

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting  
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801  
October 17, 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 Nick Fleming
- Councilor Gordy Hicks
- Councilor Michael Olguin, Jr.
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

Councilor members absent:

- Councilor Deborah Dean
- Councilor Damien Ocampo

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of October 17, 2023 City Council Agenda
- b. Consideration of Minutes
  - i. October 3, 2023
- c. Voucher Run

The Voucher Run included vouchers 159771 to 159997 in the amount of \$2,224,949.27 plus Payroll Transfers \$444,451.89 for a total of \$2,669,401.16.
- d. Budget Resolution No. 1 – Rio Grande Trails Grant
- e. Budget Resolution No. 2 – Grant Writer
- f. Budget Resolution No. 3 – Wastewater Collection Payment
- g. Budget Resolution No. 4 – Law Enforcement Grant FY24
- h. Budget Resolution No. 5 – Landfill Cell Loan
- i. Budget Resolution No. 6 – Compactor Loan
- j. Budget Resolution No. 7 – CNG VW Reimbursement & Payment
- k. Budget Resolution No. 8 – Airport
- l. Budget Resolution No. 9 – Short Lived Assets
- m. Budget Resolution No. 10 – Wastewater Facility USDA Reimbursement
- n. Budget Resolution No. 11 – Convention Center
- o. In-House Budget Resolution No. 101

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Salome requested that Ruby Lopez, Finance Director to give an overview of each resolution.

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**PUBLIC FORUM**

Beth Cadol reported on the Socorro Stampede Cross Country event that occurred October 6, 2023, at the City of Socorro's Rodeo and Sports complex. Ms. Cadol stated 12 teams were in attendance consisting of 216 runners competing in 5 races. Seven Socorro High School runners placed in the top ten. On behalf of the Socorro High School Cross Country team, she thanked the City of Socorro for building and maintaining the Cross Country Course and praised Steven Mathieu, Rodeo & Sports Complex Facilities Director, Raul Contreras and the rest of his staff, and City crews for their hard work. Ms. Cadol reported Socorro will host the district meet to be held November 3, 2023.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Public Hearing – Transfer of Ownership of Canopy Liquor License – El Camino**

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

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

**b. Council Action on Transfer of Ownership of Canopy Liquor License – El Camino**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Transfer of Ownership of Canopy Liquor License -- El Camino. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Resolution No. 23-10-17a – Law Enforcement Fund Grant**

Donald Monette, City Administrator stated the same resolution was approved at the last City Council meeting, but the new grant agreement number was inadvertently incorrect.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-10-17a. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Resolution No. 23-10-17b – FY25 Funding of a Public Transportation System**

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 23-10-17b. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilor Hicks reported a person living on Main Street requested a speed hump. Administrator Monette replied the road is on the list for future speed bump installations. Councilor Hicks inquired whether the City is responsible for the street lights on the I-25 on and off ramps. Councilor Hicks stated a light that is on the north exit heading south blinks off and on. Mayor Bhasker stated the City is responsible and did have some problems with wiring and will have Lloyd Martinez, General Services Director look into the problem.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Councilor Olguin stated at the July 5<sup>th</sup> Council meeting when the Socorro Electric Cooperative and the City of Socorro Attorney were present, there was a request for a sample franchise Agreement that would spell out what a "real franchise agreement would look like", and address the City's concerns with the current agreement. Councilor Olguin would like to look at the boiler plate franchise agreement. Mayor Bhasker replied he would look into it.

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**DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS**

Michael Lucero, Landfill/Sanitation Director, stated that the new cell at the landfill has been approved but has not begun accepting refuse yet. A contractor grinded all the tree limbs and the mulch will be moved to cover cells one and two. Mayor Bhasker stated City of Socorro is fortunate to have its own landfill. Councilor Salome stated that the landfill also has a recycling program. Mr. Lucero replied they have two vendors, one for Albuquerque and from Las Cruces, that pick up the recycling.

Guadalupe Tarango, Animal Shelter/Dispatch Director, stated the shelter is over capacity. An agency called Paws and Friends from Utah is coming down tomorrow to possibly sign a contract to have four to five transports a year. Mr. Tarango reported on an adoption event for a private business that occurred last week. Valencia County and the business owner were contacted as to why the City was not made aware of the event. The animals all came from Valencia County and the private business paid all adoption fees. The private business said they will do four to five adoptions a year and Mr. Tarango let them know if they would please consider the animals from the City's shelter. Mr. Tarango stated one position is open at Dispatch, hoping to fill it soon and all dispatchers are certified.

Angel Garcia, Police Chief reported on the move to Zimmerly and stated he has been contacted by Sandia Lightwave. They anticipate the surveillance cameras will be installed around the 30<sup>th</sup> of October. Integrated Technologies is working on the fiber for phones and internet. Chief Garcia anticipates in a month that they will be completely moved in. Mayor Bhasker stated the current police station will be abandoned. Chief Garcia replied they are in the process of moving, but there is evidence located in three rooms and they are working on the correct process with the District Attorney's office for the destruction of old evidence. Councilor Fleming asked what would happen to Dispatch if the police station will be abandoned. Chief Garcia replied that Dispatch will remain where it is currently located, and it will only be the police offices located in Finley Complex that will be abandoned. Chief Garcia stated that four vehicles were purchased from the New Mexico State Police; two Chevrolet Tahoe's and two Ford Explorers. The purchase of the vehicles came from the Law Enforcement Vehicles grant. There was a discussion on ATV's and a potential change in the ordinance allowing access to City roads.

Lawrence Baca, Fire Chief reported that four recruits will be hired if approved in the Personnel Changes, which will give the department a full staff but not fully certified. A grant for bunker gear was applied for but denied in the amount of 80 to 90 thousand dollars for a complete set of 16 bunker gear sets and they are finishing up on a grant for a new ambulance.

Mayor Bhasker complimented Steve Mathieu, Rodeo and Sports Complex Facilities Director, on his hard work with all the events that have been scheduled.

Dezirae Armijo Tourism/Convention Center Director and Cheyenne Cortez, Assistant Director, reported on the upcoming weekend events: VLA Open House, Trinity Site Open to the Public, Bosque del Apache, and a tour of Fort Craig. Ms. Cortez stated the staff at Fort Craig, BLM, and Tourism will give the presentation. The theme of this year's Electric Light Parade will be "A Gingerbread Holiday". Ms. Armijo informed the Council that Socorro Arts will host the Festival of the Cranes Arts and Crafts Show at the Garcia Opera House and during that weekend, along with the light parade, there will be the Annual Fire Department Matanza. Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked if there is going to be a Trunk or Treat. Ms. Armijo stated the Fall Fun Fest is scheduled for October 31<sup>st</sup> with a variety of activities and on October 28<sup>th</sup> New Mexico Tech is sponsoring a Monster Mash.

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Councilor Hicks reported a motorcycle race is scheduled for October 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at Gordy Hill.

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. Mayor Bhasker stated he is working on where the onus of cleaning up is not on the property owner. The Mayor stated that if the City could get permission from the land owner, for the items that need to be removed, the City would help with the cleanup. This would need to be approved by legal before coming into effect. Mr. Monette stated he has reviewed the ordinance, and in the City's Code there is some conflicting information that would need to be brought up to legal. Councilor Romero asked if any properties are in litigation. Mayor Bhasker replied three.

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director informed the Council that the Mayor signed a contract to hedge gas from October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024 so the City will not have to experience a spike like last year. Finance is working on collections before the moratorium on November 15<sup>th</sup>. Open enrollment for health insurance is taking place and the premiums are increasing by 10%.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Changes**

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Mykel Aragon	10/18/2023	Fire	New Hire	A-50
Jacob Raley	10/18/2023	Fire	New Hire	A-50
Kyle Julian	10/18/2023	Fire	New Hire	A-50
Christian Tierney	10/18/2023	Fire	New Hire – Basic EMT Certified	A-52
Valen Alonzo	10/17/2023	Payroll & Personnel	Completed Associate Degree	K-46 top K-48

Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

**b. Business Registrations**

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
H LLC dba Kushie	C-2	508 Old US Hwy 85	Vance Dugger	Retail Cannabis
JKL Associates Inc.	Out of Town	Billings, MT	Alan Hussna	Utility Contractor
Carmen Medina Insurance Agency	C-2	200 Manzanares Ste B	Carmen Medina	Insurance
Hydro Resources Midcon Inc.	Out of Town	Las Cruces, NM	Alton Cherry	Water Well Drilling Contractor

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.). The Council agreed to cancel the November 7, 2023, meeting due to the municipal election.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:44 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**