

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting  
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801  
December 20, 2022**

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks called the meeting to order at 12:00 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, Mayor Pro Tem Gordy Hicks, Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr., Councilor Peter Romero.

Councilor Anton Salome was present remotely.

Mayor Ravi Bhasker and Councilor Damian Ocampo were absent.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilor Dean led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. **Approval of December 20, 2022 City Council Agenda**
- b. **Consideration of Minutes**
  - i. **December 6, 2022**
- c. **Voucher Run**

The Voucher Run included vouchers 157247 to 157457 in the amount of \$1,602,826.36 plus Payroll Transfers \$425,794.67 for a total of \$2,028,621.03.
- d. **Budget Resolution No. 11 – Street Improvement Funds**
- e. **Budget Resolution No. 12 – Law Enforcement Grant**
- f. **Budget Resolution No. 13 – Revolving Loan**
- g. **Budget Resolution No. 14 – Street Fund**
- h. **Budget Resolution No. 15 – Jt. Enterprise – Water**
- i. **Budget Resolution No. 16 – Jt. Enterprise – Wastewater**
- j. **Budget Resolution No. 17 – Jt. Enterprise – Solidwaste**
- k. **Budget Resolution No. 18 – General Fund – Fire**
- l. **Budget Resolution No. 19 – General Fund – Grant Writer**

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

- a. **Community Outdoor Recreation – Box Canyon State Land Lease**

Robert J. Selina, Community Outdoor Recreation Representative accompanied by T. David Burleigh and Scott Roberts. Mr. Selina explained how the proposed state land lease adjacent to the Box Canyon Recreation Area could enhance outdoor recreation opportunities for both residents and visiting tourist.

Councilor Fleming asked if the 5k trail between the City of Socorro Rodeo & Sports Complex was already in existence, Mr. Selina confirmed that is true. Councilor Fleming asked who would be liable for injuries. Mr. Selina replied that the individual is liable on

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December 20, 2022**

public lands, but it could be comparable to people using the City's Sedillo Park. Councilor Fleming voiced his concern that of all the regional hospitals, Socorro General Hospital has the most rattlesnake bites and most of them occur at the Box Canyon area.

Councilor Romero asked what the impact would be on the people living in the area. Mr. Selina replied that this is a secondary lease and there are primary lease holders in place for local ranchers and the State Land Office has identified two lessees and both have granted permission in writing for the secondary lease.

Billy Jack Pound addressed the Council and said he was in favor of the lease, but said he was advised by his attorney to have a large liability insurance policy because there are instances of people getting injured on public land and suing the lessee. Mr. Pound also said parking on his property was a problem in the past but has been alleviated with the proposed parking area.

Mr. Selina stated that the State Land Office proposes a forty-year lease, and the terms need to be negotiated by the City with the estimated range at \$4,100.00 to \$5,800.00, containing an early termination clause.

Councilor Fleming asked if there is any intention of getting better cell phone service in that area. Mr. Selina and Mr. Pound both agreed that the service is now much better.

Donald Monette, City Administrator stated that they are looking for direction and if the Council agrees the City will move forward on investigating the lease and start working on the ground work. Mr. Monette further stated that the Tourism Department has been working with the Committee and needed direction as to continuing to move forward and it will have to come back to the Council to approve and finalize the lease.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks agreed it would benefit the community but had concerns with rattlesnake bites and liability.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

Councilor Dean brought up an article in the Defensor Chieftain stating that Lieutenant Governor, Howie Morales, visited Socorro and the article discussed renovations and demolition to Finley Gym. Councilor Dean stated she was under the impression that the Council had not finalized any plans to do that and asked Lloyd Martinez, General Services Director, for an update. Mr. Martinez explained that the current construction project is to put a store front, HVAC, new doors, windows, stucco, and work on the flooring. A recreation grant has been applied for by administration to remodel the stage, and the two offices to the north and the south of the stage.

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
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Mr. Martinez stated there has been three public hearing for input on three models with options NCA Architects provided and what they would look like. When meeting with the Lt. Governor, two of the models were discussed, so the Lt. Governor had an idea of what the city would like to do to finish the project. The Lt. Governor recommended that the City ask for 1.75 to 2 million at the legislative session for the completion of the project. Mr. Martinez assured Councilor Dean that no decision has been made on any certain plan and at this point. The City is requesting funds to continue construction. Councilor Salome stated that pre-pandemic conversations were held, and one question was moving the police station into Finley. Another discussion topic he and Councilor Dean had having a place where kids can present and do things with an audience. Councilor Salome stated that there were three different options and how to address parking. Councilor Dean recommended that the recreation committee, or a group of people, get back together to resume conversations. Mr. Martinez reminded the Council that asbestos removal will need to take place if any demolition of the West Hall takes place. Councilor Olguin asked if the funds the City requesting is going to be labeled general improvements. Mr. Monette replied that the request for Capital Outlay is very generic and general. Mr. Monette also reminded the Council that no decisions can be made until Administration can acquire funding to proceed. Once the funding is secured, options could be discussed.

Mr. Monette stated a meeting with legislators is scheduled to be held on January 9, 2023 at the City's Convention Center at 12:00 p.m. Councilor Chavez-Lopez reminded the Council that the committee consisted of herself, Councilor Dean, and Councilor Salome. However, Mr. Monette reminded the Council that Recreation Committee was originally Councilor Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Ocampo, and Councilor Olguin.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Councilor Olguin. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Romero. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks reported out of executive session the discussion of one personnel matter. No action was taken.

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks addressed the Council on how they feel about side-by-side vehicles allowed to travel within the City, on City streets. Councilor Olguin asked to have the topic on the next Council agenda for discussion.

#### **a. Job Descriptions**

##### **i. Gas – Customer Service**

##### **ii. Administration – Assistant City Administrator**

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve the Job Descriptions. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting  
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801  
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**b. Reporting on Personnel Changes**

Councilor Olguin motioned to approve the Personnel Changes.

NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Andres Garcia Vigil	01/01/2023	Dispatch	Salary Adjustment	C-38 to C-40
Devrie Chavez	01/01/2023	Dispatch	Moved to Dispatch Supervisor	G-44 to G-47
Joe Flores	01/01/2023	Gas	Transfer to Customer Service	O-41 to O41
James Padilla	01/01/2023	Gas	Transfer to Light Equipment Operator II	K-41 to k-42

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers – 111 School of Mines Road.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

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

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/s/  
**Gordon Hicks, Mayor Pro Tem**

**ATTEST:**

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