

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**October 3, 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 Nick Fleming
- Councilor Gordy Hicks
- Councilor Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr.
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of October 3, 2023, City Council Agenda
- b. Consideration of Minutes
  - i. September 19, 2023

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Mayor Bhasker had a request from the Socorro Farmers Market. They would like to have a porta potty placed at the Plaza during their sales on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The Mayor stated the City will work on it, but it would not be permanent. Farmers Market also requested signage and a speed bump. A meeting will be set up with Lefty Gonzales, Street Superintendent, to discuss the circulation of traffic around the Plaza.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

- a. Resolution No. 23-10-03a – TPF – Fowler Street

Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated the resolution was approved at the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, but the control number was inadvertently left off.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-10-03a. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

- b. Resolution No. 23-10-03b – Capital Outlay – Leroy Place, Walkway, Cassity Place, and Mary Place

Administrator Monette stated Capital Outlay was approved in February 2023 and it took this long to receive the grant agreements. The streets in Resolution No. 23-10-03b, along with

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Fowler Street, will be paved later in the month according to Lloyd Martinez, General Services Director.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-10-03b. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Resolution No. 23-10-03c – DFA Law Enforcement Fund Grant**

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, stated the City received \$393,750.00 for the Law Enforcement Fund Grant to attract and hire qualified police officers and positions to support the officers. The City is looking at adding an additional police officers, a school resource officer, and support positions.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-10-03c. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Fire Department Automatic Aid Agreement**

Lawrence Baca, Fire Chief, informed the Council this is an updated agreement with the San Antonio and Midway Volunteer Fire Departments. If a structure fire occurs in the City or County, dispatch will automatically dispatch all departments. This will increase funding by \$60,000.00 if the Fire Department's ISO rating goes from a four to a three.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve the Fire Department Automatic Aid Agreement. Seconded by Councilor Ocampo.

Administrator Monette added the agreement is in perpetuity, so it will not expire and there is a 30 day notice to terminate clause. Under job descriptions, Fire – Recruit Training Requirements, will also help with the ISO ratings, if approved. Mayor Bhasker stated if the ISO rating decreased it would help the citizens with a decrease in insurance premiums.

Motion passed unanimously.

**e. Housing Development/Economic Development Discussion**

Mayor Bhasker stated the City's biggest problem in economic development is the lack of affordable, quality housing. He would like to find a partner to engage in a public/private partnership (PPP) to develop a planned community. The Mayor introduced Cheryl Marlow, Marlow & Associates .as a way to get middle income/upper income housing. The Mayor recommended locating the housing project southeast of the Rodeo Complex.

Councilor Salome stated there is a company in Socorro that writes software for government agencies that hires approximately seven people and over the past 25 to 30 years have added approximately 40 million dollars to the economy. They have received another grant to write software for the Air Force that would increase their staff to 16 employees and would like to have their employees live in town but they face two issues: housing and school performance ratings. Councilor Salome stated the City has very good schools but they need to be promoted. The schools have had a lot of very highly successful graduates and would like the Council's help to promote the schools.

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Ms. Marlow stated she is the KKOB radio real estate expert with TJ Trout and Bob Clark and has been a realtor for 37 years. She stated she has spent 31 years of the 37 years involved in significant subdivisions starting from raw dirt, creating the master plan, open space, roads, then bringing in developers and builders. An agreement has been discussed that would allow Ms. Marlow to promote Socorro and possibly bring money into the community by getting a developer and builders to be interested in Socorro because of the need of housing. The agreement would be a PPP and involve up to 300 acres of land located in the Industrial Park southeast of the rodeo arena to develop a planned community. Mayor Bhasker stated that procurement is an obstacle and would like to have legal look into it.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mayor Bhasker asked the following to give reports:

Dezirae Armijo, Tourism/Convention Center Director reported on upcoming events.

- Tech and Town October 5,2023
- Oktoberfest October 7<sup>th</sup>
- Great New Mexico Chile Taste-Off Parade October 7<sup>th</sup>

Steve Mathieu, Rodeo & Sports Complex Facilities Director reported on the weekend events.

- Mountain Bike Race – Over 200 participants
- Melloy Car Rodeo – Over 40 vehicles sold.
- New Mexico Territory Cowboy Mounted Shooters
- Soccer games all day Saturday.

Upcoming events

- Great New Mexico Chile Taste-Off October 7th
- New Mexico Rodeo Association – Finals October 14-15<sup>th</sup>
- Youth Mountain Bike Race October 29<sup>th</sup>
- Sharron George Barrel Race October 28-29<sup>th</sup>

Shaye Lee, Recreation Facilitator, reported that there are many Youth Volleyball teams competing. One problem they are experiencing is the ball hits the new HVAC ducting. She is in the process of organizing the Fall Fun Fest to take place in the Plaza on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Chris Carrillo, Code Enforcement Officer, reported he has been working with people to clean up their property. Mayor Bhasker asked how the SRO is going. Mr. Carrillo replied that Lawrence Montano, Code Enforcement Officer, attends Sarracino Middle School for morning drop off and Mr. Carrillo is present for afternoon pick up.

Mike Lucero, Landfill & Sanitation Director, stated he is waiting for the New Mexico Environmental Department's approval to open the new cell. All equipment is up and running. Mayor Bhasker added that the two new CNG garbage trucks will be arriving soon.

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Chelsea Jones, Library Director reported Socorro is one of six libraries in New Mexico that have completed the entire process of GO BONDS 2020. Computers were replaced with these funds. The Senior Center and City Hall received the old computers. The Literacy Program has 14 active volunteers tutoring at the library and Socorro County Detention Center. Ms. Jones attended the NMAEA Conference and learned that Socorro is the only library offering literacy in the state! In addition, Socorro Public Library is one of the only programs offering in-person learning. The library offers a variety of ESL (English Second Language), GED Tutoring, and basic literacy. In addition, the library is a GED test site. Along with the Beautification Committee, the library is in the process of doing some pop-up art in the community. The committee is working with local artists to put art on various utility boxes throughout Socorro.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, reported Tyler (City’s core software) is up and running in the cloud environment. The cost of 5 years on the cloud is equivalent to two new servers. Ms. Lopez stated the Utility Committee will need to examine rates as recommended in last year’s audit.

Linda Mares, Senior Center Site Manager, reported there will be a Senior Dance on October 27<sup>th</sup> and Bingo on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Mares stated she will be working with Shaye Lee organizing the annual Turkey Bingo held in November.

Angel Garcia, Police Chief, reported that the Department purchased four used vehicles and the department is fully staffed. Mayor Bhasker asked Chief Garcia if he would attend the Mayoral Forum on October 16<sup>th</sup> to answer any questions about fentanyl use in the city. Chief Garcia replied he would attend.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**MAYOR’S REPORT**

**a. Job Descriptions**

- i. Fire – Recruit Training Requirements**
- ii. Wastewater – Technician I**
- iii. Wastewater – Technician II**
- iv. Wastewater – Technician III**

Councilor Salome motioned to approve the Job Descriptions as read by Mayor Bhasker. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion pass unanimously.

**b. Personnel Changes**

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE DATE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Richie Chavez	10/03/2023	Wastewater	Promotion to Technician II	L-38 to L-41
Lefty Gonzales	10/03/2023	Street	Promotion o Superintendent	C-47 to C-50
Michael Padilla	09/25/2023	Fire	Certification - Fire Inspector I	E-58 to E-59
Simon Costello	09/25/2023	Fire	Certification - Fire Inspector I	B-58 to B-59
Leo Petersen	09/25/2023	Fire	Certification - Fire Inspector I	D-58 to D-59

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Stephen Jajola	09/25/2023	Fire	Certification - Fire Inspector I	F-60 to F-61
Seferina Ortiz	09/20/2023	Dispatch	Termination	

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Business Registrations**

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
NM gold LLC	C-1 & R-4	210 Mesquite 110 Willow	Ernest M. McBride	Olive Oil Production
Socorro Safe and Lock LLC	C-2	733 Hwy 60 Unit B	John Wendelken	Mobile Locksmith Service
High Desert Broadband LLC	Out of town	Bend, OR	Matt DeMontegre	Installation for TDS
Canis Fidelis LLC	R-1	803 Liles St.	Rhiannon Vieceili	Dog Training, Walking, Sitting

Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

**ADJOURNMENT**


The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation



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**Ravi Bhasker, Mayor**

ATTEST:

  
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**Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk**