City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 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 Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez
- Councilor Deborah Dean
- Councilor Nick Fleming
- Councilor Joe Gonzales
- Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr.
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members absent at roll call:

- Councilor Damien Ocampo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

a. **Approval of March 17 2026, City Council Agenda**

b. **Consideration of Minutes**

   i. **March 3, 2026**

c. **Voucher Run**

The Voucher Run included vouchers 166476 to 166679 in the amount of $1,271,837.73 plus Payroll Transfers $564,555.14 for a total of $1,836,392.87.

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

PUBLIC FORUM

a. **New Mexico Tech managing the City of Socorro Swimming Pool**

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro and New Mexico Tech (NMT) are negotiating a memorandum of agreement (MOA) and noted that the city had already returned a draft with minor revisions. The mayor also stated that the city is working with NMT to get the pool open and that the city has provided approximately $250,000 in improvements over the past five years. Under the agreement, the city would contribute up to $160,000, its yearly budgeted amount for operations. The agreement would allow free summer admission for youth under 18 and support the high school swim team.

Delilah A. Walsh, CFO/Vice President for Administration and Finance, and Dr. David Green, Vice President for Student Affairs at New Mexico Tech, delivered a detailed presentation explaining why NMT can no longer operate its pool. Ms. Walsh stated that once the bubble

cover is taken down this year, it would not be able to be put back up. She also noted that the deck is failing and that the pool would have to remain closed after the fall season.

NMT's goal is to create a sustainable, year-round regional aquatic center by combining the city's infrastructure with NMT's staffing and operational capacity. The financial model shows a roughly $60,000 annual operating gap even after the city's contribution. The enclosure to cover the city's pool is estimated to range in cost from $700,000 to $3 million, with HVAC systems costing up to $700,000.

Members of the community giving their thoughts are:

- Kate Burleigh
- Sandra Nolan
- Judy Richardson
- Amy Troy
- Patti Chavez
- Kevin Carson
- Leyka Stone
- Jennifer Siegel

Mayor Bhasker stated that another public hearing will take place at an upcoming Council meeting after the MOA is finalized.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Resolution No. 26-03-17 – NMDOT TPF Application – Otero Ave.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented Resolution No. 26-03-17. If approved, the city will apply for funding to pave Otero Avenue from California Street to Hope Farms Road, as well as to complete drainage work at Otero Avenue and 6th Street.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-03-17. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Legislative Session Updates and Outcomes

Mayor Bhasker provided a legislative update and reported on funding for various city projects:

El Camino Real Monument Project:
$50,000 from Representative Dow plus a $180,000 commitment from the Office of Cultural Affairs to relocate the monument to the convention center area, with an El Camino Real theme.
Police Station:
$1,172,000 State Appropriations.
Finley Gym:
$100,000 State Appropriations.
Sports & Rodeo Complex Improvement:
$790,000 State Appropriations.
Smith's Building:
$700,000 reauthorization to purchase the Smith's building.

Evergreen Asbestos Water Line:
$2.3 million from Senator Heinrich's office to replace an asbestos water line on Evergreen.
Cuba Road:
$1.2 million (funding already in place and ready to be spent).
EMRTC Bridge:
Approximately $6.8 million to repair or replace the bridge damaged by flooding.
Natural Gas Station:
Approximately $2 million for a new natural gas station.
Community Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF):
$1 Million. Ruby Lopes, Finance Director, stated the funds are for Socorro residents who meet certain criteria to pay for windows, doors, heating, cooling and appliances.
Grid Modernization Project:
$750,000. Mr. Pineda reported that the city was tentatively awarded a grant to assist the Socorro Electric Cooperative for the design of a 5 MW substation with battery backup. It will complement either solar or geothermal energy. Mayor Bhasker stated that the city has contracted with a company out of Texas to conduct geothermal testing at the Industrial Park near the Rodeo Arena.

c. **Municipal Judge Status**
Mayor Bhasker stated that he received a letter of resignation from Municipal Judge Joseph Gutierrez, who has registered to run for a different public office. Judge Gutierrez addressed the Council and provided his recommendation on how to continue operating the court. Mayor Bhasker informed Judge Gutierrez that he will follow the law, and that it is the mayor who will nominate a replacement, subject to Council approval.

NEW BUSINESS
None

OLD BUSINESS
Councilor Partridge asked Steve Mathieu, Rodeo Director, if a cooling system had been installed at the Rodeo Arena. Mr. Mathieu replied that it is an evaporative cooling system. Mayor Bhasker stated that the New Mexico High School and Junior High School Rodeo will take place this coming weekend, followed by the Junior Rodeo the next weekend, and that both events will bring many people to Socorro.

Mayor Bhasker reported on two issues at the Police Department. One is a personal matter that does not cast any aspersion on how the department is run or how the Police Chief is managing the department. The second is that the city will be entering mediation on a lawsuit.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
None

MAYOR'S REPORT
a. **Division Director – Water, Parks, and Streets Job Description**
Administrator Monette stated that both job descriptions are intended to bring their salaries into

the proper range.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Job Description. Seconded by Councilor Partridge, motion passed unanimously.

b. Division Secretary/Admin Assistant Job Description

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Job Description. Seconded by Councilor Gonzales, motion passed unanimously.

c. Personnel Changes

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Fabian Devargas	03/17/2026	Police	Completed Probation	A-63 to A-65
Glan Madrid	03/17/2026	Wastewater	Temp top Permanent	A-44 to A-46
Cameron Montano	03/17/2026	Police	New Hire	A-59
Oscar Acosta	03/17/2026	Water/Parks	Special Projects	FZ-75 to FZ-77
Henry Jojola	03/17/2026	Wastewater	Increased Responsibilities	GZ-62 to GZ-65
Rena Benavidez	03/17/2026	Division	Special Projects	G-51 to G-53
Logan Walter	03/17/2026	Fire	Firefighter 1 & 2 Certification	A-62 to A-66
Jason Romero	03/17/2026	Fire	EMT-Basic Certification	C-58 to C-60
Sarah Stanley	03/17/2026	Fire	Firefighter 1 & 2 Certification	A-64 to A-68
Shatieya Apache	03/16/2026	Rodeo	Resignation	
Pete Lopez	03/20/2026	Recreation	Resignation	
Joseph Guiterrez	03/17/2026	Municipal Court Judge	Resignation	

Seconded by Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Business Registrations

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
Tocos El Trankazo	C-2	912 N. California St.	Ibis Acedo	Food & Ice Cream
Loaded Lemon ABQ	Out of Town	Albuquerque, NM	Christopher Chavez	Mobile Lemonade Truck
BETZ	Out of Town	Veguita, NM	La'Quinia Chenault	Cannabis Producer, Manufacturer

Seconded by councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

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March 17, 2026

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk