City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
May 19, 2026

Mayor Pro Tem Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL
Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk, took roll call.

Mayor Bhasker was absent.

Council members present at roll call:
- Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez
- Councilor Deborah Dean
- Councilor Joe Gonzales
- Councilor Joel D. Partridge, Jr. (By Phone)
- Councilor Peter Romero
- Councilor Anton Salome

Council members absent at roll call:
- Councilor Damien Ocampo
- Councilor Nick Fleming

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mayor Pro Tem Chavez-Lopez led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

a. **Approval of May 19 2026, City Council Agenda**
b. **Consideration of Minutes**
    i. **May 5, 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.

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

PUBLIC FORUM
None

ORDINANCES

a. **Ordinance No. 26-05-19 – Update Penalty Assessments**

Councilor Partridge made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 26-04-21, seconded by Councilor Dean.

Lena Chavez, Assistant City Administrator, stated that the only change in the ordinance is under Speed Regulations. Item number 2 was reduced from $115.00 to $80.00.

City Clerk Pineda conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. **ICIP Public Hearing #3**

b. **ICIP Public Hearing #3 – Senior Center(s)**

Councilor Romero made a motion to go into public hearing for both public hearing items. Seconded by Councilor Dean. Motion passed unanimously.

Donald Monette stated that this was the third public hearing and that a scoring sheet was included in the Council packet for the Council to prioritize projects. He requested that the completed scoring sheets be returned by the next meeting because they are due by July 1, 2026.

Administrator Monette reminded the Councilors that any capital outlay request exceeding $100,000.00 must be included on the ICIP.

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

c. **Automated Traffic Compliance System (ANNIE)**

Michael Olguin stated that he has committed to devoting full time to the Automated National Non-invasive Insurance Enforcement System (ANNIE). Mr. Olguin stated that New Mexico has moved from number three to number one in the nation for uninsured motorists. He explained that the program would improve public and traffic safety by identifying stolen and other wanted vehicles and reducing the rate of uninsured vehicles.

Mr. Olguin stated that he would like Socorro to serve as the model city for the program. He explained that the program would be provided to the city at no cost and with no risk, and that three cameras would be installed: two on California Street, at the north and south ends, and one on Highway 60. The cameras would read vehicle license plates and compare them against the uninsured motorist database. He stated that there would be three options for motorists identified as uninsured: provide proof of insurance within 10 days, appear in court, or participate in a diversion program. Mr. Olguin stated that the fine would be $300, with half of the fine going to the city. He added that the program is currently operating in 25 states and continues to expand.

Councilor Partridge asked about the uninsured motorist law. Mr. Olguin replied that in New Mexico, uninsured motorist coverage is optional when purchasing insurance.

Councilor Romero asked what the next steps would be. Administrator Monette stated that the program would have to be adopted by ordinance and advertised for 30 days prior to approval.

Councilor Salome asked whether every vehicle passing the cameras would have its license plate read. Mr. Olguin replied that every plate would be checked against the registered owner of the vehicle. Councilor Salome also asked whether the information would be sold to any other company. Mr. Olguin replied that it would not, stating that the information is not public.

Councilor Partridge asked how many accidents occur in Socorro and stated that this is the reason insurance is required. He also stated that he is not a fan of surveillance and believes the program is invasive, although he acknowledged that this is the direction the world is heading. Councilor

Partridge stated that he is "old school" and would rather have a police officer conduct a traffic stop and check insurance rather than use cameras. He added, with no disrespect intended, that it appeared that if someone sells insurance, they would naturally support such a program.

Mr. Olguin replied that there was no ulterior intent and that the purpose of the program is compliance.

Administrator Monette stated that he would speak with Mayor Bhasker and bring forward an ordinance for Council approval. Mr. Olguin thanked the Council for the opportunity to present the program.

d. Preliminary Budget 2026-2027

Ruby Lopez, Finance Director, presented the preliminary budget to be submitted to DFA. She explained that a five-year financial history is reviewed by department heads and that salary estimates are included in the budgeting process.

Director Lopez noted that health insurance costs increased by 27% from FY24. She also stated that salaries decreased because a 5% increase budgeted in the previous fiscal year did not occur.

Director Lopez reported that the beginning cash balance is approximately $3 million, revenues are projected to be 3% higher, and Gross Receipts Tax revenues are down by approximately $1 million.

e. Resolution No. 26-05-19a – Utility Charge Off FY26

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-05-19a. Seconded by Councilor Dean.

Director Lopez explained that the city writes off utility billing balances every five years and that this year's write-off will apply to accounts from 2021 in the amount of $124,523.93. Director Lopez stated that the write-off represents less than 1% of the $8.8 million billed.

Motion passed unanimously

f. Resolution No. 26-05-19b – Ambulance Write Off 2025-2026

Finance Director Lopez presented Resolutions No. 26-04-21b and 26-05-19b. If approved, the resolutions would authorize the city to write off 2020 accounts totaling $162,338.92, representing 17% of billing.

Councilor Partridge made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-05-19b. Seconded by Councilor Gonzales.

Councilor Salome asked what makes up the 17% uncollected. Director Lopez stated that it consists of the difference between what insurance pays and the customer's unpaid responsibility, uninsured individuals, and accounts deemed uncollectible.

Councilor Gonzales added that, based on his experience as former Fire Chief, the average collection rate for medical billing is 50% to 60%, so 17% uncollected is very good.

Motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS
Councilor Partridge informed the Council that the RMN Wrestling Tournament will be held June 5-6 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the city's Rodeo & Sports Complex.

OLD BUSINESS
None

EXECUTIVE SESSION
None

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Summer City Council Meeting Schedule

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez-Lopez stated that the usual summer meeting schedule is for one meeting per month, including the months of June through September, which would be the second meeting of the month.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Summer City Council Meeting Schedule. Seconded by Councilor Dean.

Administrator Monette added that if a meeting is required between regular meetings, there are two types: an emergency meeting, which requires 24 hours' notice, and a special meeting, which requires 72 hours' notice, and that the city will follow those procedures if necessary.

Motion passed unanimously.

b. Library Board Appointment

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez-Lopez recommended Teresa Conner to be appointed to the Library Board.

Councilor Romero made a motion to appoint Teresa Conner to the Library Board. Seconded by Councilor Dean, motion passed unanimously.

c. Job Description

i. **Socorro Police Department – SOP – All Positions**
ii. **Gas Department – Utility Division director**
iii. **Gas Department – Gas Compliance Supervisor**

Administrator Monette stated that the three job descriptions are changing, with only the pay range being adjusted because they have moved beyond the previous pay range, so the pay ranges will be aligned with what they are currently being paid.

Councilor Salome stated that the pay range indicates they report to the City Clerk. Administrator Monette stated that they should report to the City Administrator and directors to the Mayor.

Councilor Gonzales made a motion to approve the job descriptions with the changes to reporting

structure from the City Clerk to the City Administrator and Mayor. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

a. Personnel Changes

Councilor Romero motioned to approve the Personnel Changes as presented by Mayor Pro Tem Chavez-Lopez.

NAME	EFFECTIVE	DEPARTMENT	REASON	SALARY
Luis Chavez	05/19/2026	Police	Promotion to Assist. Chief	W-75 to W-77
Peter Gonzales	05/19/2026	Police	Promotion to Captain	M-73 to M-75
Leandra Acosta	05/13/2026	Municipal Court	New Hire	A-40
Michael Alfonso	04/20/2026	Wastewater	Termination	
Isacc Angel	05/19/2026	Gas	Certifications	CZ-69 to CZ-71
David Gutierrez	05/19/2026	Gas	Certifications	O-61 to O-63
Aldo Ruiz Torres	05/19/2026	Gas	Promotion to Operator I	B-41 to B-43
Cenyon Scarborough	05/19/2026	Gas	Temp to Permanent	A-37
Antonio Garcia	05/19/2026	Gas	Temp to Permanent	A-37

Seconded by Salome, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

None

c. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez-Lopez stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers (111 School of Mines Rd.).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leopoldo Pineda, City Clerk