

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
February 20, 2024

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 at roll call:

- Councilor Nick Fleming
- Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr. arrived at 6:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of February 20, 2024, City Council Agenda
- b. Consideration of Minutes
 - i. February 6, 2024
- c. Voucher Run

The Voucher Run included vouchers 160723 to 160964 in the amount of \$2,021,175.70 plus Payroll Transfers \$487,886.68 for a total of \$2,509,062.38.

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

Councilor Salome commented that he noticed a significant amount of money spent for the Evergreen project on engineering and was glad to see the project is moving forward as it will benefit our community.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a. **100% Socorro County – Sandra Martinez**

Sandra Martinez spoke on behalf of 100% Socorro County. 100% Socorro County is about transforming our community to a place where every child thrives. It's a statewide commitment established in 2019 with bipartisan sponsorship with funding from the state legislature. The idea was to try something to ensure that 100% of New Mexico residents can access the 10 services required to survive and thrive. The work is carried out on a county level within a framework tailored to the unique needs of rural communities. Ms. Martinez gave the Councilors the book "*David, Age 14*" which explains the program, A Project

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Proposal, Socorro High School Community Mapping, and the 100% Socorro County Initiative's survey. Ms. Martinez stated they are interested in some assistance in identifying a suitable building to house a Family Center. Mayor Bhasker asked how the city could help. Sharron Sessions stated they are working on a proposal that would describe all the needs. Ideally something that can hold office space, one on one counseling, and one utilized so people can use computers to apply for jobs. Mayor Bhasker stated the city is inheriting some buildings and space would be available. Councilor Salome stated that they should present it to the budget committee and ask for some funding that would help support the program. Ms. Martinez stated the program has funds for a community building mural project and the topic would be 100% Socorro or anything that represents community. The 100% Socorro County Summit will be held on June 14th.

b. Will Carter

Mr. Carter raised the issue of vacant and abandoned buildings in Socorro, particularly in commercial areas. Mr. Carter referenced a 2019 study by the State of New Mexico on how to address the issue of vacant buildings. The study lays out nine recommendations for how communities can deal with the issue. Mr. Carter stated he would like to share the study and discuss it further with the Mayor and Council.

PROCLAMATIONS & AWARDS

a. Gordon Hicks

Mayor Bhasker presented a plaque to Gordy Hicks in recognition and appreciation of 33 years (from 1986 to 1990 and 1998 to 2023) of dedicated public service to the City of Socorro as City Councilor, Mayor Pro Tem, and the City's representative on multiple committees throughout the State of New Mexico. Mr. Hicks thanked the Mayor, Councilors, employees of the City, and the public. Councilors Romero, Olguin, Ocampo, Partridge, and Salome thanked Mr. Hicks for his service.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Gregory Miller – Gun Range Discussion

Mr. Miller cancelled. Mayor Bhasker stated the City has been doing research with other gun ranges on noise pollution and welcomed Mr. Miller to come at another time.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker reported on the 2024 New Mexico Legislative Session. The city will receive approximately \$2.5 million if the governor signs the bill as approved. The funds would be dedicated to the following projects:

- Finley Complex
- Sound System at the Rodeo Complex
- Landscaping I-25 entrances into Socorro
- Moving the El Camino Real Heritage monument
- Spec Building at the Eagle Picher site
- Planning of the museum at the Convention Center (State Historical Preservation Office)

The Mayor stated that the City has received authorization from the New Mexico State Highway Department to turn into the Convention Center and RV Park off of Highway 60. The city is looking for a named celebrity (Neil McCoy) to headline a concert on July 3rd. The three modular

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buildings that the city received from Socorro Consolidated School will be utilized as follows: one will be used as housing for a caretaker at the Rodeo & Sports Complex, one will be converted into showers, restrooms, and kitchen facilities for the RV Park, and the last one will be at Zimmerly School for the Friends of the Library. The natural gas garbage trucks are coming in soon. The Senior Center is working with Socorro County to obtain the Veguita Senior Center to allow the seniors in that area to be served on-site. The new Recreation Director, Michael Padilla, is upgrading the workout equipment at Finley Complex and has created a new cornhole league. The mayor recognized Steve Mathieu for doing a great job at the Rodeo and Sports Complex. Councilor Ocampo stated over 1000 kids will attend a football camp at the Rodeo and Sports Complex this summer and mentioned that one of the previous attendees is the first New Mexico athlete to be offered a scholarship to Alabama. The best talent in the state will be attending.

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council he will send Lena Chavez', Assistant Administrator, monthly director report to all the Councilors.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated the city received funding for matching a federal grant for \$700,000.00 for LED lighting at Sedillo Park. The mayor added the city received a \$923,417.00 Quality of Life Grant to install wind blinds around the Rodeo Arena and for heating that will allow winter events. The CDBG project received \$750,000.00 and the city will apply for additional funding to cover the entire project. Mr. Monette stated that, due to inflation, many communities did not apply for CDBG funding knowing the match, or community participation, would be too expensive so there were excess funds to apply for as many communities do not have the required funding for a complete project. The mayor stated that for the first-time gross receipts were approximately \$720,000.00 and have never been over \$500,000.00. The Mayor added Small Cities funding was approximately \$530,000.00 and was budgeted for \$230,000.00 for FY 2023-2024 and stated the city is in good financial shape.

The city will inherit Sarracino Middle School once the agreement has been signed with the Socorro Consolidated School's Superintendent and Board President.

Councilor Dean asked if Lodger Tax has increased. Mayor Bhasker reported that Lodger Tax is constant at approximately \$30,000.00 a month.

Councilor Salome stated that the location of the Rodeo and Sports Complex has allowed growth of Socorro to move in that direction and that has benefited the City of Socorro.

The Fowler Street, Center Street, McCutcheon Street projects will begin in March.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker reported he has received the report from Finley Engineering for the substation at the Industrial Park and will be given to the financial consultant to begin the pro forma report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

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MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Job Description

- i. Administration – Delinquencies and Collection Clerk

Councilor Salome motioned to approve the Job Description as presented by Mayor Bhasker. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Personnel Changes

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Clara Reyes	03/01/2024	Administration	Completed Probation/Promotion	A-43

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
M & M Lath Plaster & Roofing LLC	Out of Town	Los Lunas, NM	Manuel Gutierrez	Plaster & Roofing
Romero Roofing LLC	Out of Town	Ponderosa, NM	Martin Romero	Roofing Contractor
2 U Tobacco	C-2	401 Grant St.	Andres Vallejos	Retail Tobacco Shop
Floorshield Inc.	Out of Town	Albuquerque, NM	Paul Abraham	Epoxy Flooring

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, March 5, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation



 Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:



 Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk