

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order. Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy 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 and Councilor Ernest Pargas. Councilor Gordy Hicks was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The new City Administrator, Donald Monette, led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 21, 2016 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. March 7, 2016

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Michael Hanauer, Festival of the Cranes Coordinator, gave a brief update of the 2015 Festival of the Cranes event. Mr. Hanauer thanked the City for supporting the event annually with Lodger's Tax funds. Mr. Hanauer thanked the City's Police Department, Transportation Department, Tourism Department and all of the other City staff that assisted in the event. Mr. Hanauer stated that the Festival of the Cranes is one of the top three birding festivals in the country. Mr. Hanauer stated that the next festival will have 160 events in 6 days including tours, workshops, lectures and an expanded wildlife zone for kids. Mayor Bhasker asked if the Bosque del Apache has ever considered having a live camera feed that streams on the internet. Mr. Hanauer stated that the topic of funding a camera has been discussed. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Hanauer for his update.

Peter Anselmo, from NM Tech, stated that the 1st Annual Inventors & Entrepreneurs Workshop: A Business Start-up Conference will be held on April 15th and 16th at New Mexico Tech. Mr. Anselmo stated that the event will have something similar to the TV show "Shark Tank" called the "Wolves Den" which will give students and local residents the opportunity to find out how to start a business (there will be an \$85 fee to participate). Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would like to sponsor \$1,000 in scholarships for residents who would like to participate in the event. Kat McDonald, from the Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Chamber will assist the City with the scholarships and urged everyone to attend as there will be many quality speakers at the event. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City would also be willing to help with advertising, if needed.

Pauline Sanchez, a local resident, stated that she has concerns regarding a "marijuana" business that is opening near her home. Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that after he investigated the concerns received by the public regarding the business, he found that the business has a business registration as required by the City, the property is zoned for this type of business and the remodel being performed on the property has the required building permit. Ms. Sanchez stated that she feels uncomfortable with the business as there is a school bus stop and a church nearby. Ms. Sanchez stated that she feels the use of chemicals is also a concern. Mayor Bhasker stated that the business is not selling to the public and if it has met all of the legal requirements, the City cannot stop the owner from doing business. Ms. Sanchez stated that she is a treatment foster parent and feels uncomfortable having the business close to her home as her foster children have been affected by substance abuse. Mayor Bhasker suggested a meeting with the City,

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
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March 21, 2016

the business owner and interested parties to discuss the concerns the residents have. Ms. Sanchez stated that she feels there are better locations for the business and feels that the neighbors should have been notified about the business. Ms. Sanchez stated that she also has concerns about traffic and parking. Mr. Czosnek stated that the business is not a retail business and that it is a secure facility. Mr. Czosnek stated that the property is zoned commercial and the business is compliant with all other regulations and as such, no notifications required. Ms. Sanchez stated that she feels the problem cannot be fixed at this point and thanked the Mayor and City Council for listening to her concerns.

Jay Armijo and Angela Rael, from the South Central Council of Governments, attended the meeting to introduce Lisa Baca who is the new grant administrator for the SCCOG. Mayor Bhasker welcomed Ms. Baca and stated that he hopes to see her working in Socorro. Ms. Baca stated that she is familiar with the area as she is from Magdalena.

Lillian Armijo, the NM Tech liaison, stated that in regards to the recent parking concerns of residents who live near NM Tech, City crews painted curbs and the area residents were happy with the results. Ms. Armijo stated that she would like to know if there are continued issues and she will be happy to try to address the problem.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES – APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION ONLY

a. Ordinance No. 16-03-21a – Sale of Industrial Park Land (Solaro Energy Inc.)

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 16-03-21a. Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance authorizes the sale of approximately 2.9 acres of Industrial Park land to Solaro Energy Inc. Mayor Bhasker stated that previous appraisals in the Industrial Park have valued the land at \$18,200 per acre but that an updated appraisal is currently being conducted. Councilor Olguin asked if the wording needed to be changed as the appraisal is not complete. Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance says “approximately” but that the ordinance can be amended with an actual number once the appraisal is complete.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance is on the agenda for approval for publication only.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 16-03-21a for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. Ordinance No. 16-03-21b – Socorro Industrial Corridor Competitive Electric Power Ordinance

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 16-03-21b. Mayor Bhasker stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to create a municipally-owned electric utility. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City will be going out for “Requests for Information” for electricity supply information from companies who sell electricity. Councilor Olguin asked if the City Council should approve the ordinance before the feasibility study is complete. Mayor Bhasker stated that the two things can be done parallel to one another and if the feasibility study shows that it is not feasible for the City to proceed, the ordinance will still allow the City to become a municipally-owned electric utility in the future.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the ordinance is on the agenda for approval for publication only.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 16-03-21b for publication only. Seconded by Councilor Pargas, motion passed unanimously.

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – PUBLIC HEARING & CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Ordinance No. 16-02-16 – Amending the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Mayor Bhasker presented Ordinance No. 16-02-16. Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that the purpose of the ordinance is to adopt an updated Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Mr. Czosnek stated that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has made updates to the ordinance including a new Flood Insurance Study, new flood insurance rate maps and accreditation of the Diversion Channel Levee. Mr. Czosnek stated that the new FEMA maps will go into effect on May 2, 2016.

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

There were no comments from the public.

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

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 16-02-16. The motion was seconded by Councilor Jaramillo. A roll call vote was taken, motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Legislative Updates

1. Speaker of the House – Representative Don Tripp

Representative Tripp stated that the capital outlay that came to Socorro from the Legislative Session includes funding for improvements to Grefco Road, \$290,000 for the City's rodeo facility and \$2 million for Phase 2 of the levy project. Representative Tripp stated that there was a groundbreaking earlier in the day at NM Tech for a new \$15 million building. Representative Tripp stated that in regards to broadband, there was an appropriation approved for an implementation report. Representative Tripp stated that he would like to see Socorro become a pilot site for the Physics in Middle School Program.

2. Senator Howie Morales

Senator Morales stated that other topics discussed include oil prices, the Real ID driver's license compliance issue and Medicaid concerns. Senator Morales stated that NM Tech also received an appropriation. Senator Morales stated that he has recommended that the Legislative Finance Committee have one of their meetings in Socorro.

Paul Lopez, a local resident, stated that there was a tax on alcohol many years ago that was supposed to go towards alcohol programs and he believes the tax is going to the General Fund. Mr. Lopez wanted to know why the funds were not going towards alcohol programs. Senator Morales thanked Mr. Lopez for his comments and stated that he would look into the matter.

Mayor Bhasker asked how the Real ID driver's license process works. Representative Tripp stated that a resident has the option to get a driver's license through the Real ID process or can choose to use their current license while having to use another form of ID in an airport or on a military base. Mayor Bhasker thanked Representative Tripp and Senator Morales for helping the City get the funds for the rodeo area and for wastewater treatment plant upgrades. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Small Cities distribution this year

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

(\$190,000) was much lower than last year (\$860,000). Senator Morales stated that the decrease is consistent with that of other cities. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the transparency at the NM Taxation and Revenue Department is poor. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has been unable to get information regarding public projects which makes it hard to tell if the companies are paying the correct taxes in Socorro. Representative Tripp stated that obtaining that kind of information from the NM Taxation and Revenue Department has been a problem for years and that the biggest obstacle has been the New Mexico Municipal League.

Mayor Bhasker thanked Representative Tripp and Senator Morales for the legislative updates.

b. Paul Lopez – Presentation - Saddle

Mr. Lopez presented a saddle that he believes once belonged to Pancho Villa. Mr. Lopez told the Mayor and City Council how he came to be in possession of the saddle. Mr. Lopez stated that he would like to sell the saddle to the City. Mr. Lopez stated that he believes people will want to come to Socorro to see the saddle. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Lopez for his presentation.

c. Literacy Volunteers of Socorro County - Presentation

Maggie Olguin and Linda Murrillo attended the meeting to ask the City Council if the City would like to sponsor a “Little Free Library”. Ms. Olguin stated that the concept of the Little Free Library is to “take a book, leave a book”. Ms. Olguin stated that students from Socorro High School have agreed to build the structure and the Literacy Volunteers of Socorro County will maintain the structure. Ms. Olguin stated that the sponsorship of \$350.00 will cover the building materials and registration (including books). Ms. Olguin stated the City logo can be incorporated onto the structure. Ms. Olguin stated that she feels a good location for the structure would be Sedillo Park. Mayor Bhasker stated that he thought the concept was a great idea.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve the City sponsorship of \$350 for the Little Free Library and the placement of the structure at Sedillo Park. Seconded by Councilor Olguin, motion passed unanimously.

d. City Council Vacant Seat - Discussion

Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to the vacant City Council position, he created a questionnaire that he would like interested parties to complete. Mayor Bhasker stated that the forms will be available at City Hall and on the City’s website. Mayor Bhasker stated that the New Mexico Municipal League was asked about the legality of an advisory committee made up of City Councilors and the City was told that an advisory committee was acceptable. Mayor Bhasker appointed Councilor Fleming, Councilor Chavez-Lopez and Councilor Pargas to the advisory committee. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like the committee to review the questionnaires and make 3 to 5 recommendations. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would then choose someone and recommend that person to the City Council for consideration. Mayor Bhasker stated that the process may take a few months. Mayor Bhasker asked that the questionnaires be turned in by April 15th.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Bhasker stated that he has received information from the natural gas engineer that he would like to have the Utility Committee review. Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that changing the valves and increasing the psi from 400 to 525 would improve the system by 36%. Mr. Santillanes stated that the system would improve another 24% if the City added 10 miles of 8” transmission line. Mr. Santillanes

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

stated that first option would cost \$650,000 and the second option would cost \$2.5 million. Mr. Santillanes stated that he recommends the first option which would carry the City over several more years and would allow Dicaperl to remain online during the colder months. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like the Utility Committee to discuss the project and funding options.

Mr. Santillanes stated that the City had advertised for bids for the fuel farm at the airport. Mr. Santillanes stated that there were questions regarding the height of the existing structure. Mr. Santillanes stated that a new structure is going to be built but that it will not have a cover. Mr. Santillanes stated that an evaporation analysis will be performed and if needed, a pole barn will be built as a cover to the structure.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked Mayor Bhasker if he was going to reappoint committees. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would review the committee list and reappoint committees at a future City Council meeting.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the pothole repair project is almost complete. Mr. Santillanes stated that the next project, which will start in June, will be a crack and fog seal on El Camino Real. Mr. Santillanes stated that applications for MAP funding and Co-op funding have been submitted. Mr. Santillanes stated that the deadline for CDBG applications is March 25th and that the City will be submitting its application on March 23rd. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Street Department painted curbs yellow near NM Tech to help with parking concerns. Mr. Santillanes stated that the American Public Gas Association declared March 18th as Natural Gas Utility Workers Day. Mr. Santillanes stated that the date was picked due to a gas explosion on March 18, 1937 in New London, Texas which prompted updated compliance regulations. Mr. Santillanes stated that the department had a small gathering with food for the employees of the Gas Department.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, stated that AYSO and flag football started at the new soccer fields. Mr. Martinez stated that Parks Department crews aerated and fertilized all of the parks as well as the trees at the soccer complex. Mr. Martinez stated that the drip systems on School of Mines Road and California Street have been checked. Mr. Martinez stated that 200 plants need to be replaced due to an issue with ants. Mr. Martinez stated that wood chips were replaced under the exercise equipment at Sedillo Park and the playground equipment at the mini-parks. Mr. Martinez stated that NMED performed a sanitary survey at the wastewater treatment plant 2 weeks ago and no deficiencies were found. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department crews have been performing maintenance on the lift stations and responding to sewer calls. Mr. Martinez stated that the Water Department has finished installing sewer and fire lines at the Charter School and will now finish the tie-ins to the buildings and demolish and remove the old concrete slab on the property. Mr. Martinez stated that the covered stalls at the rodeo arena are complete. Mr. Martinez stated that Ross Electric will be installing the electrical panel for the lights. Mr. Martinez stated that the bleachers have been selected and the roads to the RV park have been graded. Mr. Martinez stated that the design for the lighting is currently being reviewed by CID.

Councilor Romero stated that the fishing derby held on March 19th was a success and that approximately 250 to 300 kids participated.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from February 2016 (74 arrests, 253 citations, 3 DWI arrests, 190 police reports filed, 19 traffic accidents, etc.). Chief Winders also provided a handout with information regarding animal control calls for the month of February. Chief Winders stated that supervisors recently attended suicide prevention training. Chief Winders stated that there are 3 police officers attending the police academy. Mayor Bhasker stated that in

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

regards to animal control, he feels all of the employees involved are doing a very good job and the City is staying vigilant on animal control issues.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from February 2016 (total calls were 2,122). Mr. Tarango also provided a handout which shows a map of the City and identifies calls related to animal control, burglaries and traffic accidents. Mr. Tarango stated that dispatch has been busy with fire calls and reminded everyone that it is fire season and to always contact dispatch if they are burning. Mr. Tarango stated that he had one dispatcher graduate from the police academy and he also has a new hire on the agenda tonight. Mr. Tarango stated that the training he scheduled for April was moved to November.

Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk, stated that summer youth applications will be available at the beginning of April.

Councilor Olguin stated that in regards to the job description for Tourism Director that will be presented later in the meeting, he would like to see that employee report on the economic impact of the events that are held in Socorro. Councilor Olguin stated that the City needs to figure out how to entice people to come to Socorro and spend money in Socorro. Councilor Olguin stated that the City needs to figure out which events are bringing in money and capitalize on those events. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that City events need better advertising. Mr. Monette stated that agencies requesting lodger's tax funds used to have to provide that information to the Lodger's Tax Committee.

Mable Gonzales, City Clerk/Treasurer, stated that in order to apply for and acquire new funding, an entity must have a water conservation plan. Ms. Gonzales stated that the City has contracted with Suzanne Smith, of Torres Research, to assist the City with the plan. Ms. Gonzales stated that there would be a public hearing regarding the plan on April 6th at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall and the public is invited to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Updated Job Description – Tourism Director

Mayor Bhasker presented an updated job description for Tourism Director. Councilor Olguin stated that he would like to add "is responsible for analyzing and reporting the economic impact of tourism-related events in the City of Socorro" to the job description. Mayor Bhasker agreed it would be a good addition to the job description.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve the updated job description for Tourism Director with the amendment. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

b. Personnel Changes

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

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
March 21, 2016

Gonzalo Lopez – 3-21-16 – Police – Completed Probation – A-35 to A-37
Devrie Chavez – 4-4-16 – Dispatch – New Hire (Dispatcher) – A-20

Temporary New Hires: Derrick Chavez, Charli Gonzales, Pat Silva, Sebastian Alvarado, Jerome Martinez, Paul Moya, Robert Adams

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Tony Silva, Angelica Vega, Michael Padilla, Felipe Romero, John Ferguson, Billy Romero, Chris Carrillo, Paul Foulfont, Jerry Griego, Rondall Sauls, Mackie Gonzales

Student Workers: Camryn Sager, Mariah Jaramillo, Erik Boeck, Taylor Saavedra, Wesley Mauldin, Zach Anaya, Maya Cordova, Evelyn Gomez, Ricky Silva, Dennis Woods

Referees (4), Zumba (2)

Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Coulter and Company – Out of Town – Owasso, OK – Corporation – Storefront Installation

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

e. Voucher Run

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve vouchers 137046 to 136698 in the amount of \$1,148,931.07 plus Payroll Transfers (\$146,912.26), for a total of \$1,295,843.33. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously with Councilor Pargas abstaining as there is a payment to his wife's business included in the voucher run.

f. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – April 4, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting would be held on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:11 p.m., Councilor Fleming motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk