City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 21, 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 Joe Gonzales
- Councilor Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr. (By Phone)
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members absent at roll call:
- Councilor Nick Fleming

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

a. **Approval of April 21 2026, City Council Agenda**
b. **Consideration of Minutes**
   i. **April 7, 2026**
c. **Voucher Run**

The Voucher Run included vouchers 166680 to 166942 in the amount of $3,286,876.82 plus Payroll Transfers $611,820.82 for a total of $3,898,697.64.

d. **Budget Resolution No. 18 - Fire Department**
e. **Budget Resolution No. 19 – Airport**
f. **Budget Resolution No. 20 – Transportation**
g. **Budget Resolution No. 21 – Library Bond**
h. **Budget Resolution No. 22 – Recreation**
i. **Budget Resolution No. 23 – Senior Center**
j. **In-House Budget Resolution No. 105**

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

PUBLIC FORUM

a. **Christy Smith**

Ms. Smith expressed her thanks to those who put together the Pearson Ranch Company project occupying the old Smith's building and asked whether it would be used as a warehouse or for meat processing. Mayor Bhasker replied that no meat processing will occur on site. He explained that Mr. Pearson operates a business in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, and intends to centralize operations; all exotic meats will be processed at a separate facility and then transported to the Socorro location. The final product will be sold in gas stations and companies such as Cabela's.

Ms. Smith also noted that a company has purchased acreage next to New Mexico Tech to manufacture circuit boards and stated that she is opposed to the development of a data center. She recommended that the city be more involved in economic development. Mayor Bhasker responded that the city utilizes the Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Association for economic development efforts.

b. Breaking Bad Habits

Marcella Alvarado, Que Linda Grant Coordinator, and Breanna Lucero, Breaking Bad Habits Ambassador, reported on a clean-up event at Otero Park that Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham attended. Ms. Alvarado stated that the Governor was present from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. and helped pick up trash. Thirty people participated in the clean-up, and everyone received shirts and other items.

Michael Lucero, Landfill & Sanitation Director, will receive cargo nets from the Governor's Office to distribute to residents to help them cover their trash when transporting it to the landfill, which will reduce litter along Highway 1.

Ms. Lucero also stated that two actors from the television show Breaking Bad attended the event with the Governor, and a total of 30 bags of trash were collected along the Bosque and river.

She thanked the city for its assistance with transporting the collected trash.

ORDINANCES

a. Ordinance No. 26-04-21 – Replacing Ordinance No. 26-04-07 – Approving a Community Energy Efficiency Development (CEED) Block Grant

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, presented Ordinance No. 26-04-21 and stated that the ordinance replaces Ordinance No. 26-04-07. She explained that the only change in the new ordinance is that it must state "enacted" and must also be posted on the City's website.

Councilor Dean made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 26-04-21, seconded by Councilor Salome. City Clerk Pineda conducted a roll call vote, and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. FY 25 Audit Presentation

Robert Peixotto, CPA, of Southwest Account Solutions, LLC, presented the 2025 City of Socorro annual audit. Mr. Peixotto reviewed the financial statements and stated that the City has a strong statement of condition, indicating it is a very well-run city. He further noted that the city has a solid cash flow position; however, it is not immune to inflation, which is placing upward pressure on utility rates.

Most of the City's debt carries very low interest rates, with the exception of some at 5%, which may be worth refinancing at a lower rate. The City continues to improve each year, bringing in $5.7 million in external funds from the federal government, which helps subsidize the cost of living for the community. This marks the seventh consecutive year with no audit findings.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the Utility Committee needs to review the rates, noting a $900,000 deficit in gross receipts this fiscal year compared to last year.

Mr. Peixotto congratulated Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, along with management and staff, on a job well done.

Councilor Ocampo made a motion to approve the FY25 Audit. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. ICIP Public Hearing #1

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

Mayor Bhasker asked if the public had any additions to the City's project list that they are interested in.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, explained that the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) is a five-year plan in which the city prioritizes its projects, focusing first on the most critical needs. He noted that this will be the first of four public hearings, and the resolution is due by July 1.

Each councilor will complete scoring sheets, which will be averaged to determine project placement on the ICIP. Beginning this year, any project over $100,000 must be included in the ICIP. Administrator Monette then named the current top 10 projects on the ICIP.

1. Socorro Police Department Substation Conversion
2. Community Center Remodel
3. Wastewater Collection Line Expansion
4. EMRTC Bridge (#9270)
5. Sedillo Park Improvements
6. Gianera St., Skylark Dr., Otero Ave., Fisher Ave.
7. El Camino Real Museum
8. 6th Street and Bullock Stormwater Solution
9. Cuba Road Drainage Improvements
10. Police Department Auto Purchase

After hearing no public comment, Councilor Romero made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. ICIP Public Hearing #1 – Senior Center

Councilor Romero made a motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Gonzales, motion passed unanimously.

Linda Mares, Senior Center Director, presented the top ten ICIP projects at the Socorro Senior Center.

1. Hot/Cold Food Truck X2
2. Entrance - Funded
3. Electric Panel - Funded
4. 5 passenger Van
5. Paving
6. Doors/Windows
7. Design Freezer/Refrig
8. Kitchen/Bath Remodel
9. Stucco
10. Carport

Veguita Senior Center top ICIP requests are as follows:

1. 14 Passenger Van
2. Hot/Cold Food Truck
3. Windows/Doors
4. Paving
5. Stucco
6. Range/Hood
7. Security
8. Covered Carport

Finance Director Lopez reported that the Socorro Senior Center was awarded $86,000 this year for the entrance project. She noted that the electrical panel cost $32,000 and that no capital outlay funds were allocated to the Veguita Senior Center.

Mayor Bhasker inquired whether any city funds had been used for the Veguita Senior Center. Finance Director Lopez responded that no city funds have been used and that they are awaiting state funding; Socorro County is also expected to contribute.

Councilor Salome asked whether the state allowance had increased, decreased, or remained the same. Ms. Mares stated that meal costs have increased due to inflation. Finance Director. Lopez indicated she would provide Councilor Salome with a report the following day.

After hearing no public comment, Councilor Gonzales made a motion to go back into regular session. Seconded by Councilor Ocampo, motion passed unanimously.

d. Bid Award – RFP 030226 – Magdalena Trails System Heritage Surveys

City Clerk Pineda presented the bid award for RFP 030226 and stated that 10 proposals were received on March 2, 2026. After review by the committee, it was recommended that DMG Four Corners Research, Inc. be awarded the bid.

Cheyenne Cortez, Tourism/Convention Center Director, gave the Council an overview of the project.

Councilor Romero made a motion to award RFP 030226 to DMG Four Corners Research, Inc. the bid. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

e. Fire Department SOP – Annual Firefighter Physical Fitness Test Addition

Lawrence Baca, Fire Chief, and Daniel Pacheco, Assistant Fire Chief, presented the SOP Annual Firefighter Physical Fitness Test addition. Chief Baca stated that the Fire Department is implementing an annual fitness test for firefighters.

Assistant Chief Pacheco explained that the initiative originated during an officers' meeting to identify improvements needed within the department. He emphasized the importance of the department's role in serving the citizens of Socorro and stated that the department aims to progress toward higher standards so that all personnel can perform at their highest level. He added that the program will not only promote health but also help the department strive to be among the best in the state, benefiting the city and its residents.

Chief Baca commended Assistant Chief Pacheco in his new position, stating that he has been a great addition to the department.

Councilor Salome made a motion to approve the Annual Firefighter Physical Fitness Test Addition. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

Assistant Chief Pacheco announced to the citizens of Socorro that it is fire season and that the State Forestry Department has issued open burning restrictions. He stated that anyone needing to burn is required to obtain a permit from the department.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez commended Assistant Chief Pacheco as a great asset to the department and the city.

f. Resolution No. 26-04-21a – LGRF – Otero Avenue Extension
Administrator Monette presented Resolution No. 26-04-21a. If approved, the resolution would allow the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) to extend the City's grant agreement for one year, to June 30, 2027. This extension would allow engineers to complete the final design and provide the city additional time to seek funding for construction.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-04-21a. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously

g. Resolution No. 26-04-21b – Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Wastewater Application
h. Resolution No. 26-04-21c - Technical Assistance Program (TAP) Water Application
Finance Director Lopez presented Resolution No. 26-04-21b and Resolution No. 26-04-21c. If approved, the resolutions would allow the City to apply for planning funds to design wastewater and water infrastructure along Highway 60 prior to the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Highway 60 project. An estimated $25,000 is needed to complete the wastewater design, and approximately $300,000 is needed for the water design.

Councilor Dean made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-04-21b and 26-04-21c. Seconded by Councilor Ocampo, motion passed unanimously.

i. Resolution No. 26-04-21d – Disposition of Ambulance
Finance Director Lopez presented Resolution No. 26-04-21d. If approved, the resolution would allow the city to donate an ambulance to Casa Grande, Mexico.

Councilor Ocampo made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-04-21d. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS
Councilor Ocampo asked if the landfill is accepting tires at all. Landfill Director Lucero replied that they are accepting a small number of tires. Finance Director Lopez stated that the city is applying for a grant for the rental of a tire shredder.

Mayor Bhasker announced there will be a public Forum for Green Data prior to the May 5, 2026, Council meeting at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

OLD BUSINESS
Councilor Dean stated she has been approached again regarding what the City plans to do about individuals operating ATVs and Forerunners on city streets.

Chief of Police Angel Garcia stated that, currently, any vehicle under 49cc does not require a license to

operate, which limits enforcement options for the Police Department. Chief Garcia added that he has reached out to the District Attorney regarding requirements for insurance and registration in order for such vehicles to be legally operated on roadways. He also noted concerns about very young children operating ATVs and stated that operators are generally required to be at least 14 years of age. Chief Garcia indicated he hopes to receive guidance from the District Attorney by the following day.

Councilor Salome inquired about the relocation of the monument from the El Camino Real Museum site and the cost associated with its relocation. Councilor Salome stated that he believes the monument looks appropriate in its current location and suggested that the city might save money by having the creator design a new monument for a lower cost.

Mayor Bhasker stated that funding has already been secured to relocate the monument, including $170,000 from the Department of Cultural Affairs and $50,000 from a state appropriation. He added that the artist, Greg Reiche, formerly of Socorro, will assist with the relocation. Councilor Salome added "Because it is everybody's money it nobody's money that's the problem".

Mayor Bhasker also stated that landscaping at the entrance to Socorro on I-25 will cost $200,000, with an additional $20,000 for design.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Salome made a motion to go into executive session. Seconded by Councilor Dean. City Clerk. Pineda took a roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

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

Administrator Monette stated the Council discussed three personnel matters. No action was taken.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. **Job Description**

Administrator Monette stated this is an updated job description for Municipal Court Clerk.

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

a. **Personnel Changes**

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

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Lena Chavez	03/30/2026	Administration	Municipal Court Responsibilities	I-66 to I-69
Cheyenne Cortez	04/21/2026	Tourism	Extended Work Schedule	G-59 to G-62

Seconded by Salome, motion passed unanimously.

b. **Business Registrations**

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

NAME	ZONING	ADDRESS	OWNER	TYPE
Paradise Power Company, Inc.	Out of Town	Taos, NM	Daniel Weinman	Electrical Contractor
CandiFreeze, Inc.	Out of Town	Belen, NM	Jason McKinney	Freeze Dried Candy Manufacturer

Rug King	Out of Town	Breckenridge, TX	Ariel Arellano	Rug Sales
Jewelry for Life	C-2	1408 Frontage Rd.	Richard Coddington	Retail Jewelry Sales
Holiday Inn Socorro	C-2	1040 N. California	Vijay Kordiya	Hospitality
CF Padilla LLC	Out of Town	Albuquerque, NM	Jesus Serrano	Construction

Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk