City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
February 17, 2026

Mayor Ravi 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 Deborah Dean
- Councilor Nick Fleming
- Councilor Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr.
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members remotely present:
- Councilor Peter Romero

Council members absent at roll call:
- Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez
- Councilor Joe Gonzales

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Joe Gonzales arrived at 6:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA
a. **Approval of February 17 2026, City Council Agenda**
b. **Consideration of Minutes**
   i. **February 3, 2026**
c. **Voucher Run**
The Voucher Run included vouchers 166280 to 166475 in the amount of $2,108,706.43 plus Payroll Transfers $557,440.61 for a total of $2,666,147,.04.

Councilor Partridge made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM
Elaine Briggs, Deputy Socorro County Assessor introduced Socorro County Assessor Julie Griego and the Clerk Supervisor in the Assessor's office Donna Sapp. Ms. Briggs explained all the exceptions that can be claimed by taxpayers.

- **Head of Household** – Worth $2,000 off homeowners' taxable value. Can be used on residential property as long as you are a New Mexican resident.
- **Veterans'** – Worth $10,000 off of your taxable value. It can be used on residential or non-residential property.

- **Fully Disabled Veterans' (100%)** – Worth the value of your primary residence and up to five acres of land (same account) associated with your residence.
- **% Disabled Veterans'** – Can only be used on your primary residence and can be combined with Head of Household Exemption and a Veterans' exemption. This exemption can only be claimed on your primary residence and up to five acres.
- **Valuation Freeze** – (65 & older) Can only be used on your primary residence and you must be a New Mexican resident. It is necessary to meet the income qualifications for three years in a row. The income qualifications change yearly, for 2026 the qualification is no more than $44,200 total household income.

Ms. Griego stated that a Valuation Freeze is not a freeze on taxes, but rather on the value of the property. Taxes may still increase if the tax rate increases; however, the property value will remain the same.

Councilor Partridge asked how this information is being communicated to taxpayers. Ms. Briggs replied that the purpose of the presentation is to make taxpayers aware of the April 30 deadline. Mayor Bhasker stated that the city will include a flyer in the upcoming utility bills.

Councilor Salome added that citizens should understand how taxes are collected and noted that each assessment notice includes a list of the entities for which taxes are collected. He asked for a brief description of where the tax dollars go. Ms. Briggs explained that each entity submits its budget to the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, and the mill rate is established based on the amount of funding each entity requests.

Mayor Bhasker suggested that creating a pie chart would help taxpayers better understand how their money is distributed. Ms. Griego stated that this would be the responsibility of the County Treasurer's Office.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 26-02-17a – LGRF/COOP Application

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented Resolution No. 26-02-17a. If approved, the city will apply for funding to complete the streets around the courthouse, from Park Street to California Street and from Spring Street to the Plaza.

b. Resolution No. 26-02-17b – MAP Application

Administrator Monette stated that the MAP application would fund the design to reconstruct Leroy Place, as it is beginning to crack.

c. Resolution No. 26-02-17c – NMFA-Local Government Planning fund Grant Application

Administrator Monette stated that the application is a planning grant for the Wastewater Treatment System on Spring Street.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-02-17a, 26-02-17b, and 26-02-17c. Seconded by Councilor Ocampo, motion passed unanimously.

d. City of Socorro/New Mexico Tech Pool Discussion

Mayor Bhasker stated that he had a meeting with New Mexico Tech regarding the possibility of New Mexico Tech taking over the city pool. A Town Hall meeting Hosted by NM Tech will be held at Macey Center on February 26 at 5:30 p.m. for public discussion. The city will also hold a public input session during the City Council Meeting on March 17.

Mayor Bhasker outlined the proposal as follows:

- The City of Socorro would turn over the city pool to New Mexico Tech for use and operation at a cost of $1 per year. New Mexico Tech proposes to install a cover over the pool, as well as maintain and staff the facility. In return, the city would provide the amount currently budgeted for the pool, approximately $170,000 to $180,000 per year.
- During the summer, the city would request that children be allowed to use the pool at no charge and that adults pay $5.00.
- The city will continue to maintain the pool's chlorine and pumping systems using half-time personnel.
- The swimming team would continue to use the facility.
- The city will benefit from having access to a year-round pool.

Mayor Bhasker further stated that over the past five years, the city has spent approximately $250,000 on pool repairs. He also noted that New Mexico Tech would likely need buy-in from Socorro County and Socorro Consolidated School District for the partnership to succeed.

New Mexico Tech representatives have visited the pool, and several changes are anticipated. The baby pool would be removed, and unisex bathrooms would need to be installed.

Mayor Bhasker introduced Delilah A. Walsh, CFO/Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Dr. David Green, Vice President for Student Affairs at New Mexico Tech.

Ms. Walsh reported that New Mexico Tech's current pool is a failing structure, and even if renovated, it would take approximately two years to complete. A partnership with the city would ensure both the community and campus benefit from a year-round facility.

Councilor Gonzales asked about the timeline for installing the pool cover. Ms. Walsh responded that if New Mexico Tech proceeds with taking over operations, contractors have indicated what work could be completed between now and the fall. The pool typically shuts down in October, which would be the likely timeframe to erect the cover.

Councilor Salome stated he looked forward to increased integration between the campus and the Socorro community.

Dr. Green stated that New Mexico Tech has spoken with the Socorro Consolidated School District and plans to meet with Socorro County next week. As the Mayor noted, this effort cannot involve only the city; the goal is to include all stakeholders.

Councilor Ocampo shared that he has received many calls from seniors who use the Tech pool in the mornings and asked whether the best-case scenario would involve closing in October and reopening in March. Ms. Walsh responded that discussions are still ongoing regarding construction feasibility and staff transitions, and no definitive timeline is available. Ideally, they would like to keep operations and services available as long as possible and minimize any shutdown period.

Christie Smith asked whether the new Wellness Center at New Mexico Tech would include a pool. Ms. Walsh stated that the Wellness Center does include a pool in its plans; however, it is part of Phase Three of the project. The new Wellness Center is estimated to cost approximately $80 million and securing that level of funding presents challenges. Because it is considered an auxiliary service, it cannot be bonded under state rules since the pool does not generate revenue. Completion of Phase One is projected to take five years, with the pool scheduled for Phase Three.

Councilor Fleming noted that the city pool is significantly larger than New Mexico Tech's current pool for workout purposes. Ms. Walsh confirmed that it is more than twice the size.

Mayor Bhasker concluded by stating that, if the Council has no objections, the City will work with New Mexico Tech to draft a legally binding agreement to present to both the City Council and the New Mexico Tech Board of Regents.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker informed the Council that the city received $2.5 million from U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich for a water project.

The mayor also encouraged the Council to visit the newly completed clubhouse at the Rodeo Complex.

OLD BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Chelsea Jones	02/17/2026	Library	Completed Suicide Prevention Certification	L-70 to L-72
Maribel Tarango	02/17/2026	Library	Completed Suicide Prevention Certification	L-43 to L-45
Antoinette Lopez	02/17/2026	Library	Completed Suicide Prevention Certification	B-39 to B-41
David Monette	02/17/2026	Library	Completed Suicide Prevention Certification	B-46 to B-48
Julian Maez	02/17/2026	Fire	EMT-Basic Certification	A-58 to A-60
Jeremiah Garza	02/17/2026	Fire	EMT-Basic Certification	A-58 to A-60
William Maldonado	02/17/2026	Landfill	Temp to Permanent	A-37

Seconded by Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
August Jayde	C-2	1220 Lemitar Lane	Emma-Jayde Savedra	Purses, Bookbags, Makeup Bags

Seconded by councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

Diedra Vinson requested that Yo Mama's Dough Joe, LLC be removed from the Business Registrations until she can be present for approval.

c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.). Mayor Bhasker will not be in attendance as he will be at a conference out of state.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk