

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 4, 2023

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk, took roll call.

Council members present at roll call:

- Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez
- Councilor Deborah Dean
- Councilor Nick Fleming
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members absent:

- Councilor Gordy Hicks
- Councilor Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr.
- Councilor Peter Romero

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Donald Monette, City Administrator requested that item 7. e. Resolution No. 23-04-04b – Reimburse with Proceeds of a Future Tax-Exempt Borrowing for Capital Expenditures – Landfill be added to the agenda.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve the April 4, 2023 agenda as amended. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

- a. **Approval of April 4, 2023 City Council Agenda**
- b. **Consideration of Minutes**
 - i. **March 21, 2023**

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

Councilor Hicks arrived at 6:03 p.m.

PUBLIC FORUM

Linda Murillo thanked the Mayor and Council for opening up discussions on saving the Socorro Senior Center and trying to reopen and serve the seniors. Ms. Murillo, as a former Senior Center Director, gave the Council information on the Center.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 4, 2023

ORDINANCES

a. Ordinance No. 23-04-04a – Uniform Traffic Ordinance Update

Administrator Monette stated the Uniform Traffic Ordinance has not been updated since 2018. This action updates the Ordinance from 2018 to current. The next item is in relation, as the Penalty Assessments do not match and now the Municipal Court and Police Department have the same penalty schedule.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 23-04-04a. Seconded by Councilor Dean. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

b. Ordinance No. 23-04-04b – updating Penalty Assessments

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 23-04-04b. Seconded by Councilor Salome. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

c. Ordinance No. 23-04-04c – Amending Ordinance No. 02-06-17 Prohibited Devices/Use Limitations

Administrator Monette stated the wording that will be added to the Ordinance is as follows:

Fireworks may only be ignited during the same timeframes sales are allowed. No fireworks are to be ignited between the hours of 11:00 pm and 8:00 am, other than New Year's Eve (December 31st) when fireworks are allowed to be ignited until 1:00 a.m. on January 1, and July 3 and 4 when fireworks are allowed to be ignited until 12:00 midnight.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 23-04-04c. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Bid Award – RFP 031323 – City of Socorro Municipal Airport Engineering

Two proposals were received and opened on March 13, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. from the following:

- Molzen Corbin
- DuBois & King, Inc.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to award the RFP to Molzen Corbin. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution No. 23-04-04 - Authorizing the City of Socorro to Enter into a Contract with North Central New Mexico Economic Development District and Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-04-04. Seconded by Councilor Salome.

Councilor Dean asked if the resolution includes Veguita. Mayor Bhasker replied that it does not, but there is a handshake agreement to deliver home bound meals, but it did not make it into the resolution. Administrator Monette added that Veguita only appears in the budget and contracts until it is worked out. Mayor Bhasker stated it was agreed on that meals would

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 4, 2023

be delivered to the Veguita area until a settlement can be reached with Socorro County on the building.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked if reimbursement is dollar for dollar and does that include employee wages and fringe benefits. Mayor Bhasker replied that it does, and all employees will be City of Socorro employees starting at a minimum of \$15.00 per hour, which were at \$12.00 per hour with Socorro County.

Mayor Bhasker thanked Neil Segotta and Monica Abeita from the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the North Central New Mexico Economic Development District with their help with the Senior Center.

Ms. Abeita thanked the Mayor and Council for their great partnership and will return to assist if approved by the Council.

Councilor Fleming asked if this will be a three-month trial basis. Ms. Abeita replied it is a three-month contract with a new contract on July 1st for the Council to consider. The Mayor added the City will provide a great service and, after three to six months, expand adding Library, Recreation, and Transportation Departments to enhance the Senior experience.

Ms. Abeita also stated that, if Council approves, AAA will take the approval to Socorro County and request transfer of title of the vehicles and the return of any other equipment that was removed belonging to the center.

Motion passed unanimously.

c. Rio Grande Trail Intergovernmental Service Agreement/NMEDD

Rob Selina, working with the Outdoor Recreation Department of NMEDD, is offering the City a \$50,000.00 reallocation through an intergovernmental service agreement for the purpose of a Rio Grande Trail Gateway Community Plan. This would allow funding from the Trail Plus Program to secure \$45,000.00 for a contractor to develop a plan and \$5,000.00 for administrative purposes.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve the Rio Grande Trail Intergovernmental Service Agreement. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

d. Law Enforcement Grant Stipend Discussion

Administrator Monette stated that at 4-, 9-, 15-, and 20-years of service, officers are eligible to receive longevity stipends through the Law Enforcement Action Fund. Ruby Lopez, Finance Director stated it is 5% of their annual salary and officers over 20 years would receive \$15,000.00 (\$7,500.00 Law Enforcement Grant \$7,500.00 City match) upon signing a one-year employment contract. Mayor Bhasker stated it is an administrative issue but wanted to be transparent with the Council.

Angel Garcia, Police Chief stated this will help tremendously with attracting and retaining officers.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 4, 2023

e. **Resolution No. 23-04-04b - Reimburse with Proceeds of a Future Tax-Exempt Borrowing for Capital Expenditures – Landfill**

Ms. Lopez stated the purpose is for a pay request that will be reimbursed by NM DFA for the new Landfill Cell.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-04-04b. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker distributed a list of all the City's ongoing projects to the Council for their information. The total dollar amount is approximately twenty million dollars. The Mayor added the City took \$800,000.00 from reserves to decrease the natural gas charge on a consumers bills, lowering the price from \$3.80 to \$2.80, which before the spike in natural gas prices averaged approximately \$1.00.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that Chelsea Jones, Library Director, through a grant, helped a person replace the roof on their home.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that a meeting with CEC Facilities Group, the fiber contractor for TDS, took place and discussed utility cuts and damage to property. Councilor Fleming stated that no construction has occurred north of Bullock Avenue. Mr. Pineda replied that he has seen construction reaching as far as Newberry. Councilor Fleming also inquired about signage in Western Hills for internet hookup. Administrator Monette stated that Code Enforcement has been taking down signs that are on stop signs and City right away, but if they are on private property there is nothing that can be done. Mr. Pineda stated Western New Mexico Telecom will start the Socorro Consolidated School's fiber project that will connect Mid-Way and San Antonio School's to broadband.

Councilor Hicks inquired if the City would be paving the road through Bob Tacker's subdivision. Mayor Bhasker replied that the City does have money to do roads in that area. Administrator Monette stated the funds are for Cassidy, Walkway, Leroy, and Mary Place.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council the New Mexico Department of Transportation is holding a public meeting for the reconstructing the I-25, Escondida interchange at the same time as the current Council meeting. The Mayor also gave an update on the Finley Gym Renovation and Sedillo Park fields upgrade.

OLD BUSINESS

Cheyenne Cortez, Assistant Tourism Director reported on the Annual Fishing Derby held on April 1, 2023. Approximately 250 kids participated in the event.

Carlos Savedra, Transportation Director reported approximately 16 people from the motels and 25 more at Finley Gym were transported to the Trinity Site event. Mr. Savedra thanked Danny Hicks with the Socorro Consolidated School for the use of a school bus.

Mayor Bhasker stated the use of the Ambulance was in high demand with Trinity Site, The I-25

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 4, 2023**

Championship Roping, Rugby game, and the Fishing Derby. Mr. Monette mentioned the City's Easter Egg Hunt will be held on April 8, 2023, 10:00 a.m. at the Rodeo and Sports Complex.

Mayor Bhasker reported on a meeting with Sun Zia, which is now Pattern. Pattern has requested the City move its gas transmission line near Bernardo for the construction of their electrical transmission line. Councilor Fleming asked if Pattern would pay for the relocation of the gas line. Mayor Bhasker replied yes, and a third-party company will be contracted, and the City would like money up front, as the City would have to test the line yearly. The Mayor also reported that Samsung has backed out of the solar project at the Industrial Park as Tri-State's cost for the interconnection was too expensive and stated the City is continuing with the City's Electric Utility with conversations with Guzman Electric, Also, the bid for the engineering services for the substation will soon be awarded.

Councilor Hicks asked Councilor Chavez-Lopez if the side-by-side committee has met. Councilor Chavez-Lopez replied yes and asked Mr. Monette where we were with this issue. Mr. Monette replied that the last he heard, Council Chavez-Lopez requested a meeting with the Mayor in early April to discuss the topic.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk