

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting  
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801  
May 23, 2022**

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 Deborah Dean, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr., Councilor Peter Romero, and Councilor Anton Salome.

Councilor Damian Ocampo was present via telephone.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Socorro High Wrestling Team led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MAY 23, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. May 2, 2022**

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

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**a. Socorro High Wrestling Team**

James McNeil, Socorro Wrestling Team Coach introduced Joel Partridge, Socorro High School head wrestling coach. Coach Partridge stated the program started 11 years ago and detailed the history. Coach Partridge stated the High School Team finished second at the New Mexico State Championships and introduced the individual state champs.

Mayor Bhasker praised the team members, coaches, and parents for their success and invited the team and coaches to take a photo with the Council.

**b. Pablo Lopez – Speed Bump**

Mr. Lopez requested a speed bump be installed on San Miguel Street between the San Miguel Church and California Street. Mayor Bhasker stated that a traffic study should be performed to ensure a safe speed bump.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. P & Z approved Home Occupation Permit – 539 Harold Dr.**

Kristy Padilla, Planning and Zoning Manager informed the Council the Home Occupation Permit for 539 Harold Dr. was approved by the P & Z Commission meeting on May 18, 2022 and no Council action is needed.

Pat Davis, Canopy Services, LLC advised the Council this is a permitted in the zone as agriculture, with the front two acres to be occupied by the caretaker and fenced back four acres are designated for the growth of Cannabis. Mr. Davis also stated this is a research project to determine the best growth patterns for cannabis in New Mexico.

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Councilor Fleming asked Mr. Davis if he is using this as a test pattern and what size of building will the product be stored in. Mr. Davis responded the research is open to strings that already exist in New Mexico and some new and will comply with Federal Law and will be stored in an existing 60 x 60 metal barn.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, relayed a question from Councilor Ocampo, asking if the product will be going to different municipalities and what kind of Gross Receipts will the City get. Mr. Davis replied that a CRS number is assigned to the address, a half a million dollars of equipment will be purchased and proceeds from the harvest and the sell to the producers will be assigned to the City.

Dr. Leslie Johnson read a prepared statement in opposition to the Home Occupation Permit. Abigail Johnson also voice her opposition. Concerns included water usage, pesticides, smell, traffic, crime, and expansion.

Mayor Bhasker discussed the positive Economic Development cannabis brings to the City and Canopy Services, LLC is required to follow Federal, State, and City guidelines.

Councilor Olguin stated he agrees with the Economic Development aspect and the increased Gross Receipt Taxes that the City will receive.

Councilor Salome stated that the question isn't whether it can be grown their legally and that has already been resolved by the state, it is if the Council will approve the Home Occupation Permit to allow them to conduct business at that location.

Administrator Monette expanded on Councilors Salome's statement that no action will be taken on the Home Occupation Permit, only on the business license.

Councilor Fleming asked Mr. Davis what kind of security will be provided at that location. Mr. Davis replied that the state has provided guidelines for them to follow, and a six-foot block fence will be constructed around the perimeter and a chain link fence in the interior separating growing areas.

Council Romero asked about the stench. Mr. Davis replied that the smell will be minimal and if any smell is detected, it would be in the last four weeks before harvesting.

**b. Tourism Update**

James McNeil, Recreation/Tourism Director stated some Councilors have requested an update of the Tourism Department. Mr. McNeil introduced Cheyenne Cortez, Dezirae Armijo, and Daryl Ross. Ms. Cortez gave an overview of the events that have occurred recently. Ms. Armijo gave an overview of the upcoming events and recreation activities.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that there is free admission to the pool this year.

Mr. McNeil stated the Tourism is focusing on outdoor recreation and recently received

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a grant for \$25,000.

Mr. Ross showed a film created by the Department of the surrounding attractions of Socorro.

Councilor Hicks asked if the Captain Laura S. Haines M Mountain Fly-In would take place this year. Mayor Bhasker instructed Mr. McNeil to contact the Civil Air Patrol for assistance in organizing the event.

**c. New Mexico Tech Request of Waiver on Distance Requirements for License (300 ft.)**

Nowka Gutierrez, New Mexico Tech Director of Auxiliary Services addressed the Council for the City's approval of expanding their governmental liquor license to encompass several restricted access spaces on campus. One space, the Grotto located outside on the basement level of the Skeen Library is within 165 ft. of the Epiphany Church which would require approval.

Mayor Bhasker stated the City would like the locations of each access space and need written approval before the Council would consider.

Ms. Gutierrez stated that she has email approval and would receive a document from the Epiphany Church soon.

Councilor Olguin motioned to postpone pending more information. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Resolution No. 0001A – Preliminary Budget 2022-2023**

Councilor Fleming, Budget Committee Chair praised Ruby Lopez, Finance Director for the hard work on preparing the Budget.

Ms. Lopez presented an extensive overview of the Budget to the Council.

Councilor Hicks motioned to approve Resolution No. 001A – Preliminary Budget as presented. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**e. Resolution No. 22-05-23a – Transfer of Ownership and Responsibility for California Street**

Mayor Bhasker would like the City to take ownership of California Street allowing the City to have more control. The Mayor stated the City would have control of the traffic lights and entrances of property.

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve Resolution No. 21-05-23a – Transfer of Ownership and Responsibility for California Street as presented. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**f. Resolution No. 22-05-23b – Utility Billing Charge Off**

Ms. Lopez reported to the Council the Charge Off amount of \$35,993.86 in individual utility accounts incurred during the calendar year 2017 are now considered as

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uncollectable. Ms. Lopez stated that it is less than 1% of the total 2017 Utility Billing.

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve Resolution No. 21-05-23b – Utility Billing Charge Off as presented. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**g. Cash Handling Policy**

Ms. Lopez informed the Council that the State has a new regulation requiring the City be PCI Compliant and submit an updated Cash Handling Policy.

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve the Cash Handling Policy as presented. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**h. Memorandum of Understanding – Socorro Consolidated Schools**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Memorandum of Understanding is providing the schools with a resource officer in exchange for modular buildings.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Socorro Consolidated Schools as presented. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Second Tranche of Incentive Pay**

Administrator Monette stated that a budget would be presented to the Council at a future meeting.

**b. Council Convention Center Tours by end of May**

Administrator Monette let the Council know to schedule with Lloyd Martinez, Utilities Director, for a tour of the Convention Center before the end of May.

**c. Code Enforcement Officer Swearing In**

Mayor Bhasker stated he has appointed Christopher Carrillo as Code Enforcement Officer in the City of Socorro for the purpose of investigating and enforcing the Code Enforcement Ordinances.

Mr. Carrillo recited the oath on becoming a Code Enforcement Officer for the City of Socorro.

The Mayor and Council congratulated Mr. Carrillo on his appointment.

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**d. Job Descriptions**

- i. Library – Circulation Manager**
- ii. Parks – Forman**
- iii. Parks – Crewman**
- iv. Water Department – Foreman**
- v. Water Department – Heavy Equipment Operator I**
- vi. Water Production and Wastewater Collection Department – Technician I**

Councilor Romero made the motion to approve the job descriptions i. through vi. as presented. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

**e. Reporting on Personnel Changes**

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Personnel Changes as read by Mayor Bhasker.

NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Steve Mathieu	04/22/2022	Recreation/Rodeo	Completed Probation	A-36 to A-38
Robin Romero	05/23/2022	Library/Circulation Mgr.	Hired in New Position	A-34 to A-38
Placido Chavez	05/18/2022	Water/ Backhoe Operator 3	Certification Completion Water Supply Level 1	E-36 to E-38
Waylon Billie	05/18/2022	Production/Waste water Technician I/Collections	New Pay Range for CDL	A-33 to A-35
Kevin Chavez	05/18/2022	Parks/Crewman	Completed Probation	A-31 to A-33
Jordan Torres	05/04/2022	Rodeo	Fail to Complete Probation	
Dustin Moreland	05/02/2022	Police	Fail to Complete Probation	
Tyler Greenwood	05/17/2022	Police	Resignation	
Elijah Molina	05/13/2022	Police	Resignation	
John McGuire	05/31/2022	Fire	Resignation	

Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

**f. Business Registrations**

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve the Business Registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker.

NAME	ZOING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
Lujan's Freeze-Dried Foods	C-2	1394 Fair Grounds Rd.	Pet Lujan	Freeze Dried Food Sales

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Pecos Joe Bar B Que	Out of Town	17963 E U.S. Hwy 60	Joe R. Ramirez	Food Wagon
American Spirit Drafting	R-1 P & Z Approved	600 Miller Ave.	Gail Tripp	Computer Drafting
Ruth Astrology	R-4 P & Z Approved	324 Calle Bonita	Ruth Blomquist	Online Medical Claims & Online Astrology
Perfect Scents and More	R-4 P & Z Approved	506 Center St.	Doreen Baca	Candles, Perfume & Make-up Sales
Canopy Services, LLC	R-R P & Z Approved	539 Harold Dr.	Pat Davis	State-Licensed Cannabis Production (Cultivation)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**g. Voucher Run**

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 155848 to 156082 in the amount of \$977,546.80 plus Payroll Transfers \$354,272.45 for a total of \$1,331,819.25.

Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

**h. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers – 111 School of Mines Road.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

**THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Ravi Bhasker, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk**