

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
May 4, 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 Damien Ocampo, Councilor Peter Romero, and Councilor Anton Salome. Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr. was absent.

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 May 4, 2021 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. April 19, 2021

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council of his opinion of a request to honor one person at the Veterans Park with a statue. The Mayor feels that all service men and women should be honored. Councilor Romero agreed with the Mayors comments.

The Mayor reported on a lady that has made multiple complains of noise.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Discussion – Participation in Council of Governments

Mayor Bhasker stated that if it may be more productive to join another Council of Governments. The Mayor stated his concerns with South Central Council of Governments and the City's interests may be served better with another Council of Governments. After further discussion, the Mayor stated the Council could discuss more anecdotal information at the next City Council Meeting.

b. Engineering Contract – CDBG Cuba Road Project

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk stated that this is a contract between the City of Socorro and Dennis Engineering Company for the CDBG project – Cuba Road Street and Drainage Improvements.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the engineering contract between the City of Socorro and Dennis Engineering Company as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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c. Special Use Permit – Casey A. Spurgin

Kristy Padilla, Zoning Manager reported the Special Use Permit is for a billboard located at 1231 NW Frontage Road. The billboard had been the property of Lamar Signs and the current landowner Casey A. Spurgin will construct a new billboard in its place. Ms. Padilla stated that because the sign is more than 128 square feet it requires a Special Use Permit.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit – Casey A. Spurgin as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez- Lopez. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker reported on the Sewer Project and emphasized that because of the size of the project there will be problems. Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Superintendent stated that since some of the infrastructure is 30 to 40 years old and what is underground is unknown that can result in surprises. The Mayor stressed that keeping the public informed is extremely important whether good or bad.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief reported a Johnson & Johnson vaccination clinic will take place Thursday May 5, 2021 at the City of Socorro Rodeo and Sports Complex. Mr. Gonzales reported that approximately 30 individuals, ages 16 to 17, were vaccinated last Thursday. Mr. Gonzales reported Socorro should be 60% vaccinated by the end of June and factoring in the 1200 positive cases, herd immunity should be achieved.

Lena Chavez, Administrative Assistant reported that New Mexico Tech will have its graduation ceremony at the City of Socorro Rodeo and Sports Complex with two sessions May 8, 2021 at 8:00 am and 1:00 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Dean made a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Councilor Fleming. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Romero made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Dean. Mayor Bhasker took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker reported out of executive session the discussion of a legal matter. No action was taken.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Report on Clarksville Arkansas Trip

Mayor Bhasker reported on the June 30th trip to Clarksville Arkansas he attended with Donald Monette, Leopoldo Pineda, and Daniel Lunceford (New Mexico Tech ITC Director) to view their City's broadband and municipal electric operations. The group toured the city with Andy Heins from Finley Engineering before meeting with John Lester, General Manager, and Phil Sharps, Technical Services Manager of Clarksville Connected Utilities at the company's headquarters.

Mr. Lunceford stated that Clarksville Connected Utilities were very progressive in their thinking, approach, foresight and planning and overall, he was very impressed with their operations.

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Andy Heins reported on the draft Feasibility Study and gave examples of what funding is available for financing a broadband project.

b. Announcement – Next City council Meeting Date and Time

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be a on Monday May 17, 2021 at 12:00 Noon using GoToMeeting online.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk