

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
June 20, 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 Gordy Hicks, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Michael Olguin and Councilor Ernest Pargas. Councilor Nick Fleming was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 20, 2016 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. June 6, 2016

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

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Proclamation – Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation recognizing Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementia-type illnesses. In the proclamation, Mayor Bhasker proclaimed June 2016 as Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month in Socorro.

PUBLIC FORUM

Randy Torres, a local resident, stated that he would like to thank the Socorro Fire Department for responding to a fire behind his home that was ignited by fireworks.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the topic of fireworks was later on the agenda but that it could be discussed during public forum.

Mr. Torres stated that he feels there should be restrictions on fireworks as conditions are very dry. Mr. Torres stated that he believes there should be harsh penalties for anyone who violates these restrictions. Mayor Bhasker stated that by State Statute, the City can only ban certain types of fireworks and only if it is determined that the area is in an extreme drought situation. Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that fireworks restrictions must be approved by the Governing Body 20 days prior to the first day of sales (the first day of fireworks sales was June 20, 2016, the date of the City Council meeting). Chief Gonzales stated that three weeks ago, when the restrictions would have needed to be approved, the City of Socorro was not in an extreme drought situation. Mr. Torres stated that Governor Martinez had urged municipalities to consider banning fireworks. Chief Gonzales stated that he will look into the possibility of restrictions for this season. Chief Gonzales stated that the Fire Department inspects the fireworks stands to make sure they are selling legal fireworks and possess the proper permits.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Lease Agreement between the City of Socorro and Solaro Energy, Inc.

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented a lease agreement between the City of Socorro and Solaro Energy, Inc. for the lease of two acres of land in the City’s Industrial Park. Mr. Monette stated that the two acres will be leased for \$450 per acre per year and that Solaro Energy, Inc. plans on constructing two storage buildings on the property.

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Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the lease agreement between the City of Socorro and Solaro Energy, Inc. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. City of Socorro – Water Conservation Plan

Mayor Bhasker stated that approval of the City of Socorro Water Conservation Plan was postponed from the last City Council meeting so that the City Council could have time to review the document. Mayor Bhasker stated that Lloyd Martinez, Water Department Superintendent, approves the plan and Mr. Martinez believes the City can fulfill all of the items discussed in the plan.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the City of Socorro's Water Conservation Plan. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 16-06-20 – Ambulance Billing Write-Offs

Mable Gonzales, Finance Director, presented Resolution No. 16-06-20 which, if approved, removes uncollectible ambulance accounts from 2010, in the amount of \$189,050.82, 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 Romero made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-06-20. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Transportation Department

1. Job Description – Transportation Department – Lead Driver/Back-Up Program Manager

Mayor Bhasker presented a job description for the newly-created position of Lead Driver/Back-Up Program Manager.

2. Approval of Customer Service Policy

Mayor Bhasker presented the Transportation Department's newly-created Customer Service Policy.

Mayor Bhasker stated that both of these items were created as a result of recommendations from a recent audit of the Transportation Department. Mayor Bhasker stated that the position of Lead Driver/Back-Up Program Manager will not be filled until next fiscal year.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the newly-created position of Lead Driver/Back-Up Program Manager and the Transportation Department's newly-created Customer Service Policy. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

e. Fireworks - Discussion

See Public Forum above.

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f. Budget Resolutions

Mable Gonzales, City Clerk/Treasurer, presented the following:

1. No. 16 – Industrial Park Fund

Resources are Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Legal/Other Professional, Contractual Services – Amount is \$20,000 – The increase is needed to allow for expenditures to June 30, 2016.

2. No. 17 – Recreation Fund

Resources are Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Youth Sports, Telephone & Utilities, Building Maintenance, School & Per Diem - Amount is \$37,500 – The increase is needed to allow for expenditures to June 30, 2016.

3. No. 18 – Health Council Grant Fund

Resources are Miscellaneous – Requirements are Contractual Services – Amount is \$5,000 – The increase is needed to allow grant award and expenditures to June 30, 2016.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Budget Resolution No. 16, 17 and 18. Seconded by Councilor Pargas, motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution No. 16-06-20b – NMDOT CO-OP Agreement

Mr. Santillanes presented Resolution No. 16-06-20b which, if approved, allows the City to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the New Mexico Department of Transportation for the reconstruction of El Camino Real (from Franklin Street to San Miguel Street). Mr. Santillanes stated that the total project cost is \$57,388 with the NMDOT funding 75% and the City funding 25%. Mr. Santillanes stated that the total project cost is approximately \$100,000 and that Socorro Schools will be contributing \$40,000 which leaves a small amount that the City may have to finance. Mr. Santillanes stated that the project consists of paving and striping the road and will not include curb, gutter or sidewalk.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 16-06-20b. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Bill Stone, the NM Tech Liaison, stated that NM Tech will have ten new faculty members this year and the student count will remain about the same. Mr. Stone stated that the new faculty members were told that if possible, NM Tech would prefer that they live in Socorro and be a part of the Socorro community. Mr. Stone stated that NM Tech's new president will take his position in ten days and that a community meet and greet will be scheduled in September. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to parking issues around NM Tech, one suggestion would be creating two-hour parking on the perimeter while reminding people that NM Tech's parking lot on College Avenue can be used as all day parking. Mayor Bhasker stated that there are still concerns that NM Tech's irrigation water is running down Bullock Avenue and Leroy Street/Neel Street and creating areas of standing water. Mr. Stone stated that he would inform NM Tech staff of Mayor Bhasker's concerns. Councilor Olguin reminded everyone that there is now a three-way stop on College Avenue and Leroy Street.

Councilor Romero stated that there will be a Neighborhood Watch meeting on June 22nd at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Councilor Romero urged residents to bring their neighbors with them so the watch groups can be set up.

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DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from April and May 2016. Chief Winders also provided a handout with information regarding narcotics-related charges and arrests from January 1, 2016 to June 20, 2016 (140 charges in 5 ½ months). Mayor Bhasker stated that there were recent news stories about drug arrest done in Socorro by State Police. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro appreciates the help given by State Police. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Socorro Police Department also works on these issues every day. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would be interested to see the outcome of these cases after they've gone to court. Mayor Bhasker stated that there still seems to be a concentration of accidents on California Street and asked Chief Winders to make sure officers are patrolling that area.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from May 2016 (total calls were 2,766). 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 there are some minor issues with dispatch's fire channel and that he is working with the Fire Marshall's Office to get the problem fixed.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Fire Department stats from May 2016 (190 ambulance runs, 21 fire calls, etc.). Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that fireworks went on sale and all seven stands were inspected for compliance (permit, business registration, sale of only legal fireworks). Chief Gonzales stated that four of the firefighters received their Firefighter II certifications.

Bobbi Gonzales stated that she attended the meeting to give a report for the Recreation, Youth Center and Tourism departments. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Recreation Department is busy with swimming lessons, youth baseball, adult softball and the swim team. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Youth Center has approximately 50 kids per day and that the kids are taken on weekly field trips. Ms. Gonzales provided the new rack cards for the Tourism Department to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Gonzales stated that the new rack cards were designed by Tourism Department employee Katy Weaver. Ms. Gonzales also provided a copy of the updated Historic Walking Tour brochure. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Tourism Department posts upcoming events such as the 3 on 3 soccer tournament and Paws for a Cause on the Tourism Facebook page. Ms. Gonzales stated that there will be a 4th of July parade that will start at the Plaza and end at NM Tech (Macey Center). Mayor Bhasker extended the City's condolences on the recent passing of Ms. Gonzales' father (Leo Rosas) and stated that Mr. Rosas served as a great City Councilor.

Donald Padilla, Library Director, stated that the beginning of the summer reading program started with a block party which included a band, barbecue and a water slide. Mr. Padilla stated that there were 190 kids and 60 adults who signed up for the program on the first day. Mr. Padilla stated during the last rain, he discovered three leaks in the new roof which was installed in December. Mr. Padilla stated that the contractor believes the leaks are from clogged gutters and a separation in the wall that needs to be caulked. Mr. Padilla stated that painting had been completed on the first and second floor. Mr. Padilla stated that the brick floor in the main room is uneven and will be repaired next month. Mr. Padilla stated that he is getting a quote to replace all of the lighting with LED lights.

Mayor Bhasker stated that there is a lot of dry vegetation around the City and asked Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, how he plans to address the issue. Mr. Czosnek stated that he has been working mainly with business owners on California Street and will now start working with homeowners in residential neighborhoods on the issue. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like Mr. Czosnek to work on addressing

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the issue a few days each week. Mayor Bhasker stated that there were mattresses thrown on the side of the road at the end of Lopezville Road. Mr. Czosnek stated that as the end of Lopezville Road is outside the City limits, he spoke with the County Manager who has contacted the owner of the property and asked them to clean the area. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would also like Mr. Czosnek to address any inoperable vehicles that are located on City streets. Mr. Czosnek stated that he would meet with the Police Chief regarding the inoperable vehicles.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, stated that Parks Department crews have been working on lining baseball fields, cutting weeds and picking up trash at Sedillo Park. Mr. Martinez stated that Parks Department crews have also been cleaning weeds in the medians. Mr. Martinez stated that Production Department crews are cleaning and painting wells and cleaning lift stations. Mr. Martinez stated that Production Department crews prepared the swimming pool for its annual inspection (which was passed). Mr. Martinez stated that the final inspection at the Wastewater Treatment Plant was conducted June 17th and that there was an issue with the bar screen high level sensor which will be repaired. Mr. Martinez stated that the next phase of upgrades at the plant will include the blowers, piping and SCADA system. Mr. Martinez stated that Water Department crews have been replacing fire hydrants, cutting weeds, replacing faulty meters and installing water lines at the rodeo arena. Mr. Martinez stated that the Special Projects crew will be working on the alley to the roping chutes and surveyed and staked all of the roads at the arena. Mr. Martinez stated that the rodeo arena lighting will be installed at the end of next week.

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the engineer for the Natural Gas Valve Replacement Project is putting together the final bid package for the project and the project should begin in late July. Mr. Santillanes stated that the City was awarded approximately \$166,000 in MAP funding for the Fairgrounds Road Project. Mr. Santillanes stated that the CDBG allocation meeting will be held on June 22nd. Mr. Santillanes stated that the City applied for approximately \$450,000 in CDBG funds for the continuation of the Texas Area Drainage Project. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Street Department has been working on cleaning weeds and fixing potholes. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Auto Maintenance Department has been performing services on the City's vehicles in a timely fashion.

Michael Lucero, Division Director, stated that operations are normal in the Landfill, Sanitation and Recycling departments. Mayor Bhasker stated that he, along with Mr. Lucero and Mr. Monette, recently attended a Waste Expo. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may purchase a residential truck that was found during the Expo. Mayor Bhasker stated that he is also interested in an automatic can cleaner that was presented at the Expo. Mr. Lucero stated that there was also a tarp system and a spray system for covering garbage that he would like to research. Mr. Lucero stated that Landfill crews are busy picking up litter and will start baling tires and grinding tree limbs soon. Mr. Lucero stated that work on the new cell will begin July 5th. Mr. Lucero stated that one of the residential sanitation trucks is having its engine rebuilt. Mr. Lucero stated that he will be doing interviews with the applicants for the open driver position in the Sanitation Department. Mr. Lucero stated that the Recycling crew continues to pick up recyclables.

Mr. Monette stated that he has been busy with meetings and assisting Department Heads with various documents. Mr. Monette stated that he will be starting work on the City's Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan and will be asking for public input during the Council meetings in July.

Ms. Gonzales stated that she is working on closing the 2015-2016 budget year. Ms. Gonzales thanked Department Heads for assisting with work on their budgets. Ms. Gonzales stated that the final budget for FY 2016-2017 will be brought to the City Council for approval.

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Ms. Saavedra stated that approximately 115 summer youth employees were hired in the 2016 Summer Youth Employment Program. Ms. Saavedra stated that there are about 35 employers/departments where summer workers are placed including various City departments, NM Tech, Socorro County, Housing Authority and Socorro Schools. Ms. Saavedra stated that the program lasts six weeks and the summer workers have the opportunity to make \$930 each.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Jaramillo stated that the Socorro County Senior Center recently donated a pool table to the City's Youth Center.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Changes

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

Sergio Cuevas – 6-7-16 – Street – Completed Probation – A-15 to A-17
Humberto Lucero – 5-16-16 – Fire – Certification (FF II) – D-35 to D-38
Orlando Martinez – 5-16-16 – Fire – Certification (FF II) – B-33 to B-36
Resen Messer – 5-16-16 – Fire – Certification (FF II) – B-33 to B-36
Elvires Otero – 5-16-16 – Fire – Certification (FF II) – B-33 to B-36

Temporary New Hires: David Chavez, Theresa Chavez, Seferina Ortiz, Joseph McGaha
Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Michael Padilla, Felipe Romero, Billy Romero, Chris Carrillo, Paul Foulentfont, Jerry Griego, Mackie Gonzales, Derrick Chavez, Pat Silva, Sebastian Alvarado, Jerome Martinez, Aaron McDaniel, Jared Marquez, Marcella Alvarado
Student Workers: Zach Anaya, Maya Cordova, Ricky Silva, Dennis Woods, Chris Altamirano
Referees (2), Zumba (2), Lifeguards (15)

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

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

Medicine Chest of Socorro – C-2 – 312 N California Street – Ken Corazza & Kelly Kemper - Pharmacy

Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 137664 to 138010 in the amount of \$829,219.86, plus Payroll Transfers (\$307,051.55), for a total of \$1,136,271.41. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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d. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – Tuesday, July 5, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:35 p.m., Councilor Hicks 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