

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
January 3, 2022

The City of Socorro regular municipal election was held on November 2, 2021. The newly elected, or re-elected, officials were sworn in prior to the start of the City Council meeting. The Honorable Roscoe A. Woods, Seventh Judicial District Court Judge sworn in Municipal Judge Joseph E. Gutierrez. City Councilors Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Damien I. Ocampo, Michael Olguin, Jr., and Peter D. Romero were sworn in by Municipal Judge Joseph E. Gutierrez.

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk took roll call.

Council members present at roll call were: Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Damian Ocampo, Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr., Councilor Peter Romero, and Councilor Anton Salome.

Councilor Deborah Dean and Councilor Gordy Hicks were absent

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 3, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. December 20, 2021

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORM

None

Councilor Hicks arrived at 6:09 p.m.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Lobbying Representation and Flood Plain Management

Mayor Bhasker presented a one-year agreement between the City of Socorro and MJS Consulting for floodplain management and lobbying services.

Jay Santillanes, of MJS Consulting, stated that this will be the third consecutive year, if approved, for MJS to lobby for the City and as Flood Plain Manager, working on the levy project with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

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Mr. Santillanes informed the Council of the process of completing the certification of the levy. Mr. Santillanes stated completion should take place by the end of the year and, at that point, two thirds of the people living in the City limits that reside in the flood plain will be out.

Mayor Bhasker asked Councilor Ocampo, as a State Farm Agent, how this would affect flood insurance that is required by financial institutions. Councilor Ocampo replied that insurance is purchased through FEMA and is very expensive. Mayor Bhasker stated the City has been working on this project for more than twenty years and once certified would lower the flood insurance premiums.

Councilor Hicks asked what the process would be changing to the new flood insurance rates. Mr. Santillanes, along with Councilor Ocampo and Councilor Olguin, advised that it would be in the best interest for each person to contact their insurance agent and lending agency.

Mr. Santillanes informed the Council of the new legislative redistricting and what effects it would have on the City. The new representation maps were approved in the Special session of the Legislature.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the agreement between the City of Socorro and MJS Consulting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

Mr. Santillanes stated that this year's Legislative session is a 30-day budget session, starts January 18, 2022 at noon and ends February 17, 2022.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council he has asked MJS Consulting, if approved, to make appointments with Legislators, the Department of Transportation, Department of Cultural Affairs, the New Mexico Environmental Department, and the Outdoor Recreation Department. The Mayor invited the Council to attend as one group. Councilor Hicks said he will be attending during the New Mexico Municipal League day in early February.

Councilor Olguin asked Mr. Santillanes what the biggest accomplishments MJS Consulting has done on lobbying for the City in the past two years. Mr. Santillanes replied the 4.5 million dollars from the Department of Transportation for the Bullock Avenue project.

Councilors voting in favor of the motion were: Councilor Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Fleming, Councilor Hicks, Councilor Ocampo, Councilor Romero and Councilor Salome. Councilor voting in opposition was Councilor Olguin. Motion passed.

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b. Resolution No. 22-01-03 – 2nd Change of Route and Termini L100519

Donald Monette, City Administrator, advised the Council this is adding Manzanares Street from California to the Plaza to the list of streets to be paved from the funding already approved from the New Mexico Department of Transportation

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 22-01-03 – 2nd Change of route and Termini L100519. The motion was seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked about the water leaks along Highway 60. Mayor Bhasker replied that the City is asking for funds from the New Mexico Environmental Department to address the problem.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that there is 2 million dollars from the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the US 60 project from California Street to the bridge located south of the industrial park. The Mayor stated that an RFP has been issued for engineering for the project.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council he has received comments pertaining to fireworks from Councilors Dean, Ocampo, Romero, and Salome. The Mayor wanted to let the public know that the City is working on it and City Administration would provide an analysis at a future date.

Councilor Olguin asked about the progress of the Sands Motel. Mayor Bhasker replied that a meeting with City Attorney Jerry Armijo is scheduled on Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. on what options the City can take. The Mayor invited Council members to attend.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that the City will be applying for 10 new vehicles through the VW Grant/Lawsuit. The Mayor stated that the City will have to salvage diesel fuel vehicles in order to purchase natural gas vehicles.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Taylor Saavedra – 01/22/2022 – Police – Probation – A-30 to A-32

Robin Romero – 01/22/2022 – Library – Probation – A-29 to A-31

Daryl Ross – 01/01/2022 – Recreation – Temp to Permanent – A-27

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

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b. Business Registrations

Councilor Hicks motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker.

Zia auto Detail – Out of Town – San Antonio, NM – Jonathon Baca – Vehicle Detail

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Road).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk