

City of Socorro Emergency City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 19, 2020

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Mayor Bhasker took roll call.

No Members were physically present.

Members remotely present at roll call were: Mayor Bhasker, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Deborah Dean, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Damian Ocampo, Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr., Councilor Peter Romero, and Councilor Anton Salome.

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.

Mayor Bhasker asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Alamo Reservation President Buddy Mexicano.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. COVID-19 Update

Mayor Bhasker reported that he has received a letter from the Acting Deputy Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) dated November 19th that the NMDOH has sanctioned the Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE) to run housing of COVID-19 positive people at Days Inn in Socorro and therefore the administration will have to stand down. The Mayor was disappointed and dishearten because the resources the City has if something goes wrong is totally lacking. Mayor Bhasker stated that a list of questions had been sent to PAE for answers. The Mayor has ordered that the barricades at Days Inn removed and the meeting scheduled with PAE, Vice President of Alamo, Socorro General Hospital, City of Socorro Police Chief and Fire Chief will be canceled.

Councilor Romero stated that the Council wanted to know what safety protocols are going to be taken with patients being housed in the hotel and on how things are going to be controlled, no one seems to have those answers. Mayor Bhasker replied that the letter from the NMDOH will be available to the public, NMDOH has reviewed the plans PAE submitted and that's as much specificity that has been received.

Councilor Dean stated that her understanding is that they come in and quarantine for 14 days but there is no way to demand that the patients stay and would be able leave at any point and can't be forced to stay. Mayor Bhasker replied that it is all voluntary.

Councilor Olguin concern is about the barricades and how it was handled and understands the reasoning is to protect the citizens, but moving forward how do we continue to protect our citizens and at the same time be a good neighbors and help people especially from Alamo that are in need of help. In a way we are segregating them and does this set precedent when we know someone is COVID positive, are we going to barricade them in their houses.

Mayor Bhasker replied that it has nothing to do with prejudice. The problem is how the Navajo Nation and PAE handled the situation and not giving prior notification of the use of Days Inn.

Councilor Dean asked if PAE is required to get permits, any licenses from the City of Socorro.

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Councilor Chavez-Lopez would like to know how we can help the people of Alamo. Mayor Bhasker replied that the City with Positive Outcomes (Tara Jaramillo) have helped the people of Alamo and continue to help in any way the City can.

Mayor Bhasker opened it up for public comment.

After numerous comments from the public, Mayor Bhasker reconsidered meeting with PAE, Alamo, Socorro General Hospital, and the City of Socorro Police Chief and Fire Chief. Mayor Bhasker informed the Council he would give a complete report of the meeting. The meeting will take place November 20, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez thanked the Mayor for addressing all of the concerns from the Council and Public.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk