

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
May 4, 2015

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pat Salome, City Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Ernest Pargas, Councilor Donald Monette, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Peter Romero and Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez. Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Toby Jaramillo were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MAY 4, 2015 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. April 20, 2015

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Update – Camino Real Run Auto Rally & Car Show

Deb Caldwell, from the Chamber of Commerce, provided a handout regarding the Camino Real Run which will be held September 4-6, 2015. Don Boyd stated that registration for the event is currently open. Mr. Boyd stated that the run will have a car show, scavenger hunt, two run routes, a reception and an awards banquet. Mr. Boyd stated that both individuals and members of car clubs are welcome to participate.

Councilor Hicks arrived.

Ms. Caldwell stated that the election for open seats on the Chamber's Board of Directors is in June and the Chamber is taking names for nominees for board members. Ms. Caldwell stated that the Chamber is hosting several upcoming customer service training events including training for the youth participating in the City's summer youth employment program. Ms. Caldwell stated that on May 8th there would be an art reception at the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Caldwell stated that the historical society has, in the past, stored old memorabilia (old mining claims, photographs, etc.) in the old NM Tech geology building. Ms. Caldwell stated that since the geology department is moving into their new building, the historical society will have to get a storage unit for the memorabilia. Ms. Caldwell stated that the historical society will accept donations to help with the costs of the storage unit.

Marie Watkins stated that she is disappointed in the loss concerning the new SEC bylaws. Ms. Watkins read two sections of the new bylaws that she does not agree with. Mayor Bhasker stated that the new SEC bylaws would be discussed later during the meeting but that he is also unhappy with many sections of the new bylaws.

Josh Kerns, the City's Recreation/Tourism Director, provided a handout regarding activities in the recreation (swim lessons, youth baseball, adult softball, summer fit program, outdoor adventure program), tourism (softball Tournament, 4th of July parade, County parade, M Mountain Fly In, Hot August Nights, Socorrofest, rodeo arena event schedule, billboards, gift bags) and youth center (summer program registration, parent meetings, Senior Hunger Initiative) departments. Mr. Kerns stated that the Tourism Center is being rearranged and rehabbed (windows, roof). Mr. Kerns stated that the Cinco de Mayo event was well-attended and had anywhere from 750 to 1,000 people. Councilor Olguin asked what methods, besides using billboards, the Tourism Department is using for promoting Socorro. Mr. Kerns stated that the department is using, among other things, social media (Facebook, web site), the NM Vacation magazine, newspapers and NM True marketing. Mr. Salome stated that word of mouth and having consistent events are the best things to attract people to Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City could also reach out to NM Tech students and their families to let them know what events are going on in Socorro.

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Councilor Pargas introduced James McNeil as the new Socorro County Healthy Kids Initiative Coordinator. Mr. McNeil stated that he was born and raised in Socorro and currently owns a barber shop. Mr. McNeil stated that he has coached youth football and wrestling and is excited to promote health and exercise to the youth in Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City received a grant (\$46,000 with an \$8,000 match) from the NMDOT to do a study on creating bike trails in the City and invited Mr. McNeil to attend a meeting on May 14th regarding the grant. Mr. McNeil stated that he will continue to work on getting the 5-2-1-0 program in local schools.

Savannah Morris stated that she is currently conducting a Socorro County Community Survey regarding underage drinking, prescription drug abuse and misuse, providing alcohol and cigarettes to minors, etc. Ms. Morris stated that she should be able to provide the compiled data in July or August.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Presentation & Resolution – Stronger Economies Together (SET)

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 15-05-04 which, if approved, adopts a regional (with counties such as Sierra, Catron, Lincoln and Valencia) approach to economic development by way of Stronger Economies Together. Prescott Grey stated that the Chamber of Commerce, along with Councilors Monette and Olguin and an economic development committee, have been working together to create an organization called the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association. Mr. Grey stated that the Stronger Economies Together program provides training for an organization such as the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association. Mr. Grey stated that he is seeking a letter of commitment from the City of Socorro to participate in the program and that he feels the program will be very valuable to Socorro. Councilor Olguin stated that he feels the City, as part of a regional economic development organization, will be able to better compete for funding.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-05-04 which will serve as the City's letter of commitment. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Juvenile Justice Board - Presentation

Kirsten Kellar, Coordinator for the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board, stated that she would be providing a synopsis of the SCJJB from FY 2012 present. Ms. Kellar provided a brochure from the CYFD Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee. Ms. Kellar stated that the JJAC allocates funding for continuum sites. Ms. Kellar reviewed funding awards to date. Ms. Kellar reviewed SCJJB activities including creating bylaws, creating a resource guide, creating a strategic plan, holding monthly meetings, implementing a Teen Diversion Court Program, working with schools on attendance policies, holding a Truancy Board Retreat, participating in the Maze of Life, completing the Socorro County Teen Center, making sure grant guidelines are being met, providing anger management and parenting and substance abuse classes. Ms. Kellar reviewed the goals of the SCJJB including maintaining programs and ensuring sustainability of programs, applying for funding, striving for community and parental involvement and maintaining communication through all community organizations. Councilor Pargas stated that the parenting classes are held once a week for 90 minutes each class. Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, stated that the City's 40% match has been in-kind including rental fees for the use of Finley Gym, City staff salaries and board member attendance. Mayor Bhasker suggested that Ms. Kellar contact City staff to see if field trips can be coordinated for teen center participants. Mayor Bhasker thanked Ms. Kellar for her presentation.

c. Discussion – New SEC Bylaws

Mayor Bhasker stated that it was apparent that there were certain things Mr. Christensen was going to do in order to "sweeten" the pot with the new SEC bylaws such as including democratic action (adding three representatives from the City of Socorro) and transparency. Mayor Bhasker stated that on the other side of the matter, the board would be allowed to "fire" any of the board members by majority vote to disenfranchise the board member in question. Mayor Bhasker stated that another new bylaw that affects him personally is that if his hotel is 100% occupied and then ten years later it is only 40% occupied, the bylaw says he may be legally bound to pay the amount that was being paid when the hotel was 100% occupied. Mayor Bhasker stated that there was no mention of alternative energy and what "buy back" rate for that alternative energy

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would be. Mayor Bhasker stated that he was initially for new bylaws but voted against these new bylaws. Mayor Bhasker stated that when he contacted Mr. Christensen to discuss his concerns, Mr. Christensen stated that he would only discuss them if the SEC board president and manager monitored the phone call. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to see a franchise agreement that does not allow the Co-op to charge residents and businesses for electricity they are not using. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to offer a franchise agreement and give the SEC 6 months to review it and another 6 months to approve it. Mayor Bhasker stated that after that time, a date will then be given (to the SEC) in which to approve the agreement or the City will end the month to month franchise agreement currently in place. Mayor Bhasker stated that he was really disappointed in the outcome of the election regarding the new bylaws. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to propose a “take it or leave it” franchise agreement that addresses each one of the points he made earlier. Mr. Salome stated that with bylaws like this, Socorro will not be able to effectively attract new business. Mr. Salome stated that the rules the City places on the SEC should be similar to what the Mayor and Council face as elected officials because the right to provide electricity lies with the City’s elected officials and is forwarded on to the SEC Board. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would also like to know if the new bylaws are for new customers only (becoming a member after the new by laws were passed) or all existing customers. Mr. Salome stated that the length of the franchise agreement should be severely limited. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Council will have to approve the new franchise agreement.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Gonzales stated that the May 5th Budget Committee meeting will be postponed to a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked about the Affordable Housing Plan and stated that there was new monies available. Ms. Gonzales stated that she received the information about the new monies and the City would like to re-apply. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the plan will help with the development of affordable housing such as an assisted living facility.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Salome reported out of executive session the discussion of one personnel matter from the personnel change list. No action was taken.

MAYOR’S REPORT

a. Planning & Zoning Commission Reappointments

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to reappoint Sefie Anaya, Jeanene Hall, Christa Hockensmith and Alonzo Gonzales to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Mayor’s reappointments of Sefie Anaya, Jeanene Hall, Christa Hockensmith and Alonzo Gonzales to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Salome stated that the other members of the Commission are Jean Fraissinet, Marcos Gonzales and Cathy Martin who are not up for reappointment at this time.

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b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the personnel changes as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Dustin Aldrich – 3-1-15 – Fire – Promotion to Lieutenant – D-36 to D-40
Resen Messer – 5-16-15 – Fire – New Hire (FF/EMT Recruit) – A-29
Scott Crespin – 5-16-15 – Fire – New Hire (FF/EMT Recruit) – A-25
Alma Leon – 5-11-15 – Dispatch – New Hire (Dispatcher) – A-20
Haylee Chavez – 5-11-15 – Dispatch – New Hire (Dispatcher) – A-20
James Peralta – 4-16-15 – Gas – Additional Job Duties – Q-20 to Q-21
Nicole Winders – 4-16-15 – Gas – Merit – G-25 to G-28
Donald Padilla – 5-4-15 – Library – From Interim Library Director to Permanent Library Director – H-45

Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he included a budget for all of the libraries in New Mexico in the packets.

c. Business Registrations

Councilor Hicks motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mayor Bhasker:

Remember When Portrait Studio – C-2 – 607 Hwy 60 W – Malisa Smith – Photographic Services
Queston Construction Inc. – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Corporation – Construction/Roofing

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

d. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting would be held on Monday, May 18, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:21 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Pat Salome, City Clerk