

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 17, 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, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Peter Romero and Councilor Toby Jaramillo.

Terri Saavedra's 4th and 5th grade class attended the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker and the students led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 17, 2014 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. November 3, 2014

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

Terri Saavedra, a 4th/5th grade teacher at Zimmerly Elementary School, stated that she brought her students to the meeting as part of the "We The People" program which teaches students about constitutional knowledge. Ms. Saavedra stated that every year, her students attend a competition in Santa Fe where they are tested on their knowledge.

As the students assisted the City Councilors with their votes approving the agenda and the minutes, the City Council affirmed their votes to make them official.

Michael Schirra, on behalf of the Disabled American Veterans #24 and its members, presented a letter to the Mayor and City Council. Mr. Schirra read the letter which thanked the City of Socorro for their work at Isidro Baca Veteran's Park but expressed their unhappiness with a plaque in the park which has the name of a political party displayed on top. The letter states that the members feel it is inappropriate to have the plaque placed in a park dedicated to honoring fallen heroes. Mayor Bhasker stated that he understands the position of the DAV members and stated that the City is willing to assist in moving the plaque to another area in the plaza. Councilor Romero pointed out that the plaque was not placed by City crews but was placed when the County owned the park and recognized donations made to the park by placing plaques in the park.

Deb Caldwell, Chamber of Commerce Director, stated that the Festival of the Cranes will start November 18th and that the arts and crafts fair portion of the event will be held the 20th through the 22nd at the Opera House. Ms. Caldwell stated that an economic development meeting had been held and that approximately 30 people attended. Ms. Caldwell stated that the Chamber hopes to host another meeting in December. Several of the City Councilors stated that they attended the event and that it was well-attended and well-represented with Socorro citizens. Councilor Olguin stated that among other things, the main topic of the meeting was to identify strengths and weaknesses for Socorro County. Ms. Caldwell stated that the luminaria stroll will be held December 6th. Ms. Caldwell stated that the Socorro Community Kitchen received their grant funds and have started purchasing equipment.

Mayor Bhasker congratulated Representative Don Tripp for being nominated as Speaker of the House.

John Mann, a local resident, thanked the Police Department for their efforts with traffic control but stated that there are still cars speeding through the school zone located near Newberry Road. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Mann for his concerns but urged him to be careful when interacting with drivers.

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SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Public Hearing

Councilor Hicks made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

There were no comments from the public.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Ordinance No. 14-10-06 – Land Exchange – Highlands Pond

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 14-10-06 which, if approved, agrees to the exchange of 3.795 acres of City property for 3.898 acres of property owned by the Bursum Family Trust, LLC (the two properties have been appraised at equal value). Mayor Bhasker stated that when the City built the berm for the Highlands Pond drainage project, the City encroached on private property and the owners of the property (Bursum Family Trust, LLC) feel they can no longer use the property for development. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City could purchase said property or exchange a piece of City property equal in value. Mayor Bhasker stated that there were appraisals of both properties done. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City property that is proposed to be exchanged is located along the northern border of Rodeo Access Road and has approximately 71.7 feet of frontage on the north side of the road.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 14-10-06. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jaramillo. After a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Salome stated that the approved ordinance has been advertised according to State Statute.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Pargas stated that the Mayor's Drug Task Force (previously the Substance Abuse Core Team) has been active since 2003. Councilor Pargas stated that the task force uses numbers to measure improvement and that the numbers seem to be trending down. Councilor Pargas stated that this means youth are making less risky choices. Councilor Pargas stated that he will continue to educate the public about the efforts of the task force. Councilor Pargas introduced Savannah Morris, Program Coordinator for the Socorro County Prevention Coalition. Ms. Morris provided a handout which included several pieces of information including a history of the Socorro County Prevention Coalition (SCPC), proposed strategic plan strategies for the SCPC, a NM Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey and various other items. Ms. Morris stated that the SCPC will be involved in tobacco compliance in the spring. Ms. Morris stated that there is currently a logo and slogan contest at the high school. Ms. Morris discussed her training and stated that she will be testing to become a prevention specialist which will make her the first prevention specialist in Socorro. Ms. Morris stated that the next SCPC meeting will be held on the second Tuesday in January at noon at City Hall and invited everyone to attend.

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, stated that the Utility Billing Committee met and agreed upon a proposed rate increase which will now be presented to the City Administration for review.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Donald Padilla, Library Director, provided a handout which outlined library building maintenance, an update on personnel, program and outreach information, information about the library's inventory and grant and donation information. Mr. Padilla stated that the library is currently spending the 2012 GO Bond funds and that the 2014 GO Bond just passed in the recent election. Mr. Padilla stated that the library received a 2015 State Grants in Aid in the amount of \$7,780.

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Michael Lucero, Sanitation/Landfill/Recycling Director, stated that sanitation will be picked up on the regular pick up day during the Thanksgiving holiday. Mr. Lucero stated that one of the residential sanitation trucks is in for maintenance. Mr. Lucero stated that landfill crews continue to grind tree limbs. Mr. Lucero stated that the loader at the landfill is in for maintenance. Mr. Lucero stated that recycling crews continue to collect recycling on the first and third Saturdays of the month at the plaza.

Josh Kerns, Recreation/Youth Center/Tourism Director, stated that the haunted house and carnival event was well attended. Mr. Kerns stated that he is assisting the Chamber of Commerce with the Festival of the Cranes event and that banners were put up for the event. Mr. Kerns stated that the Recreation Department is taking registration forms for youth, men's and women's basketball. Mr. Kerns stated that Turkey Bingo will be held November 21st at 6:00 p.m. at Finley Gym and the price is \$5.00 or 5 canned goods per card. Mr. Kerns stated that an adult soccer league from Albuquerque will be using the City's new soccer fields for tournaments on December 7th and 13th. Mr. Kerns stated that he is currently working on the Christmas Lights Parade and Art Stroll. Mr. Kerns stated that he is working with the Community Kitchen on the storage space.

Jay Santillanes, Utilities Division Director, stated that Street Department crews have been working on sidewalk replacement, tent set up and pothole repairs. Mr. Santillanes stated that the road crew continues to work at the soccer fields/rodeo arena. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Gas Department has completed natural gas line replacement and will install the odorizer as soon as it arrives. Mr. Santillanes stated that City crews can inspect for carbon monoxide and that residents should call City Hall if they would like an inspection.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from October 2014 (total calls were 3,036). Mr. Tarango stated that the Dispatch Department is currently eligible for an update on the recorder and that the dispatch system itself is up for an upgrade in FY 2016 (\$480,000). Mr. Tarango stated that he spoke with the CAD designer regarding mapping and that the new recorder will have the capability to map calls. Mr. Tarango was asked for the non-emergency number for dispatch to which he replied "835-4222".

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from October 2014 (102 arrests, 82 citations, 5 DWI arrests, 248 police reports filed, 16 traffic accidents, etc.). Chief Winders gave a report regarding criminal activity in Socorro during the last month which yielded the seizure of drugs, guns, counterfeit bills and stolen property. Chief Winders stated that the Lion's Club had their Fall Fling during which the Police Department won two tug of war contests (against the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Department).

Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that the new Dollar Tree building is still being constructed and that the opening is set for early January. Mr. Czosnek stated that the levy certification is close to completion.

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, reminded business owners that the \$25.00 business registration fee for 2015 is due. Ms. Gonzales stated that the City's audit for FY 13-14 is nearly complete. Ms. Gonzales stated that the exit conference for the audit will be held in late November. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Hope Farms Road sewer line extension project is 80-90% complete. Ms. Gonzales reminded ambulance customers to provide their insurance information in order to help make the claims process more efficient.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Romero thanked Lloyd Martinez and his crew for their work on getting Veteran's Park ready for the Veteran's Day ceremony.

Councilor Pargas stated that Teen Court will be held at noon on November 18th at District Court and invited everyone to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Salome stated that at a previous City Council meeting, the elected officials were asked to state any potential conflicts of interest regarding the Socorro Electric Cooperative. Mr. Salome stated that he wanted to clarify that the answer was meant to mean above and beyond being a member/owner.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Memorandum of Understanding – City of Socorro, County of Socorro & NM Institute of Mining & Technology

Mayor Bhasker presented a memorandum of understanding between the City of Socorro, County of Socorro and NM Institute of Mining and Technology which outlines the responsibility of each entity as it applies to the installation and maintenance of fiber optic cables.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding between the City of Socorro, County of Socorro and NM Institute of Mining and Technology. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Proposed Survey of the Homeless – Discussion

Mayor Bhasker stated that he was interested to see what the homeless need is in Socorro. Duane Baker, from Puerto Seguro, a local day shelter, stated that he would estimate that there are 12 to 15 homeless people in Socorro. Mr. Baker stated that sleeping arrangements vary from openly sleeping outside to sleeping in a tent to “couch surfing”. Mr. Baker stated that mental illness plays a large role in the homeless population. Mr. Baker stated that Puerto Seguro tries to have hotel rooms available when possible. Mr. Baker stated that his concern is how to keep people from becoming homeless. Ms. Gonzales stated that because the City participates in LIHEAP, it cannot turn off natural gas between November 1st and mid-March. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Socorro Electric Cooperative also accepts LIHEAP and that they should not be able to turn off utilities as well. Mayor Bhasker stated that if the SEC is in fact turning off utilities between these dates, he would like to be informed so that he can document the situation. Mr. Baker stated that Puerto Seguro tries to provide firewood and help with propane when possible. Mr. Baker stated that Puerto Seguro averages 490 people per month at the shelter. Mr. Baker invited everyone to participate in the Salvation Army’s “bell ringing” during the holidays (which raised \$9,000 last year). Mayor Bhasker stated that it might be possible to allow utility customers to donate to Puerto Seguro on their utility bill (similar to the animal shelter donation).

Mayor Bhasker stated that he presented a resolution as a member/owner (not representing the City Council) at the SEC District 3 meeting on November 15th. Mayor Bhasker stated that there was a quorum and the resolution was approved to be sent to the annual meeting. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is still looking to buy SEC assets but is still willing to work with the SEC board and management on several items. Mayor Bhasker stated that he does not feel a franchise agreement would be possible at this time. Mayor Bhasker stated that the SEC manager discussed a rate increase and that the SEC is using their revenue (and not billing) to explain the rate increase. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is looking into an engineer to do an official appraisal. Mayor Bhasker stated that Greg Miller also presented a resolution at the SEC meeting which was also approved to be sent to the annual meeting. Mayor Bhasker stated that he took issue with the Chairman of the meeting discussing matters during the meeting with Ann Dorough (an SEC representative from another district) and not Melissa Amaro who is the District 3 representative. Councilor Hicks requested that the resolution presented by Mayor Bhasker be placed on the agenda for the next City Council meeting so that the City Council could consider the resolution (as the City itself is an SEC member/owner).

c. Personnel Changes

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

Alfred Jojola – 11-28-14 – Animal Shelter – Resignation
Juliet Montoya – 11-14-14 – Animal Shelter – Resignation
Eloisa Romero – 11-10-14 – Library – Resignation
Ramiro Garza – 11-22-14 – Transportation - Resignation

Temporary New Hires: Jesus Escobedo, Cindy Saiz, Billy Romero, Brad Winton, Jerry Griego, John Ferguson

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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 (5), Zumba (2)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Business Registrations

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

Socorro Fitness & Nutrition – C-2 – 102 Baca Street – Joaquin Roibal – Nutrition Club

Seconded by Councilor Pargas, motion passed unanimously.

e. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 131877 to 131876 in the amount of \$932, 126.25, plus Payroll Transfers (\$298,804.30), for a total of \$1,230,930.55. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

f. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – December 1, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting would be held on December 1, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:07 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Pat Salome, City Clerk