

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 7, 2016

The City of Socorro held a regular municipal election on March 1, 2016. The newly elected, or re-elected, officials were sworn in prior to the start of the City Council meeting. Municipal Judge Frances Cases was sworn in by Probate Judge Darryl Cases and City Councilors Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Toby Jaramillo and Michael Olguin were sworn in by Municipal Judge Frances Cases. Councilor Peter Romero was also sworn in by Probate Judge Cases.

The Civil Air Patrol Color Guard attended the meeting to present the United States and New Mexico flags. Councilor Jaramillo's grandchildren, Esai and Eliana Jaramillo, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Ernest Pargas, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Donald Monette, Councilor Peter Romero and Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

See above.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 7, 2016 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

RE-ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING - 2016

a. Open Meetings Resolution – Resolution No. 16-03-07a

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 16-03-07a. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Open Meetings Resolution is passed each year at the beginning of the calendar year and after an election.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-03-07a. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. Governing Body Rules of Procedure Resolution – Resolution No. 16-03-07b

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 16-03-07b which, if approved, reaffirms the Governing Body Rules of Procedure adopted August 7, 2014 and recognizes those rules as the method by which the Socorro City Council meetings are conducted. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Governing Body Rules of Procedure are re-adopted at the beginning of each year and right after each election.

Councilor Pargas made a motion to approve resolution No. 16-03-07b. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

c. Appointment of Officials & Organizational Structure – City Clerk, Treasurer & Chief of Police

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro is a Mayor-Council form of government. Mayor Bhasker stated with a Mayor-Council form of government, the City Clerk, City Treasurer and Police Chief positions are appointed.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to appoint Mable Gonzales as City Clerk/Treasurer.

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Councilor Jaramillo made a motion to approve the appointment of Mable Gonzales as City Clerk/Treasurer. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to appoint Mike Winders as Police Chief. Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the appointment of Mike Winders as Police Chief. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that Stephanie Saavedra will continue in her role as Deputy Clerk.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. February 16, 2016

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

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Socorro Junior Wrestling Program – Event Update

Joel Partridge stated that the State Wrestling Championship was recently held in Socorro at NM Tech for youth ages 4 to 15. Mr. Partridge stated that there were 687 participants with 22 of those participants being youth from Socorro who had qualified. Mr. Partridge stated that the Socorro team placed 9th out of 34 teams. Mr. Partridge stated that the two-day event was very successful and he hopes to bring more events to Socorro in the future. Mr. Partridge stated that the Socorro Junior Wrestling Team has 42 kids on the roster. There were several members of the team present at the meeting and Mr. Partridge introduced them all. Mr. Partridge thanked the City of Socorro and NM Tech for supporting the event.

b. SHS Interact Club Purple Toilet Fundraiser Campaign

Penny Lommen, President of the Rotary Club, introduced Autum Goranson, Emerald Goranson, Matthew Frail and Audrey Carrillo who are members of the Socorro High School Rotary Interact Club. Ms. Lommen stated that the Interact Club has done several fundraisers in the past which help them earn a Presidential Citation. Emerald Goranson stated that the club was conducting a fundraiser for Doctors without Borders. Ms. Goranson stated that a resident could purchase placement of a toilet for \$15 and place it on someone's lawn. That resident, in turn, would pay \$5 to have the toilet removed, \$10 to have the toilet removed and sent somewhere else or \$20 to have the toilet removed, sent somewhere else and have immunity from the toilet coming back to their lawn. In addition, a resident could pay \$20 beforehand to buy immunity from having the toilet placed on their lawn. Mr. Goranson stated that the fundraiser will last 3 to 4 weeks.

c. Kim Schaeffer – Cottonwood Valley Charter School

Kim Schaeffer, Cottonwood Valley Charter School Principal, stated that the school is in the process of constructing six small buildings on their campus. Ms. Schaeffer stated that she would like to thank the City for assisting with water and sewer connections as well as assisting in the removal of the foundation of the building that was on the property before the school. Ms. Schaeffer also thanked NM Tech, San Miguel Church and Socorro County for their assistance. Ms. Schaeffer stated that the project should be done by June 30th. There were also several parents and CVCS board members at the meeting. Delilah Walsh, Socorro County Manager, stated that the project was a collaborative effort between several entities.

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DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. US Army Corps of Engineers & Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District – Levee Project Update

Mike Hamman, from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Hamman stated that he attended the meeting to give an update on the San Acacia Levee Project. Mr. Hamman stated that the first phase of the project should be done by the end of July. Mr. Hamman stated that phase two should be completed by January 2017 at which time the third phase would begin. Mr. Hamman stated that in addition to federal funding, the project has also been funded by the MRGCD, Interstate Stream Commission, City of Socorro, NM Capital Infrastructure and the Water Trust Board. Chris Sichler, MRGCD Board Member, along with his wife Paula, also attended the meeting. Mr. Sichler stated that this was a much-needed project and that there has been a lot of cooperation between the agencies involved. Mayor Bhasker stated that he wanted to compliment the local MRGCD crew for all of their work in the community. Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that once the project is complete, an application will be submitted to FEMA for accreditation of the levee. Mr. Czosnek stated that flood insurance for homeowners should decrease once the levee is accredited.

b. Tularosa Basin Downwinders – Tina Cordova and Louisa Lopez

Louisa Lopez, a Socorro County resident, introduced Tina Cordova, the co-founder of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium (TBDC). Mr. Cordova stated that the TBDC was organized in 2005 to represent people in New Mexico who have been affected by exposure to radiation as a result of the test conducted at Trinity Site in South Central New Mexico on July 16, 1945. Ms. Cordova stated that the TBDC is trying to make New Mexico a part of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act which can authorize lump sum payments and/or medical coverage to individuals who suffer from radiation-related diseases. Ms. Cordova stated that the amendments to RECA which would make New Mexico part of the Act have been introduced but have not made their way through Congress and have not received a Congressional hearing. Ms. Cordova stated that a Santa Fe Community organization has received a grant which would allow the implementation of a survey process in order to collect cancer information. Ms. Cordova stated that surveys have been collected in Tularosa and feels they need to be collected from Socorro, Carrizozo and Mescalero. Ms. Cordova stated that she is asking for the City's support in the effort to collect the surveys in Socorro and if possible, a resolution in support of amending the RECA to include New Mexico. Mayor Bhasker asked Ms. Cordova to send the City Administration the resolution passed by the Village of Tularosa. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels Trinity Site should have been recognized as an international monument but has never been recognized. Mayor Bhasker stated the City may be able to help by including the survey in the utility bills and on the website.

c. Parking on Leroy Street from School of Mines Road to Bullock Avenue - Discussion

Mayor Bhasker stated that he has received concerns regarding parking on Leroy Avenue. Mayor Bhasker stated that NM Tech built a parking lot for use by students and staff but that it is not utilized. Mayor Bhasker stated that one possible solution would be to make that area "permit parking only" which may encourage people to use the NM Tech parking lot. Mayor Bhasker stated he feels the local residents who pay taxes in Socorro should be allowed to park in that area at no charge. Councilor Fleming stated that there are concerns regarding cars parking where there are yellow lines and homeowners being blocked in their driveways. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to see drivers use the parking lot that NM Tech built and for those who choose not to use the parking lot, drivers would have to purchase a parking permit (if they are not a local resident). Councilor Monette suggested a meeting with NM Tech officials to see if there is a possible solution.

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Lillian Armijo, the NM Tech liaison, was at the meeting and suggested a meeting between the two entities to see how the problem could be addressed.

d. Socorro Public Library Policy Manual – Revised 2016

Donald Padilla, Library Director, presented a revised Policy Manual for the Socorro Public Library.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the revised Policy Manual for the Socorro Public Library. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution No. 16-03-07c – Texas Street Area CDBG Application

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, presented Resolution No. 16-03-07c which, if approved, authorizes the submission of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program application to the Department of Finance and Administration and further authorizes the Mayor to act as the City's authorized representative on the project. Mr. Santillanes stated that the application is for \$500,000.00 which will be used for the Texas Area Street and Drainage Improvements Project.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-03-07c. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

f. Resolution No. 16-03-07d – CDBG Federal Requirements

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, explained that the CDBG Program requires that entities have a Citizen Participation Plan, a Section 3 Plan, a Fair Housing Plan and a Residential Anti-Displacement & Relocation Assistance Plan in place in order to be able to apply for funds. Mr. Santillanes stated that the resolution presented has been approved by the City Council in previous years and CDBG requests that municipalities periodically reconfirm their approval of the resolution. Mr. Santillanes briefly described each policy presented under the resolution.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-03-07d. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

g. Resolution No. 16-03-07e – Municipal Arterial Program Application for 2016-2017

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 16-03-07e which, if approved, authorizes the submittal of an application for the 2016-2017 NMDOT Municipal Arterial Program (MAP) funds for street and drainage improvements to Fairgrounds Road from State Road 1 to Rodeo Road. Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that project will include sidewalk, gutters and bicycle lanes. Mr. Santillanes stated that Dennis Engineering will prepare and submit the application.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-03-07e. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

h. Memorandum of Understanding between City of Socorro & City of Truth or Consequences – Animal Shelter Services

Mayor Bhasker presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Socorro and the City of Truth or Consequences. Mayor Bhasker stated that the MOU will allow the City of Socorro to provide housing and care for animals originating from T or C as T or C does not currently have an animal shelter. Mayor Bhasker stated that the MOU outlines fees for boarding, quarantine, euthanasia, disposal and laboratory services. Mayor Bhasker stated that the term of the MOU is for four years. Victoria Murphy, Animal Shelter Director, stated that she expects less than 40 animals

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per month and any more than 40 will result in an extra fee. Ms. Murphy stated that T or C will pay \$3,000 initially and \$3,000 per month thereafter.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Socorro and the City of Truth or Consequences for animal shelter services. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

i. Resolution No. 16-03-07f – Proposed Vacation of City Property

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 16-03-07f which, if approved, will allow the City to move forward with the formal process of vacating a portion of Hot Springs Avenue and a portion of Mississippi Avenue. Mayor Bhasker stated that the owners of the property on either side of the street requested the vacation of the property (the property is located across the street from KOA Campground on State Road 1). Mayor Bhasker stated that in the past (for similar requests), the Planning and Zoning Commission would hold a public hearing and then make a recommendation to the City Council. Mayor Bhasker stated that the resolution only authorizes the City to begin the formal process of the vacation and does not approve the vacation itself. Mayor Bhasker stated that if vacated, the property will be divided equally to the property owners on each side of the street. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has vacated City property before when the City has decided that there is no longer a public use for the property.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that she feels the resolution should include a section that states the vacated property should be returned to the City of Socorro or purchased at fair market value if the person who receives the land does not use it for the specified use within a certain time frame.

Councilor Olguin stated that the safeguards would be similar to those of LEDA in that the entity must pay back the funds if they do not fulfill their duties. Councilor Olguin stated that he feels there should be a checklist of items that the requestor must complete and if the items are not done, the vacated property should be returned to the City of Socorro or purchased at fair market value. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels that since the requested land is unusable by the City, a checklist would just be creating red tape and not be helpful towards economic development. Councilor Olguin stated that he feels there will soon be an influx of people who want the City to vacate land with the words “economic development” attached to their request. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels it would be best to take each request on a “case by case” basis.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-03-07f. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Councilor Olguin asked for an amendment to the motion to include getting a legal opinion from the City’s attorney to make sure the City is not violating the anti-donation clause by vacating City property. Motion passed unanimously.

j. Budget Resolutions

1. No. 6 – General Fund – Rodeo Arena/Soccer Department

Resources are Beginning Cash Balance Available – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance – Amount is \$10,000 – The increase is needed to allow for expenditures to June 30, 2016.

2. No. 7 – Joint Enterprise Fund – Production Department

Resources are Beginning Cash Balance Available – Requirements are Repair & System Maintenance, Capital Outlay-Over 500 – Amount is \$47,000 – The increase is needed to allow for expenditures to June 30, 2016.

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Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Budget Resolutions 6 and 7. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Hicks stated that he asked the NMDOT to inspect the traffic light at the north end of California Street as the direction the light is facing has confused some drivers. Councilor Hicks stated that the NMDOT inspected and corrected the light.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has a contracted engineer for matters regarding natural gas. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is going to need to figure out how to pay for miles of natural gas lines in order to increase capacity. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like the Utility Committee to meet to look at options.

Mayor Bhasker stated that City will be going out for “Requests for Information” for electricity supply information from companies who sell electricity. Mayor Bhasker stated that Nann Winter, the attorney the City hired for this matter, will be preparing the request.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Olguin stated that in regards to Resolution No. 15-11-02 (vacation of City property), there is a provision in the Governing Body Rules of Procedure that would allow a reconsideration of the action taken on that resolution. Councilor Olguin stated that he would not, however, be able to make that request as he was not on the prevailing side of the vote. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would want to ask for a legal opinion on whether the City can rescind an action on property that has been vacated by the City and already signed over to the landowners. Councilor Olguin stated that he only brought the subject up as a matter of discussion and there is always the chance another Councilor will not make a motion to reconsider. Jay Santillanes, Division Director, read from the Governing Body Rules of Procedure that a “request to reconsider previous action must be made not later than the next regular meeting”.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilor Olguin made a motion to go into Executive Session. Motion failed for lack of a second.

MAYOR’S REPORT

a. New Job Description – Recreation Department – Event Manager

Mayor Bhasker presented a newly-created job description for Event Manager. Mayor Bhasker stated that the position includes coordinating and marketing events in the City including events at the rodeo arena and convention center.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve the job description for Event Manager. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Letter of Support to NM Department of Health for Dialysis Center

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would be sending a letter to the NM Department of Health in regards to the dialysis center that will be opening in Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that he will be asking for an exception to the priority assignment of the initial survey for Medicare certification so that Socorro residents on Medicare can receive dialysis services immediately. Mayor Bhasker stated

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that if the rule is invoked, over 20 dialysis patients in Socorro who are on Medicare/Medicaid would have to continue to travel for treatment. Mayor Bhasker stated that if any of the City Councilors wish to send the letter of support, his staff can prepare a letter for them.

c. Reporting on Personnel Changes

Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to the City Administrator position, the Administration received four applications. Mayor Bhasker stated that he personally knows each of the four applicants and therefore did not conduct interviews. Mayor Bhasker stated that he was also aware of their past experience, education and expected salary. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels his recommendation, existing City Councilor Donald Monette, has several years of experience on the City Council, on the Budget Committee and working with the schools and he knows Councilor Monette has always had a strong desire to work for the City in this type of role. Mayor Bhasker stated that as far as concerns regarding “taking away power”, the City of Socorro has always had a Council-Mayor type of government with an Administrator and never a Manager.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the following personnel change:

Donald Monette - 3-21-16 – Administration - New Hire*(City Administrator) - \$7667.00/month

The motion was seconded by Councilor Jaramillo. Councilor Monette abstained from the vote as he is the person being considered. After a roll call vote was taken of the remaining Councilors, motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Monette thanked the Mayor and City Council for trusting him with this position. Councilor Monette stated that he brings 18 years of experience to the job and he will spend a large amount of time working closely with the City Council. Councilor Monette stated that he appreciated the unanimous vote. Mayor Bhasker stated that it is time to transition into the next generation and it will be healthy to have a person in the position of City Administrator. Mayor Bhasker stated that Councilor Monette’s City Council seat will become vacant and that a person will need to be appointed to serve for the rest of the term. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like interested parties to explain why they are interested in filling the vacant position. Councilor Chavez-Lopez suggested that a committee be formed to assist with choosing a person to fill the position. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would agree to an advisory committee.

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

Lucario Mirabal - 3-1-16 – Fire - New Hire*(FF/EMT Recruit) - A-25

Richard Montano - 3-9-16 – Street - Resignation

Humberto Lucero - 3-1-16 – Fire - Certification (Fire Inspector I) - C-33 to C-35

Scott Crespin - 1-15-16 - Fire Certification (Firefighter I) - A-30 to A-32

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Business Registrations

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

CPI Builders LLC - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Daniel Somellera - Underground Cable Construction

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Larry Jackson Drywall dba Jackson Young Drywall - Out of Town - Clovis, CA - Larry Jackson - Subcontractor
Carnell Storefront Systems Inc. - Out of Town - Wilkes-Barre, PA – Corporation - Service & Installation of Overhead Doors
Eagle Rock Contracting - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM – Corporation - Subcontractor
DPV Electric LLC - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM - Daniel Valverde - Electrical
Sherri's Creations - Out of Town - 3058 Chaparral (in County) - Sherri Wilkinson - Gift Baskets
Tri-Helix Research LLC - Out of Town - Santa Fe, NM – Corporation - Product Research
Sanchez Demolition Inc. - Out of Town - Belen, NM - Corporation General Contractor
T & G Cosina - Out of Town - Bosque, NM - Gregorio & Tammy Erivez - Food Sales
American Restoration Water & Fire LLC - Out of Town - Albuquerque, NM – Corporation - Restoration & General Construction
C & N Construction Inc. - Out of Town - Sonora, CA – Corporation - Construction
Las Cruces Automotive Group - Out of Town - Las Cruces, NM – Corporation - Automobile Sales

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously. Councilor Pargas abstained as his wife's business registration is on the list.

e. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting would be held on Monday, March 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:27 p.m., Councilor Monette motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk