

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
August 17, 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. July 20, 2020

b. July 29, 2020

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2020 and July 29, 2020 meetings as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

John Riley addressed the council as a parent of a Cottonwood Valley Charter School student and lives east of the railroad tracks in an area that is under served with telecom and is suffering from the lack of necessary connectivity.

Mr. Riley is proposing to create a wireless grid and build a prototype that would shoot to the M-Mountain and back to hot spots in various locations using the internet at the City Pool or a School. This would be used for education on an emergency situation.

Mayor Bhasker suggested a meeting and possibly approach the State for COVID-19 funds.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. City's Response to COVID-19 Enforcement and Observation

Mayor Bhasker gave an update that there have been 16 City residents that have tested positive and all have recovered. Still checking on New Mexico Tech and other places that we have been informed about not following protocol, overall 95% are doing very well with mask wearing, social distancing, and personal hygiene.

Belen has 95 positive cases, Los Lunas 327 and with many traveling back and forth to Socorro, we would like to them to follow what we think is safe.

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b. Socorro General Hospital-Scope of Services/Response to COVID-19

Veronica Pound, Socorro General Hospital Administrator reported that all patients and employees are screened. Between March and July SGH has had the following COVID-19 data.

27 ER patients tested positive

8 Patients were sent home to self-quarantine

7 Patients were transferred

12 Admitted to SGH

4 Transferred to ICU

8 Sent home

Socorro County currently has 75 positive COVID-19 cases and 6 deaths, no deaths occurred at SGH.

Ms. Pound would like support for the mill levy that's on the ballot at the general election. The levy has been in effect since 1980 and will not increase taxes. It would raise a million dollars annual.

c. ICIP-Public Input-Third (3rd) Public Hearing

a. Councilors' Top Five (5) Priorities

b. ICIP Due Date September 18th

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go into public hearing. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker opened up the meeting to public hearing. Donald Monette, City Administer reported that the letter that Councilor Olguin requested to go out in the utility bills went out last month to make people aware of this meeting. Councilor Olguin asked if there were any responses and asked if they would count towards the public hearing? Mr. Monette stated that no responses were received. Councilor Hicks would like to add Douglas Place and Councilor Chavez-Lopez had a request to pave Eaton St. Mr. Monette stated that the ICIP is due September 18th and needs the Council to meet before that date to approve the resolution with the itemized list.

Councilor Hick made a motion that with no other input from the public to go back into regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Monette asked for the Councilors to get their top 5 recommendations to him and would compile the score sheets.

d. Resolution No. 20-08-17a – NMFA Application-Well Pump, Equipment and Meters

Councilor Olguin made a motion to pass Resolution No. 20-08-17a. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director reported that this is an application for a loan in the amount of \$150,000.00 for Evergreen Well to purchase a pump, VFD and the remaining funds to purchase water meters. Mayor Bhasker reported that four pumps that have burnt out for two reasons, lightning, and power surges. Latest one due to a power surge and have requested engineers to write a report and there is a report of a documented power surge that the Socorro Electric Cooperative did mention.

Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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e. In-House Budget Resolution #1-Revolving Loan Fund-Vector Payment

Councilor Hicks made a motion to pass Resolution No. 20-08-17a. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

f. Discussion-Donation of Sick Leave vs. Annual Leave (Personnel Manual)

Mayor Bhasker stated that we have been able to donate annual leave but now there is a suggestion about donating sick leave on a case by case basis when it comes to a COVID-19 related problem of quarantining. This is for discussion and to look at to see if the council wants to put into a resolution for the personnel ordinance. Mr. Monette read the Governors order from July 30, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

a. New Job Descriptions

Administrative Assistant/Assistant City Administrator

Payroll and Personnel Administrator

City Clerk/Procurement Officer/IT Director/Projects & Grants Admin/ED

Mr. Monette reported that Kristy Padilla will take on the Payroll and Personnel Administrator and Lena Chavez will move over to the Administrative side in the Mayor's office. She is also training Rena Benavidez and Val Alonso on her prior duties. Mr. Pineda has agreed to take City Clerk if approved by the council.

Mayor Bhasker said he is very happy with the changes and with the people that have agreed to take the positions.

b. Personnel Changes

Mr. Monette reported that a councilor that had previously voted no to the personnel changes from the July 29, 2020 would like to bring it back up. Because the list has changed it should be brought up under New Business.

Councilor Dean made a motion that the personnel changes be reconsidered and pass those numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and ask the council to reconsider those that are labeled with a 6 to go into effect at a later date possible January 1, 2021.

Mayor Bhasker stated the council was given a list of employees and the reasons for the increase of salaries.

Mayor Bhasker read the numbering system:

1. Per City Personnel Manual Policy-Probation Ending
2. Promotion
3. Additional Job Duties
4. New Position and Responsibilities
5. New Hires and Resignation
6. Administration and Director Recommendations

Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 1 be approved.

Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 2 be approved.

Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 3 be approved.

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Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 4 be approved.

Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 5 be approved.

Councilor Dean made a motion that anyone under number 6 be postponed until January 1, 2021.

Mayor Bhasker would like to accept a clean motion of anyone under number 1 thru 5 be approved.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Olguin.

Councilor Salome discussed salary ranges.

Councilor Hick amends the motion to approve the personnel changes as presented numbers 1 thru 6.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero.

Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion failed 3 to 4, with Councilor Dean, Chavez-Lopez, Olguin and Salome voting no.

Mayor Bhasker moved to take a vote on Councilor Dean's Motion that anyone under the numbers 1 thru 5 be approved.

After a lengthy discussion Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve personnel changes number 6 retroactive from August 17, 2020 to go into effect January 1, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming.

Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed 5 to 2 with Councilors Olguin and Salome voting no.

Mayor Bhasker ensured the Council that he would not allow these increases to go into effect if the City is not in a good financial condition.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

Mayor Bhasker publicly discussed legal matters that involved the City of Socorro.

1. Police case settled.
2. Case involving a house flooded by sewage will either be heard in court or go to mediation.
3. SEC vs. City of Socorro, Judge Murdock rule against the City's request for dismissal and waiting for further responses.
4. SEC vs. New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, there has been no action by the Supreme Court as of today on the SEC rate case.
5. Working with TDS on broadband with the help of Representative Xochitl Torres Small.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. City Clerk Appointment

Mayor Bhasker would like to appoint Leopoldo Pineda to City Clerk.

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the appointment of Mr. Pineda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

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Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

b. Personnel Changes

Personal Changes approved under New Business numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Cassandra Benjamin - 7-1-20 – Transportation – Ending Admin Asst. Trial Period - N-35 to N 37
Carlos Savedra – 7-1-20 – Transportation – Ending Director Trial Period – H-36 to H-40
Henry Jojola – 7-1-20 – Wastewater – Promotion to Foreman – AZ-40 to AZ-42
Deanna Aragon – 7-1-20 – Gas – Added Duties at Airport – H-37 to H-38
James Peralta – 7-1-20 – Gas – Added Duties at Airport – V-24 to V-26
Rena Benavidez - 7-1-20 – Finance – Added Duties – B-25 to B-28
Marcella Alvarado – 7-1-20 – Finance – Added Duties – C-35 to C-38
Lena Chavez – 7-1-20 – Admin/Finance – Admin Asst. /Asst. City Administrator – C-43 to C-47
Isaac Angel – 7-1-20 – Gas – Completed 6 Month Trial Period Airport – W-55 to W-58
Oscar Acosta – 7-1-20 – Water – Promotion to Director – AZ-55 to AZ-58
Joe Melendrez – 7-1-20 – Production – Promotion to Director – T-55 to T-58
Leopoldo Pineda – 8-3-20 – Administration – Addition of City Clerk Duties - \$10,000 increase
Kristy Padilla – 8-3-20 – Administration – Payroll & Personnel Administrator – O-45 to O-47
Val Alonzo – 8-3-20 – Administration – Cashier, A/P, GL & Ambulance Billing – H-23 to H-26
Andrew Garcia-Vigil – 8-17-20 – Dispatch – New Hire – A-27
Nancy Silva – 8-17-20 – Dispatch – New Hire – A-27
Cheyenne Cortez – 8-17-20 – Dispatch – Completed Probation – A-29
Camryn Sager – 8-17-20 – Dispatch – New Hire – A-27
Felipe Romero – 7-31-20 – Dispatch – Resignation
Natasha Otero – 8-13-20 – Dispatch – Resignation
Stephanie Saavedra – 8-1-20 – Administration/Payroll/City Clerk - Retirement

Personal Changes approved under New Business number 6 retroactive from August 17, 2020 to go into effect January 1, 2021.

Guadalupe Tarango - 8-17-20 – Dispatch – Outstanding Work Performance – N-50 to N-52
John Silva - 8-17-20 - Water - Outstanding Work Performance – S-31 to S-32
Corey Sanchez - 8-17-20 – Water - Outstanding Work Performance - I-30 to I-32
Kevin Gonzales - 8-17-20 - Parks – 2 Years Foreman Experience - E-29 to E-31
Demecio Silva – 8-17-20 – Street – MAP/Co-op/CDBG & Street Projects– L-59 to L-60
Lloyd Martinez – 8-17-20 – Water – USDA Compliance & Application Mgmt – 2.5% Increase
Ruby Lopez – 8-17-20 – Finance – No Audit Findings/USDA Application Mgmt - \$10,000 Increase
Donald Monette – 8-17-20 – Administration – COVID-19 Response Management – 7.5 % Increase

c. Business Registrations

None

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 151413 to 151622 in the amount of \$719236.03, plus Payroll Transfers (\$327,883.87), for a total of \$1,047,119.90. The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be a special meeting on Wednesday September 14, 2020 at 12:00 Noon using GoToMeeting online.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk