget Committee will need to reconvene. Councilor Olguin stated that the gross receipts revenues should be watched. Mayor Bhasker stated that Councilor Dean and Councilor Fleming are on the Budget Committee and suggested that Councilor Salome be added as a third person on the committee. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels Councilor Salome's comments were inflammatory. Councilor Salome stated that the City Council has the responsibility of spending other people's money and it is not always an easy task. Councilor Fleming suggested Wednesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 a.m. for the Budget Committee meeting.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to postpone "Resolution No. 001A – Final Budget Approval for FY 20-21". The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**g. Resolution No. 20-07-20c – Vector Truck**

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 20-07-20c which, if approved, authorizes a loan agreement between the City of Socorro and NM Finance Authority in the amount of \$250,000 for the purpose of purchasing a new vector truck. Ms. Lopez stated that the truck costs \$300,000 and the USDA awarded \$50,000 towards the cost.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20c. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**h. Resolution No. 20-07-20d – RCAC Resolution – Wastewater Collection System**

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 20-07-20d which, if approved, allows the City to submit a loan application to the Rural Community Assistance Corporation for the purpose of wastewater collection system improvements.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20d. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**i. Resolution No. 20-07-20e – RCAC Resolution – Wastewater Reclamation Facility**

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 20-07-20e which, if approved, allows the City to submit a loan application to the Rural Community Assistance Corporation for the purpose of wastewater reclamation facility system improvements.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20e. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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**j. Resolution No. 20-07-20f – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Resolution**

Ms. Lopez presented Resolution No. 20-07-20f which, if approved, adopts the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter financial report for fiscal year 2019-2020. Ms. Lopez stated that the report shows that the ending cash balance for the prior year matches the beginning cash balance for the new year.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20f. The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**k. Budget Resolution No. 20-24**

**1. No. 20 – Rodeo Arena Fund**

Resources are Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance – Amount is \$78,000.00 – The transfer is needed to allow for expenditures.

**2. No. 21 – Sedillo Park Renovation Fund**

Resources are Beginning Cash Balance Available – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance – Amount is \$9,000.00 – The transfer is needed to allow for expenditures and original budget.

**3. No. 22 – Municipal Street Fund**

Resources are Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance – Amount is \$16,000.00 – The transfer is needed to allow for expenditures.

**4. No. 23 – Judicial Fund**

Resources are Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Automation Grant Expenses – Amount is \$3,000.00 – The transfer is needed to allow for expenditures.

**5. No. 24 – General Fund – Airport Operations Fund**

Resources are Beginning Cash Balance Available – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance – Amount is \$9,000.00 – The transfer is needed to allow for expenditures.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Budget Resolutions 20-24. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**l. In-House Budget Resolution No. 101-103**

Ms. Lopez explained that In-House Budget Resolutions 101 through 103 are adjustments within a department which are needed to allow for expenditures through the end of the fiscal year. Budget Resolutions 101 through 103 include adjustments in the General Fund and Joint Enterprise Fund.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve In-House Budget Resolutions 101-103. The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**m. City of Socorro ICIP – Public Input**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is currently working on its ICIP and asked anyone who would like a project added to the ICIP to present their information to the City for consideration. Councilor Olguin asked how the request for public input is being advertised. Mr. Monette replied that it is advertised on the agenda which is published on the City's website. Councilor Olguin requested that the request for public input be advertised better and suggested placing it in the City bills. Mayor Bhasker stated that the information can be sent out via the City's notification system.

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**n. Resolution No. 20-07-20g – Disposition of Police-Fire Vehicles**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 20-07-20g which, if approved, details the disposition of several vehicles that the City Council has already deemed surplus. Mr. Monette stated that the City is right to do a resolution deeming vehicles as surplus but the City also has to provide a disposition resolution for those vehicles.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-07-20g. The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Bhasker stated that Councilor Toby Jaramillo passed away and he would like to do a proclamation in his honor (which will be presented at a future meeting).

**a. Pending Lawsuit**

Mayor Bhasker stated that Judge Murdoch denied the City's motion to dismiss in the City's case with the Socorro Electric Cooperative. Mayor Bhasker stated that there will be a planning session to determine what the next step is regarding the case.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Romero family is suing the City for damages (sewer damage) and the case has been turned over to the City's insurance company for review.

**b. Appointment to WIA**

Mayor Bhasker asked Councilor Dean if she would like to continue with her role in the WIA to which Councilor Dean replied no. Mayor Bhasker asked anyone with a candidate to replace Ms. Dean to call him and let him know.

**c. Personnel Changes**

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

Placido Chavez - 7-1-20 – Water - Promotion to Heavy Equipment Operator III - C-23 to C-31

The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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

Jeremy Montano - 7-10-20 – Production - Resignation

Marcia Amaro - 7-8-20 - Animal Shelter - Resignation

John Brannan - 7-20-20 – Police - New Hire\*(Police Officer) - A-45

Mikayla Lopez - 7-20-20 - Animal Shelter - New Hire\*(Kennel Assistant) - A-32

The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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**d. Business Registrations**

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

Free-Space Ranch - Out of City Limits - 4000 Chaparral Dr. - Kenny Gonzales & T. Reese Janca - Wireless Internet Service Provider  
Dreamweaver - Out of Town - San Antonio, NM - Cynthia Pearse - Buying & Selling Alpaca/Llama Animals & Products  
Scoggin Mechanical Industries Inc. - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Charles & Annie Scoggin - Mechanical Contractor  
Pharmers LLC - C-2 - 118 Meek - Donald Romero - Manufacturing Medical Cannabis  
Creative Work Solutions LLC - C-2 - 1014 California Street - Robert Efford, CEO - Employment & Social Services  
Full Circle Recovery - C-2 - 100 6th Street - William Garberina - Mental Health Counseling Structures Inc. - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Tom Jackson, President - Contracting  
Salas Auto - Out of Town - Lemitar, NM - Kimberly Salas - Auto Mechanics  
Carl Spring - R-4 (Approved by P&Z) - 706 Memory Lane - Carl Spring - Custodial Service  
Tump Dogg LLC - R-4 (Approved by P&Z) - 519 Park Street - Orion Jaramillo - Online Retail/Wholesale (art & various items)

The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**e. Voucher Run**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 151178 to 151312 in the amount of \$284,985.28, plus Payroll Transfers (\$154,131.42), for a total of \$439,116.70. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 151313 to 151412 in the amount of \$246,682.57, plus Payroll Transfers (\$147,628.01), for a total of \$394,010.58. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be a special meeting on Wednesday July 29, 2020 at 12:00 Noon using GoToMeeting online.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

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

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

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk**