

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
December 7, 2020

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 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.

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 DECEMBER 7, 2020 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. November 16, 2020

b. November 19, 2020

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2020 and November 19, 2020 meetings as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 20-12-07 Transfer Land to Socorro Vista LLP for Multifamily Rental

Mayor Bhasker stated that this is a transfer of land from City of Socorro to Socorro Vista LLP for Multifamily Rental located next to Socorro Mental Health and PMS.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 20-12-07 Transfer land to Socorro Vista LLP for Multifamily Rental. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez reported that this is for 32 units of low tax credits through the special need's category. Also, in attendance were Chris Lopez, one of the developers and Jeff Curry with JL Gray.

Mr. Lopez thanked the Council and Mayor for their support.

Mr. Curry reported that this is the third time in applying and is due January 15, 2021 and will know a few months later if awarded.

Again both Mr. Lopez and Mr. Curry thanked the Mayor and Council for its support and how critical the donation of the land supports the project.

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

b. Memorandum of Understanding – Contract for Shelter Services

Mayor Bhasker stated this is the only animal shelter in the County of Socorro. The Shelter receives animals from surrounding areas and is paid for through City tax dollars. Would like the Council to approve the Memorandum of Understanding and present it to the County of Socorro to help provide financial support to shelter animals from outside of the City proper.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Contract for Shelter Services. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

Councilor Dean asked if the City has been in contact with the County and if they are aware of this coming. Mayor Bhasker replied not in a direct fashion, but first time in black and white.

Lupe Tarango, Animal Shelter Director explained that the County doesn't communicate with regards of the animals that are brought in to the shelter. Have reached out to see if the County was going to update their ordinance after the City's was updated, but after numerous attempts never received any feedback.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the MOU is very specific and is not different from any other entities.

Councilor Hicks asked at present time what happens when the County brings an animal to the Shelter with the charges.

Mr. Tarango stated that the shelter accepts the animal and verifies the address of the person is a Socorro County resident and at the end of the month processes a bill for \$30.00. At this time that does not cover the cost of housing the animal.

Councilor Hicks asked if we are receiving payment.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director replied that the City used to receive payment from the County but has not seen anything lately, but Magdalena does pay. At this time Socorro County pays \$150.00 a month regardless of the number of animals brought in per month.

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

NEW BUSINESS

a. COVID-19 update

1. Free Rapid COVID-19 Testing for Socorro Businesses

Mayor Bhasker reported that rapid COVID-19 testing has begun in the City. Results will be back in 10 minutes and the current problem is people test but do not get results back for 5 to 6 days, so if they are symptomatic, they may be at work, with family, or shopping not knowing of their results. People can know of their results on the spot if they are positive or negative and is 90% accurate.

The City has set aside \$30,000.00 to cover the cost of testing.

A lengthy discussion followed.

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2. Days Inn

Mayor Bhasker reported that PAE has vacated Days Inn and has left to Tuba City, AZ.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Lawrence Baca, Captain Fire Department complimented his fellow members of the department, having to pick up positive COVID patients and with no infections. The Department has been helping out on COVID testing. All vehicles are in working condition and have been inspected. New ambulance will arrive in March.

Chelsea Jones, Library Director reported from June 1st to November 16th the library circulated over 14,570 items. The Library has increased e-book patrons and offers over 30,000 items. Thanked the Fire Department for their quick response when the HVAC burned out and will be replacing it with a new unit at a cost of approximately \$7,000.00.

Demesio Silva, Road Superintendent thanked Lloyd Martinez and Oscar Acosta for their help filling pot holes around the City. The department did a major clean up south of Wal-Mart and cleaned through out the City. Helped the Water Department on the Bullock Avenue project. The bridge on the north entrance from I-25 is finishing up, the delays were caused by bad surveys and the Company's employees testing positive for COVID-19. Crosswalks on California Street will be done soon when the weather permits. LED lights are now installed from the North entrance to the South entrance.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Director reported that the money used at the Convention Center will be expensed by January and preparing figures to finish the project. All bricks at the Veterans Park have been installed and completed. Parks Department has decorated the City Plaza and around City Hall. Water line on Bullock has been completed. Going out for bid on the fence at Eagle Pitcher and installed a new water line at the Wagon Wheel Park. VFD's have been installed at the Evergreen Well, still waiting on the meter and surge protectors. Pre-Construction will be held in January for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and will start construction shortly after. Pre-Construction for the collection lines will be held in the middle of January with construction starting in February. The City is in need of backhoes and will be receiving \$300,000.00 for a new Vactor.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation Director reported no problems with equipment with the exception of the loader that is in need of a transmission rebuild. Continues to collect and bail cardboard from businesses. Trash pickup is conducted on all holidays with Sunday the only day off.

Councilor Hicks thanked the Sanitation Department employees.

Tom Stidstone, Head Mechanic reported that one backhoe is getting repairs and Auto Maintenance is doing good and all is up and running.

Isaac Angel, Gas Superintendent/Airport Director reported that two-line extensions have been completed on Evergreen and Pisano. Approximately 25 connections and relocations are complete and extended the main gas line at the Airport to convert the heating from propane to natural gas. The Airport has received a new sweeper and a new tractor that is equipped with a snow removal attachment. Installed a new pole with lighting for PHI helicopter.

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Ruby Lopez, Finance Director reported that all departments are within budget and met with all department heads about their projects. Continuing to cross train at City Hall and have stayed busy even though City Hall is closed to the public. Working on USDA grants and loans. COVID-19 leave was reimbursed to all employees through CARES funding.

Lena Chavez, Administrative Assistant reported on the small business grants, the first round there were 15 applicants totaling \$50,100.40. The current round there is 20 applications totaling about \$89,000.00. first round the grant was for \$4,000.00 per business this round \$6,000.00.

Kristy Padilla, Payroll Administrator/Planning & Zoning Manager reported that the short-term salary adjustment has been rolled into the employee's hourly rate.

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk reported that if you have not done the broadband survey please do so. Reported on past State Appropriations, CDBG grant. Provided the Council with a spreadsheet of all City Projects.

Guadalupe Tarango, Animal Shelter Director/Dispatch Director reported that the Animal Shelter is open by appointment only. There are no volunteers at this time. Dispatch is going well and all the new 911 equipment is on order.

Carlos Saavedra, Transportation Director reported that rides are limited to in town only and no update on when the Rail Runner will resume their services. Two employees received their CDL licenses in Farmington. Met with the RTPO for the 5311 Grant information.

Mike Winders, Police Chief reported all personnel is healthy. Toys for Tots is underway for needy children.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. State Appropriation Update

Mayor Bhasker reported that there will a Zoom meeting with our Senator and Representative on December 17th at 1:30. Will ask for additional money for Finley Gym and the Convention Center. Asked the Councilors if they had any ideas of new projects and can be dropped off at City Hall to be included in the presentation or could join the meeting and present themselves.

b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

Councilor Chavez-Lopez motioned to approve the Personnel Changes as read by Mayor Bhasker.

Daniel Pacheco – 11-1-20 – Fire Department – Fire Inspector 1 Certification - M-48 to M-50

Leo Peterson – 12-1-20 – Fire Department – EMT-B License – A-33 to A-35

Russell Rackey – 11-1-20 - Police – Police Admin Asst. Alignment – C-31 to C-35

Daniel Chavez – 11-24-20 – Parks Department – Voluntary Resignation

Earl Monte – 11-17-20 – Water Department – Termination

Huskie Monte – 11-17-20 – Parks Department - Termination

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

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c. Business Registrations

Councilor Salome motioned to approve the Business Registration as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Argus Private Security Force, LLC – Out of Town – Los Lunas, NM – Roxanne McMain – Private Security

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

d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be on Monday December 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. online using GoToMeeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk