

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
February 16, 2021

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Mayor Bhasker took roll call.

No members were physically present.

Council members remotely present at roll call were: 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 New Mexico Attorney General's Office for teleconference meetings held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 16, 2021 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. February 1, 2021

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

None.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY

a. Ordinance 19-08-05 – (Amendment A) Loan Agreement for Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements & Improvements to the Wastewater Collection System

Donald Monette, City Administrator explained the original ordinance included the Wastewater Facility and the Wastewater Collection Lines. USDA is requiring a bridge loan from RCAC that has already been approved. The interim loan from USDA and the rates were approved in 2018. This is moving to the next step, combining the expenses, engineering, design, and construction of each project and in the near future amendment B will be presented to amend the second loan.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director explained the City is going out for an interim loan to pay for construction in the amount of \$3,265,500.00 included is the cost overrun of \$540,000.00 to be added to the original loan of \$2,725,500.00.

Councilor Salome questioned how this loan would be paid back. Ruby Lopez replied that the loan will be paid with funds generated by the 2018 rate increase which was recommended by USDA. A long discussion of the rate increase followed.

Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Director reported on the history of the sewer system infrastructure.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Publication of Ordinance 19-08-05 – (Amendment A) Loan Agreement for Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements & Improvements to the

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Wastewater Collection System. The motion was seconded by Councilor Ocampo. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Home Occupation Permit – Berta A. Portillo, LMT

Kristy Padilla, Planning & Zoning Manager stated Berta A. Portillo has met all requirements to obtain a Home Occupation Permit.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Home Occupation Permit -Berta A. Portillo, LMT as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Olguin. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

b. Bid Award – On-Call Engineering Services

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk recommended the On-Call engineering bid be awarded to Dennis Engineering Company. Dennis Engineering Company was the only response received by the City.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Bid Award-On-Call Engineering Services to Dennis Engineering Services as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 21-02-16 – Acceptance and Approval of the FY20 Audit

Ruby Lopez stated the Audit was approved at the November 16, 2020 Council Meeting and needs the approval in the form of a resolution to send to the State Auditor.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Resolution No. 21-02-16 – Acceptance and Approval of the FY20 Audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

d. Water Rights Lease Amendment (V. Moore) – Decrease in Acreage (-.10) and Cubic Feet (-.2104)

Donald Monette stated that the original lease was for 3.706 acres of land which results in 7.783-acre feet of water and after review by the State Engineer, the State Engineer determined that it should be decreased to 3.606 acres of land and 7.57286-acre feet of water. As this is a change to a previously approved Council action, Mr. Monette felt it needed to be reconsidered by the Council.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Water Rights Lease Amendment (V. Moore) – Decreased in Acreage (-.10) and Cubic Feet (-.2104). The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker gave a lengthy update on COVID-19

OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Ocampo gave an update on Socorro High School beginning their sports programs following COVID-19 protocols.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Appointment of City Councilor to Budget Committee

Mayor Bhasker appointed Councilor Salome to the Budget Committee.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the appointment of Councilor Salome to the Budget Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Jim D Brown – 01-31-2021 – Tourism Director & Events Manager - Resignation

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

c. Business Registrations

Councilor Salome motioned to approved the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Berta A. Portillo, LMT – R-4 – 313 Hilltop St. – Berta A. Portillo - Message Therapy

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

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 152710 to 152893 in the amount of \$831,703.23 plus Payroll Transfers (\$317,603.82), for a total of \$1,149,307.05. The motion was seconded by Councilor Romero. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be a on Monday March 1, 2021 at 12:00 Noon using GoToMeeting online.

Mayor Bhasker announced that Ms. Penny Loman has resigned from the Library Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

