

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**October 20, 2014**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 20, 2014 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. October 6, 2014**

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

Councilor Hicks arrived.

**PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS**

**a. Proclamation – Honoring Subhas Shah**

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation honoring Subhas Shah, the Chief Engineer/CEO of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, who is retiring after 37 years. Mayor Bhasker stated that among other things, Mr. Shah has assisted the City of Socorro, as well as many other communities, with flood control, irrigation and drainage projects. However, Mr. Shah will be most remembered for getting the City the first phase of the levy project. Delilah Walsh, Socorro County Manager, also presented Mr. Shah with a proclamation from the Socorro County Commission and thanked him for his assistance with County projects. Mr. Shah thanked everyone for their recognition. Mr. Shah invited everyone to the groundbreaking ceremony on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:30 .a.m. for the levy reconstruction project.

Councilor Romero arrived.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Deb Caldwell, Chamber of Commerce Director, provided a handout with information regarding the recent Socorrofest event. Ms. Caldwell stated the event was very successful and had up to 2,000 attendees. Ms. Caldwell thanked everyone for their assistance in making the event successful. Ms. Caldwell invited everyone to an Economic Development SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the NM Grads facility. Ms. Caldwell stated that the community kitchen is doing well and has 5 consistent users and 2 potential new users (in addition to the occasional users).

Delilah Walsh, Socorro County Manager, thanked everyone who attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the new jail. Ms. Walsh stated that the new facility should open in approximately 14 months. Ms. Walsh thanked the City for the continued partnership and cooperation with Socorro County.

Councilor Romero stated that Isidro Baca Veterans Park is almost complete and that there will be a ceremony for the park on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Romero thanked Ms. Walsh and Socorro County for their assistance in improving the park.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Resolution No. 14-10-20 – Blood Drives**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 14-10-20 which, if approved, allows the City Administration to give 2 hours of personal holiday leave to City employees who donate blood during the local blood drives. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Council has approved a similar resolution in the past.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve Resolution 14-10-20. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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**b. Memorandum of Understanding – City of Socorro & Magdalena Municipal Volunteer Fire Department**

Mayor Bhasker presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Socorro and the Magdalena Municipal Volunteer Fire Department. Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, stated that if approved, the MOU would allow the City of Socorro Dispatch Center to provide dispatching and pager services to the Magdalena Municipal Volunteer Fire Department. Richard Rumpf, Magdalena Fire Chief, stated that currently, he has to use a telephone to make contact with each firefighter when there is a call. Chief Rumpf stated that by using the dispatch system, it will notify everyone at once and will speed up response time.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Socorro and the Magdalena Municipal Volunteer Fire Department. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Discussion – Lodger’s Tax – Convention Fee**

Mayor Bhasker stated that State Statute allows municipalities to implement a convention tax which would be used for the operation and maintenance of a civic center. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Council will need to decide if they want to use the armory as a civic center and if yes, decide how it will be funded. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will have to develop guidelines for the use of the civic center. Mayor Bhasker stated that a copy of the ordinance used in Roswell and Las Cruces had been provided in the packet. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would recommend the charge of \$1.50 per room and not the maximum of \$2.50 per room allowed by State Statute. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the change will bring in approximately \$75,000-\$120,000 per year to run the facility.

Councilor Monette made a motion to allow the Administration to move forward with developing an ordinance. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, stated that there is assistance (LIHEAP) for utility customers to help pay their natural gas bill. Ms. Gonzales stated that interested parties can apply at the Income Support Division.

Jay Santillanes, Utilities Division Director, stated that Street Department crews are building a handicap ramp at the Youth Center. Mr. Santillanes stated that the same crews are also filling potholes, clearing weeds and working at the rodeo facility. Mr. Santillanes stated that Gas Department crews are continuing with natural gas line replacement. Mr. Santillanes stated that the same crews are preparing the site for the odorizer which will give natural gas an odor so that it can be detected. Mr. Santillanes stated that there was a customer complaint in the newspaper regarding the Gas Department. Mr. Santillanes stated that City crews did break the customer’s water line while doing a natural gas line replacement but that the line was repaired. Mr. Santillanes stated that the customer wanted an old faucet replaced and was informed that the City could not accommodate that request. Mayor Bhasker stated that the customer then proceeded to replace the faucet on his own and fell and injured himself. Mayor Bhasker stated that the customer wanted the City to pay the medical bill, among other out of pocket expenses, which totaled \$169.48 and the Administration agreed to pay the actual expense incurred. Mayor Bhasker stated that the customer then asked for “pain and suffering”. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City was not in a position to determine “pain and suffering” and the customer then filed a claim with the City’s liability insurance company. Mayor Bhasker stated that the insurance company found the City not liable for damages and did not pay the customer. Mayor Bhasker stated that the customer did take the check for \$169.48 and proceeded to write a Letter to the Editor. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City could not fix the faucet as it was not City-related and if replaced by the City, it could be considered a donation.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from September 2014 (total calls were 2,674). Mr. Tarango stated that the new CAD system breaks down the report by responding agency and types of calls. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is working with Mr. Tarango on being able to map where certain calls are located.

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Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from September 2014 (80 arrests, 286 citations, 2 DWI arrests, 241 police reports filed, 23 traffic accidents, etc.). Chief Winders stated that batteries have been ordered for the radar guns so that the officers have another tool to use for traffic enforcement. Chief Winders stated that officers have been working on traffic enforcement including school zones. Chief Winders stated that officers were present at Socorrofest and the 49ers event and there were no issues. Chief Winders stated that the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Candlelight Vigil for Domestic Violence would be held October 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

Josh Kerns, Recreation/Youth Center/Tourism Director, stated that current events in the Recreation Department include girl's youth volleyball, youth flag football, women's volleyball and women's kickboxing. Mr. Kerns stated that Finley Gym and the community kitchen will be sharing a storage room on the west side of the community kitchen. Mr. Kerns stated that the annual haunted house/carnival/hayride will be held on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Kerns stated that there will be a girl's fast pitch tournament this weekend with 17 teams. Mr. Kerns stated that the department is working on the Electric Light Parade and Luminaria Stroll and assisting with the planning of the Festival of the Cranes. Mr. Kerns stated that the Tourism Department has been working on a budget for the rodeo arena and calling other arenas for information to help create the budget.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation/Landfill/Recycling Director, stated that operation at the Landfill, Sanitation and Recycling departments are normal. Mr. Lucero stated that the tub grinder has been moved to NM Tech. Mr. Lucero stated that landfill crews are doing the dirt work on the new cell. Mr. Lucero stated that landfill crews finished relocating the tree limbs and tires and have spread the mulch. Mr. Lucero stated that the loader is in need of repair. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to encourage the public to take their tree limbs to the landfill as placing them on the sidewalk impedes walking traffic. Mayor Bhasker stated that there may have to be a charge for picking up tree limbs in the future.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Fire Department stats from September 2014 (190 ambulance runs, 15 fire calls, etc.). Chief Gonzales stated that there is one unit in for repairs but that the 2 new ambulances are running well. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that the City's ISO rating has gone from a 6 to a 5 which is a positive change for the City.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, stated that the sewer line extension project on Hope Farms Road is ahead of schedule and that another lift station will be placed at the south end of the road to serve the last two homes on Hope Farms Road. Mr. Martinez stated that crews are working on the running track at Sedillo Park. Mr. Martinez stated that crews will be working at the rodeo arena/soccer fields all winter. Mr. Martinez stated that he will be getting a permit to work on the ticket building at the rodeo arena. Mr. Martinez stated that the water line replacement project (from the Springs to NM Tech) is ongoing. Mr. Martinez stated that Socorro High School and AYSO have been using the new soccer complex and crews have been working hard to keep the fields ready with all the rain. Mr. Martinez stated that the upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant will start in January.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Councilor Pargas asked if the dispatch and police "stat" handouts could be provided in the packets rather than getting them at the Council meeting.

Councilor Romero invited everyone to a ceremony at Isidro Baca Veterans Park on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. Councilor Romero stated that there will be a wall dedicated to the 399 veterans killed in Vietnam and 12 plaques honoring the Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, National Guard, female military members, POW's, Isidro Baca, the United States Flag, Korean War Veterans and Vietnam War Veterans.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

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**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Changes**

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

Michael Contreras – 10-20-14 – Police – New Hire (Police Officer) – A-35

Michael Chavez – 10-20-14 – Police – New Hire (Police Officer) – A-35

Ricardo Silva – 10-21-14 – Library – New Hire (Circulation Assistant) – A-17

Eric Sewell – 10-21-14 – Library – Promotion to Adult Services Librarian – A-27 to A-30

Temporary New Hires: None

Temporary Renewals: Emena Gonzales, Rick Griego, Tony Montoya, Paul Marquez, Ramiro Garza, Albert Hernandez, Rick Silva, Elias Jacquez, Tony Silva, Regina Valencia, Sergio Cuevas, Angelica Vega, Michael Padilla, Jeremy Chavez, Kevin Gonzales, Shaina Lopez, Felipe Romero

Student Workers: Giovanna Rosas, Samantha Maldonado, Adrianna Griego, Jeremy Gallegos, Kendrick Gonzales

Referees (10), Zumba (2)

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously. Councilor Pargas abstained from the vote as Michael Chavez is his nephew.

**b. Business Registrations**

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

Southwest Locate – R-1 (Approved y P&Z) – 901 Walkway Apt. A4 - Joseph Hartfield III – Utility Locating & Telecommunication Consulting

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Voucher Run**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 131471 to 131876 in the amount of \$1,430,380.28, plus Payroll Transfers (\$307,752.90), for a total of \$1,738,133.18. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – November 3, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m.**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting would be held on November 3, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:17 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

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

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

**ATTEST:**

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/s/  
**Pat Salome, City Clerk**