

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
June 6, 2023**

Mayor 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 Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr.
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members absent:

- Councilor Nick Fleming
- Councilor Gordy Hicks

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Jaydan Miller led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of June 6, 2023 City Council Agenda
- b. Consideration of Minutes
 - i. May 16, 2023

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

PROCLAMATIONS & AWARDS

- a. Immigrant Heritage Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation proclaiming June 2023 is designated as “Immigrant Heritage Month”.

Councilor Salome stated that these proclamations are public announcements of great importance and if someone puts forth a proclamation up for the City Council to vote on then it means it is a very important matter. Councilor Salome feels this proclamation falls short and would like to know who is undervaluing and under appreciates the immigrant’s contribution to our beautiful country as this proclamation does not delineate who is doing such. Councilor Dean asked who initiated the proclamation. Mayor Bhasker replied that a request was received from American Immigration Council that supports immigrants. After further discussion Councilor Salome requested a meeting with a representative from American Immigration Council to obtain more information.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a. Jason Frame – Socorro County Community Alternatives Program

Mr. Frame stated the program is expecting to receive \$3,000.00 from Recovery

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Communities of New Mexico to host a 2023 Recovery Celebration in the form of all tribes, all ethnicities Pow Wow on September 30, 2023 at the City's Rodeo & Sports Complex. Mr. Frame requested the use of the Rodeo Arena or the soccer fields if there is no conflict. Mayor Bhasker requested a written request from Mr. Frame for the use of the arena and/or soccer fields for the event.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES

a. Ordinance No. 23-06-20a – Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of a Loan Agreement – Landfill Cell

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve the publication of Ordinance No. 23-06-20a. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

Donald Monette, City Administrator informed the Council this is for the Landfill loan of \$1.4 million for reimbursement for the new landfill cell.

Motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCES

a. Ordinance No. 23-06-06 – Amending Ordinance 23-04-18a – CWSRF-130

Mr. Monette stated, if approved, this is to split the State Clean Water Revolving Fund into two different projects and this project is for the Wastewater Belt Filter Press.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 23-06-06. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion pass unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. ICIP Public Input

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Monette stated this is the first of four public meetings. Mayor Bhasker added that this is for projects that the public feels necessary for the City to place on the ICIP.

After hearing no comment from the public, Councilor Olguin made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Olguin questioned notifications to the public. Administrator Monette informed the Council that future public hearings would be advertised in the El Defensor Chieftain and in monthly utility bills.

Councilor Romero asked if a list of projects will be handed out. Mr. Monette replied that the Councilors would receive a list of projects along with a scoring sheet. Mayor Bhasker reminded the Council that a list of projects was provided to them listing approximately forty projects the City is currently working on.

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b. Bid Award – RFP 021023 – Preliminary Engineering Design for Electric Utility Substation and Distribution System

Councilor Olguin made a motion to postpone this bid award and anything involving the Electric Utility until after the upcoming election. Councilor Dean seconded the motion.

Mayor Bhasker asked for clarification, since the motion stated after the election and the election will be held November 7, 2023, but the elected officials' terms run through December 31, 2023. Councilor Olguin said until January 2024.

Much discussion followed clarifying the date of postponement and the actual intent of the motion.

Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote.

Councilors voting in favor:

- Councilor Dean
- Councilor Olguin

Councilors voting in opposition:

- Councilor Chavez-Lopez
- Councilor Ocampo
- Councilor Romero
- Councilor Salome

Motion fails.

After a long discussion Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to postpone to the next scheduled Council meeting with the Councilors receiving the following:

- The City's estimated cost to the consumer
- The City's Electric Utility Ordinance
- More Information and the Franchise Agreement Socorro Electric offered

Seconded by Councilor Salome. Mr. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

c. Bid Award – RFP 053123 – Engineering Services for Evergreen WW Collection Expansion & Spring Street Sewer Line Replacement Project

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to award the bid to Dennis Engineering.

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously. (Dennis Engineering was the only firm to respond to the RFP.)

d. Pattern Energy Agreement – Relocation of Socorro Natural Gas Pipeline

Mayor Bhasker stated, if approved, Pattern Energy, with SunZia, is requesting the City relocate a gas line near Tri-State's Bernardo Substation in order to install a high voltage power line coming from the east part of the State to California.

Jeremy Turner, Director of New Mexico Project Development for Pattern Energy, gave a background of Sun Zia and Pattern Energy. Mr. Turner stated to install the new transmission line the Tri-State Barnardo Substation needs to expand. Outside the existing

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fence surrounding the substation is an existing City of Socorro gas pipeline and Pattern is asking for City Council's approval to relocate the pipeline by 90 feet wide and 690 feet long. Pattern Energy will cover all costs including City's staff time and in addition will compensate the City in the amount of \$225,000.00 for the right to move the gas pipeline. Construction would begin this year and Pattern is working on \$10 billion financing. \$2 billion is for the Sun Zia project and the other \$8 million is for the wind farm located in San Miguel, Torrence, and Lincoln Counties. Financing will close sometime in October and full construction will begin and continue until April 2026.

Mayor Bhasker stated the pipeline was upgraded approximately 6 years ago to replace valves and the construction was done live to have very little interruption in gas service. Mayor Bhasker hopes this construction will also be done live, but there are chances the City will be out of gas service for up to half a day.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the agreement with Pattern Energy. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution No. 23-06-06a – Municipal Election

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-06-06a. Seconded by Councilor Romero.

Mr. Pineda stated, if approved, this ordinance would allow the Socorro County Clerk to place on the November 7, 2023, ballot one Mayor and four City Councilor positions. Filing date will be August 29, 2023, between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. at the Socorro County Clerk's Office.

Motion passed unanimously.

f. Resolution No. 23-06-06b – Local Government Road Fund – McCutcheon Avenue & Center Street

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-06-06b. Seconded by Councilor Dean.

Administrator Monette stated the project was selected because of the remodel that is currently taking place at Finley Complex and the City asked for \$400,000.00 but was not awarded the entire amount. McCutcheon Avenue will be first and Center Street later.

Motion passed unanimously.

g. Resolution No. 23-06-06c – Authorizing Development of Pro Forma Financial Statements – City of Socorro Municipal Electric Utility

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 23-06-06c and, if approved, would allow the City to begin preparing information for financing the Municipal Electric Utility.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-06-06c. Seconded by Councilor Salome.

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Councilor Olguin asked who will develop the pro forma. Mayor Bhasker replied that Ed Reyes, Enchantment Energy Consulting, LLC, Jeff Heit, Principal Managing Director, Guzman Energy, and Nann Winter, Stelzner, Winter, Warburton, Flores & Dawes, P.A., and City Staff will contribute to the development of the pro forma. Councilor Olguin asked if this will be projected rates. Much discussion followed related to the future of Tri-State Energy, the supplier of electricity to the SEC, and that many cooperatives, including large buyers such as United Power, were leaving and that smaller cooperatives, such as the SEC, would have to raise their rates to make up for the lost revenue. Mayor Bhasker also let the Council know that many articles relating to Tri-State Energy and Kit Carson Electric were emailed to the Council on May 15th that showed concern for Tri-State and the remaining electric cooperatives. Mayor Bhasker also let the Council know that in order to obtain financing to build the utility, the City of Socorro would have to show potential financiers the expected revenue from the project as a viable source of repayment. Finally, Mayor Bhasker informed the Council the pro-forma documents would be presented to the Council by August 31, 2023.

Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council and the public that an event (funeral) will take place at the Convention Center on Saturday June 10, 2023. The entire state knows about the event and a large number of people are going to attend (300 to 500) from the organization he belonged to.

Mayor Bhasker discussed a letter that was sent to businesses about the gross receipts tax and if anyone has questions to call Ruby Lopez, Finance Director.

Councilor Dean asked if a reminder could be sent out about the updated fireworks ordinance. Mayor Bhasker stated a notice can be sent out in this month's bills.

DIRECTOR REPORTS

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, reported that all three of the dispatch cadets finished in the top five at the academy. Andrew Garcia received the leadership award, Jeanette Archibeque missed valedictorian by a half point and Jarrad Padilla attended.

Kristy Padilla, Payroll and Personnel Administrator, announced open enrollment for insurance will take place in October 2023 and there will be no increases in rates for 2024.

Chris Carrillo, Code Enforcement Officer, reported that the City's Spring-Cleaning program is taking place in June. Since the beginning of the year, Code Enforcement has picked up seven tons of debris and since reinstating the department, hauled a total of eighteen tons.

Dezair Armijo, Tourism/Convention Center Director, reported the annual 4th of July event is in the planning stages. Now that the ten new electric hook-ups in vendor alley at the Rodeo Arena are complete, emails have been sent out seeking vendors for the event. Mayor Bhasker stated that a July 3rd event will take place next year with a named personality to perform.

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Angel Garcia, Police Chief reported that two officers graduated from the academy last week that were hired through the police grant. Chief Garcia stated they are prepared for the upcoming event, mentioned previously. Councilor Salome asked if any of the police had seen any fentanyl around Socorro. Chief Garcia replied they catch people with fentanyl quite often.

Mike Lucero, Landfill & Sanitation Director reported the new cell is not in operation until approval from New Mexico Environmental Department is received. Once approval is received the old cell will be closed. The cell lasted approximately 6 ½ years and it was designed to last 5 years. The first two cells lasted 12 years and hopefully the next two will last the same. Mayor Bhasker stated that very few small cities have their own landfill and gave Mr. Lucero praise for keeping the landfill certified and running.

OLD BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Job Descriptions

- i. Site Manager – Senior Center**
- ii. Route Driver – Senior Center**
- iii. Cook – Senior Center**
- iv. Dishwasher Prep – Senior Center**

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the job descriptions as presented. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

Mayor Bhasker thanked Linda Mares, Site Manager, and stated it was difficult finding people to fill the other positions.

Motion passed unanimously.

a. Personnel Changes

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
James Gomez	06/06/2023	Police	New Hire	A-58
Dominic Montano	06/06/2023	Police	New Hire	A-59
Juan Manzano	06/06/2023	Street	Completed Probation	A-35 to A-37
Julio Carrasco	06/06/2023	Street	Completed Probation	A-35 to A-37

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker reported that the Police Department is fully staffed.

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b. Business Registrations

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
A Pino Arborist Services	R-R	838 Giles Ln.	Andrew Pino	Tree Trimming/Removal
Subway 47314-Socorro	C-2	820 N. California St. Suites A&B	Babette Welmon	Fast Food Restaurant
Dispensary Near Me	C-2	124 B Manzanares Ave	Trevor Donaldson	Retail
Los Chapitos Mexican Food	Transient Vendor	Veguita, NM	Ricardo Ocampo-Sanchez	Food Truck
One Manned Grill	Transient Vendor	515 Sierra Bonita St.	Anthony Aparicio	Food Truck
AP Buy and Pawn, LLC	C-2	316 Spring Street	Joel Partridge	Buy, Sell, Pawn & Trade
Windy Tree Incorporated	Out of Town	Norco, CA	Wendy Quinn	Utility Line Clearing

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation



Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:



Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk