

**City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting**  
**City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801**  
**June 15, 2015**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF JUNE 15, 2015 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

Mayor Bhasker requested that Resolution No. 15-06-15d (NMDOT MAP Funding) be added to the agenda as Item 7e.

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

**a. June 1, 2015**

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

**PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS**

**a. Proclamation – SHS Girls Golf**

Mayor Bhasker presented a proclamation to the SHS Lady Warrior Girls Golf Team which recognizes them for their 2014-2015 New Mexico Class A-4A golf championship win. The proclamation also recognizes the team's record for the most state championships in New Mexico (19), the most consecutive tournament wins and the most consecutive overall wins. The team, who is coached by Margaret Stanley-Gonzales, consists of Mia Salome, Teresa Lucero, Chynna Pearson, Brianna Munguia and Aubrey Anaya. Ms. Stanley-Gonzales thanked the City for the continued support of the golf program. Ms. Stanley-Gonzales stated that this would be her last year coaching for SHS as she has taken a position in Colorado Springs. The Mayor and City Council congratulated the girls on their win.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

None.

**DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION**

**a. Teen Center - Presentation**

Erika Baxter, Teen Center Manager, stated that the teen center is made possible by funding through the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board. Ms. Baxter stated that the center opened in January at Finley Gym and provides free services to teens ages 13 through 18. Ms. Baxter stated that there is an after-school program throughout the school year and a summer program throughout the summer. Ms. Baxter stated that the purpose of the center is to offer a recreational, educational and safe place for teens. Ms. Baxter stated that some of the activities at the center include games, art and tutoring. Ms. Baxter stated that there have been an average of 17-20 visiting the center daily. Ms. Baxter stated that there is a computer lab that has 12 computers available. Ms. Baxter stated that prevention classes are also held at the center which include anger management, substance abuse prevention and parenting. Ms. Baxter stated that some of the "barriers" that the center has is the underutilization of the tutoring program, low attendance at the prevention classes and summer program and a lack of grant funding for recreational activities. Ms. Baxter stated that future plans include growing the attendance of the programs, expanding recreational activities and starting a bullying prevention class. Ms. Baxter thanked the City for their support. Mayor Bhasker congratulated Ms. Baxter on a successful program and asked her to let the City Administration know if the City could assist with anything.

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**b. Resolution No. 15-06-15a – Ambulance Billing Write-Offs**

Mable Gonzales, Finance Director, presented Resolution No. 15-06-15a which, if approved, removes uncollectible ambulance accounts from 2009, in the amount of \$181,141.79, from the City's list of accounts. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Finance Department still attempts to collect these funds through a credit agency.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-06-15a. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Resolution No. 15-06-15b – Feasibility Study for Electric Utility**

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 15-06-15b which, if approved, will allow the City to perform a feasibility study which explores the possibility of the City of Socorro establishing its own electric utility to serve the City's Industrial Park and surrounding area.

Mayor Bhasker stated that a study commissioned from the UNM Bureau of Business & Economic Research shows that the Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC) rate structure comparatively (PNM) costs residents of the City (2,802 households) an additional \$2,118,037 annually in direct and indirect costs. Mayor Bhasker stated that Electricity Local ([www.electricitylocal.com](http://www.electricitylocal.com)) shows that:

1. The SEC rate for residential electricity is 36.5% higher than the New Mexico average.
2. The SEC rate for commercial electricity is 34.98% higher than the New Mexico average.
3. The SEC rate for industrial electricity is 83.02% higher than the New Mexico average.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration would like to do a feasibility study which, among other things, will:

1. Inventory the City's Industrial Park and surrounding areas to see who the customers are;
2. Find out the cost of those customer's annual electricity bill;
3. Contact electricity suppliers to see what rate the City can get power for;
4. Provide a price for "hard costs" with the power lines being located underground.

Mayor Bhasker stated that if the costs are prohibitive, the City will not proceed with establishing the electric utility. Mayor Bhasker stated that the results would be brought back to the City Council for review. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will still develop the franchise agreement with the SEC. There was some discussion regarding whether to send out an RFP (Request for Proposals) or RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for the study. Mayor Bhasker stated that Councilor Chavez-Lopez and Councilor Olguin could be on a committee to review the proposals.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-06-15b. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Resolution No. 15-06-15c – NMDOT CO-OP Funding**

Mr. Santillanes presented Resolution No. 15-06-15c which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the reconstruction of two intersections (Otero Avenue and 6<sup>th</sup> Street/Bullock Avenue and El Camino Real) and crack/fog seal on El Camino Real (Bullock Avenue to Mariposa Street), School of Mines Road (Bernard Street to Leroy Avenue) and Neel Avenue (Grant Street to Leroy Avenue). Mayor Bhasker stated that the total project cost is \$67,496.00 with the NMDOT funding 75% and the City funding 25%.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-06-15c. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

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**e. Resolution No. 15-06-15d – NMDOT MAP Funding**

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, presented Resolution No. 15-06-15d which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a MAP Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the planning, design, pavement rehabilitation, construction, reconstruction, drainage and miscellaneous improvements to Farigrounds Road from Raychester Road heading south approximately 1.8 miles to the City of Socorro Rodeo Facility. Mayor Bhasker stated that the total project cost is \$167,492.00 with the NMDOT funding 75% and the City funding 25%.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-06-15d. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None.

**DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS**

Chelsea Lyons, Adult Services Librarian in the absence of the Library Director, stated that it is the opinion of the engineering consultants that the separation of the south wall at the library is the result of the wall not being adequately braced at the roof. Ms. Lyons stated that the engineer is recommending that the roof be repaired as soon as possible. Ms. Lyons stated that the estimate to paint several rooms in the library is \$2,500. Ms. Lyons stated that Tax Help New Mexico will be assisting patrons with tax returns next year and that in 2014, 151 tax returns were done at the library. Ms. Lyons reviewed donations, GO Bond 12, GO Bond 14 and the State Grants-In-Aid. Ms. Lyons stated that there are 209 children enrolled in the summer reading program. Ms. Lyons stated that the summer reading program had an event June 3<sup>rd</sup> (Recycle Man) and June 9<sup>th</sup> (Matt Mitchell with Wildlife Rescue) and that both events were well-attended.

Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that two commercial building permits had been issued (Positive Outcomes and Solaro). Mr. Czosnek stated that he was contacted by a national drug store chain about possibly putting a store in Socorro. Mr. Czosnek stated that in regards to overgrown weeds, he has contacted several landowners and if no response is received, the City will cut the weeds and place a lien on the property if necessary.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from May 2015 (83 arrests, 208 citations, 4 DWI arrests, 220 police reports filed, 25 traffic accidents, etc.). Chief Winders stated that Officer Victor Savedra graduated from the Police Academy. Chief Winders stated that two more officers will go to the Police Academy in August. Chief Winders stated that he would like to set up public meetings to discuss “neighborhood watch” and “crimestoppers” programs with local residents.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from May 2015 (total calls were 2,436). Mr. Tarango stated that there has been a slight increase in calls. Mr. Tarango stated that employee training on the new 911 system will be held the week of June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Mr. Tarango stated that on July 10<sup>th</sup>, due to switching over to the new 911 system, dispatch will be down for approximately 2 hours at which time the secondary PSAP will take all calls.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, stated that crews at the rodeo arena/soccer fields are working on cleaning weeds and building a retaining wall by the ticket booth. Mr. Martinez stated that Parks Department crews have been preparing the parks for sporting events as well as fixing/painting the tennis courts. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department has been maintaining the water at the swimming pool and cleaning lift stations. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department will be replacing sewer lines on Franklin Street in July. Mr. Martinez stated that NM Underground replaced sewer lines and manholes at the 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Otero Street intersection and replaced manholes on Chaparral Drive. Mr. Martinez stated that upgrades at the WWTP will start in the fall. Mr. Martinez stated that City-wide water line flushing will start in July and end in September.

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Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the NMDOT is repairing the street light at the intersection of California Street and Otero Street. Mr. Santillanes stated that Albuquerque Asphalt is repairing the 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Otero Street intersection now that the lines have been replaced. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Gas and Street Departments have been working on completing work orders and building the retaining wall by the rodeo arena ticket booth. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Gas Department has finished replacing natural gas lines.

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, thanked the City Council for having the last meeting at noon as she was able to get the City's preliminary budget turned in on schedule. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Finance Department has started closing the current fiscal year in preparation of opening the new fiscal year and that she is working on the final budget. Ms. Gonzales stated that summer time usually results in lower utility bills and it is a good time for customers to get on a budget billing plan. Ms. Gonzales stated that last year, the City ran out of time to apply for funding for an affordable housing plan and she has spoken with the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority who has recommended the City reapply for the funding as the RFP from last year is still good.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Fire Department stats from May 2015 (174 ambulance runs, 16 fire calls, etc.). Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that the department has completed the annual ladder and pump tests. Chief Gonzales stated that four permits have been issued in Socorro for fireworks sales and the department will be inspecting the stands prior to them opening.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Councilor Fleming stated that two Socorro residents will be attending the National High School Rodeo (Lelan Fountain and Chazlin Lesseur) and will be doing a litter cleanup to raise funds for the trip.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Councilor Hicks stated that the Councilors who attend the Municipal Officials Leadership Institute will enjoy the program.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the summer youth program at the Youth Center is going well and that the youth are enjoying the field trips.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

**a. Personnel Changes**

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

Lorenzo Benavidez – 5-30-15 – Water – Termination

Orlando Martinez – 6-1-15 – Fire – Certification (EMT-I License) – A-28 to A-31

Maribel Tarango – 6-29-15 – Library – Completed Probation – A-17 to A-19

Temporary New Hires: Chris Carrillo, Jared Marquez, Theresa Chavez

Temporary Renewals: Tony Montoya, Paul Marquez, Elias Jacques, Tony Silva, Regina Valencia, Sergio Cuevas, Angelica Vega, Michael Padilla, Jeremy Chavez, Kevin Gonzales, Felipe Romero, John Ferguson, Billy Romero, Brad Winton, Cindy Saiz, Loretta Tolliver, Angelica Rael, Jenny Crespín, Brent Gallagher

Student Workers: Giovanna Rosas, Samantha Maldonado, Mariah Jaramillo, Jeremy Gallegos, Alena Gachupin

Referees (7), Zumba (1)

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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**b. Business Registrations**

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

7-D Mechanical LLC – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Clifford Crise – HVAC Repair, Replace & Install

LRN Industries LLC – Out of Town – Tucson, AZ – Leah & Dale Nelson – Door to Door Kirby Sales

Carlos Santome – Out of Town – Las Cruces, NM – Carlos Santome – Produce Sales

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

**c. Voucher Run**

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve vouchers 133908 to 134207 in the amount of \$674,016.48, plus Payroll Transfers (\$298,561.93), for a total of \$972,578.41 not including the substance abuse grant checks as he had questions regarding the City's role as fiscal agent for those programs. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

**d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – July 6, 2015 @ 6:00 p.m.**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:40 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

**THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Ravi Bhasker, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
/s/  
**Pat Salome, City Clerk**