

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
April 17, 2017

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 Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Michael Olguin and Councilor Peter Romero. Councilor Toby Jaramillo and Councilor Ernest Pargas were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 17, 2017 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. April 3, 2017

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

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS

a. Retirement – Mark Benavidez – Water Department

Mr. Benavidez did not attend the meeting. The item will be placed on the next agenda.

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Connor's Causes – Connor Johnston

Connor Johnston thanked the City of Socorro for supporting his 5K and 1 Mile Walk on April 8, 2017 to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Jeanie, Connor's mother, and Councilor Hicks, Connor's grandfather, thanked the City as well.

Councilor Hicks left the meeting.

b. Senior Center – Cinco de Mayo Dance – Linda Murillo

Linda Murillo, Director of the Senior Center, thanked the City for continuing to support the Senior Center. Ms. Murillo invited the Mayor and Council to the Cinco de Mayo dance at the center. Ms. Murillo stated that last weekend, there was an Easter egg hunt at the center in Veguita. Ms. Murillo stated that the center offers services to homebound seniors. Ms. Murillo stated that the center has 15 vans which are used to give seniors a ride to the center, the doctor's office and the store. Councilor Salome thanked the senior center for offering the Foster Grandparents Program in the schools. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City and the Senior Center should look at transportation services and see how the two can be consolidated. Ms. Murillo stated that the youth center brings kids over in the summer to visit with the seniors. Some discussion followed.

c. March for Science Socorro – Dr. Richard Sonnenfeld

Dr. Richard Sonnenfeld invited everyone to the March for Science on April 22nd (Earth Day). Dr. Sonnenfeld stated that the march will start at noon at the NM Tech Fidel Center and end at the City's Plaza. Dr. Sonnenfeld stated that this event will be happening around the country and that there are five marches scheduled in New Mexico. Dr. Sonnenfeld stated that there will be public speakers and several other activities. Dr. Sonnenfeld showed the Mayor and Council three signs for the march that were made by NM Tech students. Dr. Sonnenfeld thanked the City for supporting

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the event. Dr. Sonnenfeld stated that the Socorro Police Department would be providing an escort for the march.

Lillian Armijo, the NM Tech liaison, stated that the United States Army Field Band and Soldiers Chorus will be performing at NM Tech on April 21st. Ms. Armijo stated that the Canvas and Cocktails event will be held at NM Tech on April 26th. Ms. Armijo stated that the Mary Poppins performance will be both this weekend and next weekend.

Dorothy Brook stated that she is concerned that the City has stopped recycling efforts. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City received a notice from the NM Environment Department, along with a fine of \$4,600, for not having a registered recycling center. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City followed the proper channels when starting the recycling center many years ago and the City was unaware that a recycling center had to be re-registered every 8 years. Mayor Bhasker stated that there is a requirement to have someone on-site and that cannot be accommodated at the current center. Mayor Bhasker stated that as a result, the City will be developing a recycling center at the landfill. Mayor Bhasker stated that Tractor Supply (once opened) will accept oil. Mayor Bhasker stated that once the City starts collecting cardboard again, businesses will need to break down boxes as not all the businesses are currently breaking down their boxes.

Beth Wells, a member of the Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee, stated that beautification can have a positive economic impact on a community. Ms. Wells stated that three qualities that attract people to a community are social offerings, openness and aesthetics. Ms. Wells stated that the committee is currently working on a 5-year strategic plan. Ms. Wells stated that the committee currently has ideas for 4 murals in the community: NM Tech, the John Brooks building, City Hall and the Nusenda building. One committee member stated that the committee would love to have enough murals in the community to create a walking tour. Another committee member stated that this will bring arts back to the kids. Ms. Wells stated that the committee is asking the City to help fund the City Hall mural. Mayor Bhasker stated that as the item is being heard under Public Forum, a decision on funding cannot be made. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has no concerns about murals being placed on private businesses, however, a mural on a City building must seriously be considered for content. Ms. Wells stated that there is a donation form in the handout that was provided. Mayor Bhasker stated that the donation form can be placed on the City's website and a donation space may be able to be placed on the City's utility bills. Ms. Wells stated that the next committee meeting will be held May 2nd at the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Wells stated that the committee is hoping to be "adopted" by an entity that can be a fiscal agent as they have a classification of 501(c)(3). Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may be able to be the fiscal agent for the committee. Ms. Wells stated that she will do further research on how the committee can accept donations.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board - Update

Mable Gonzales, City Clerk/Treasurer, stated that the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board was created by a grant from the NM Department of Health. Ms. Gonzales stated that the SCJJB Coordinator is Kirsten Kellar. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Teen Center continues to provide tutoring, mentoring and other various activities. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Juvenile Justice Diversion Program has a Socorro County Citation Program and Socorro County Teen Court. Ms. Gonzales stated that the board also provides substance abuse education and awareness. Ms. Gonzales stated that the next SCJJB meeting will be April 20th at City Hall.

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b. Approval of Policies

1. Equal Employment Policy

Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that certain grants (such as CDBG) require that an entity have an equal employment policy in order to apply for funds. Mr. Monette stated that eventually, he would like to update the City's entire personnel manual.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to approve the Equal Employment Policy. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

2. Purchasing Policy

Mr. Monette stated that funding agencies also require entities to have a purchasing policy. Mr. Monette stated that the City currently follows the State procurement code and this policy will confirm that the City follows the State procurement code.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve the Purchasing Policy. Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution No. 17-04-17 – City of Socorro RV Park

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 17-04-17 which, if approved, allows the City to operate and maintain an RV park at the rodeo and sports complex. Mr. Monette stated that currently, the local RV parks do not pay lodger's tax and the City operating an RV park will not be in direct competition with existing businesses as the City's RV park will serve a different type of customer. Councilor Olguin asked why the local RV parks do not pay lodger's tax. Mayor Bhasker stated that lodger's tax does not apply to stays over 30 days. Mayor Bhasker stated that the local RV parks have stated that they only have long-term customers and no transient customers. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's RV park is mainly for events and participants at the rodeo arena. Councilor Olguin requested that the 4th paragraph of the resolution be changed to add the word "additional" after the word "offer" on the first line and to strike the word "nonexistent" in the first line of the 5th paragraph. Mayor Bhasker suggested that the item be postponed so that the changes could be incorporated in to the resolution.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to postpone Resolution No. 17-04-17. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Fleming stated that the Budget Committee's public hearing will be held April 18th at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Ms. Gonzales stated that an ad with the meeting information was placed in the local newspaper and anyone receiving funding last year was contacted with the date and time of the meeting.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Mayor Bhasker stated that Cindy Rivera and the youth center staff did a great job on the recent Easter Egg Hunt held at the sports complex. Mayor Bhasker stated that the recent mounted shooting events have also been very successful.

Ms. Gonzales stated that the Budget Committee's public hearing will be held April 18th at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall and requestors have been asked to present a financial report with their request. Ms. Gonzales stated that the Lodger's Tax Advisory Board will hold a separate public hearing for requests.

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Mr. Monette stated that he recently attended Asset Management training along with Kristy Padilla, Jenelle Partridge and Lloyd Martinez.

Ms. Saavedra stated that the City is currently accepting summer youth applications from youth ages 16 to 19. Ms. Saavedra stated that the deadline for applications is May 19th. Ms. Saavedra stated that the applications are available on the City's website and that ads for the program have been placed in the local newspaper.

Donald Padilla, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Padilla stated that the relocation celebration for the Piro Indian Artifact Collection will be April 29th at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Padilla stated that the Holi celebration and Tax Help New Mexico program was successful. Mr. Padilla stated that the adult book club meets every Thursday. Mr. Padilla stated that there will be a Cinco de Mayo celebration with food, music and activities. Mr. Padilla briefly reviewed information regarding the McCune Grant, GO Bond 2014/ 2016 and the State Grant in Aid. Mr. Padilla provided FY 2017 circulation stats.

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the Gas Department is currently on the 3rd stage of the gas uprate and will perform 2 more stages in the future. Mr. Santillanes stated that the airport fuel farm is ready but that the City is waiting on the credit card machine to be registered. Mr. Santillanes stated that the PAPI system at the airport is installed but one more part is needed before it is complete. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Fairgrounds Road MAP Project is underway and should be done mid-May. Mr. Santillanes stated that the City has applied for MAP funding for the next phase of Fairgrounds Road improvements. Mr. Santillanes stated that El Camino Real is scheduled to be chip-sealed and the chips will be delivered this week. Mr. Santillanes stated that Kirkland Construction will begin patching the areas damaged by their trucks during the levy project.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from February and March 2017. Chief Winders stated that the school resource officer is back to work after being out a few weeks. Chief Winders stated that officers started STEP (Selective Traffic Enforcement Program) on March 1st. Chief Winders stated that he attended firearms instructor update training on March 7th and 8th. Chief Winders stated that the department hosted 17 hours of biannual training for officers on March 10th and 11th. Chief Winders stated that officers are required to have 40 hours of training per year to maintain their certification. Chief Winders stated that Officers Roane and Montano will graduate from the police academy on May 19th. Chief Winders stated that equipment is currently being added to the two new police units.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from March 2017 (total calls were 1,904). Mr. Tarango stated that the department hosted training for homeland security and 911 supervisors on March 21st and 22nd. Mr. Tarango stated that the training was attended by 11 agencies. Mr. Tarango stated that dispatch is currently receiving weekly map updates from the State. Mr. Tarango stated that two dispatchers will be attending the upcoming NENA-APCO training in Albuquerque and he will be attending the 911 Affiliate meeting in Taos in June.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Fire Department stats from March 2017 (221 ambulance runs, 18 fire calls, etc.). Chief Gonzales stated that all autos/equipment are up and running. Chief Gonzales stated that employee training is ongoing. Chief Gonzales stated that the department would like to host an EMT-B class in Socorro. Chief Gonzales stated that while the department

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is currently fully-staffed, two employees will be retiring late this year. Chief Gonzales stated that call volume is up 15%. Chief Gonzales stated that the closing on the purchasing of the ladder truck is pending.

Michael Lucero, Division Director, stated that operations are normal in the Landfill and Sanitation departments. Mr. Lucero stated that all autos/equipment are up and running. Mr. Lucero stated that crews continue to pick up litter. Mr. Lucero stated that crews will start hauling rip-rap from the rodeo arena on April 22nd to place on the closed cell. Mr. Lucero stated that he has finished the inventory of existing dumpsters and will be presenting the City Administration with a report. Mr. Lucero stated that he is considering purchasing a baler. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City may change to front-end loaders for commercial pick up as they are more cost efficient.

Lloyd Martinez, Division Director, stated that Parks Department crews are busy with cleaning weeds, aerating, fertilizing and replacing the wood chips on the playgrounds. Mr. Martinez stated that Production Department crews are preparing information for Dennis Engineering regarding the sewer study and cleaning weeds at the well sites. Mr. Martinez stated that he is considering having NM Tech students help with the arsenic treatment plants this summer. Mr. Martinez stated that current staff at the Wastewater Department has been busy with operations as they are short-handed. Mr. Martinez stated that he is monitoring the northeast SBR wall as it has cracks. Mr. Martinez stated that Water Department crews are running water and sewer lines on Alice Road and redoing the sewer lines at the sports complex. Mr. Martinez stated that the Special Projects crews have been busy cleaning up at the rodeo area and sports complex before and after events.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to a recent termination, there were valid reasons for the action taken. Mayor Bhasker stated that due process is being followed and there will be a Personnel Board hearing.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bhasker stated that there are two monitoring wells being placed (Lopezville Road and Newberry Road) to monitor for TCE (from the Eagle Picher site). Mayor Bhasker stated that a request was made to discharge the well water onto City property. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is not agreeable to that unless the NM Environment Department, Daniel B. Stephens & Associates Inc. and the EPA write a letter stating that the water is not detrimental to the City, the City is indemnified should the water become an issue and there will be no future problems with the City and the Ground Water Bureau. Mayor Bhasker stated that at this time, those agencies are not willing to write the letter.

a. Personnel Changes

None.

b. Business Registrations

Councilor Fleming motioned to approve the business registrations as read by Mr. Monette:

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Daniel B. Stephens & Associates Inc. – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Corporation – Environmental & Geoscience Consulting
Cascade Drilling – Out of Town – Peoria, AZ – Corporation – Monitoring Well Installation

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

c. Voucher Run

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 140757 to 140998 in the amount of \$704,611.76 plus Payroll Transfers (\$151,546.42), for a total of \$856,158.18. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Date and Time – Monday, May 1, 2017 @ 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:44 p.m., Councilor Fleming motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk