

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
May 1, 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 Peter Romero, Councilor Anton Salome, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Toby Jaramillo and Councilor Michael Olguin. Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Ernest Pargas were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MAY 1, 2017 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. April 17, 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

Mayor Bhasker presented a plaque to Mark Benavidez, who retired from the Water Department on March 31, 2017 after 30 years of service. Mayor Bhasker and the City Council thanked Mr. Benavidez for his many years of hard work and dedication to the job. Mr. Benavidez thanked the Mayor and City Council.

b. Proclamation – Child Abuse Prevention Month

Mayor Bhasker read a proclamation regarding a yearly event held by the Children, Youth and Families Department during which awareness regarding child abuse is addressed. Mayor Bhasker proclaimed April 2017 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Socorro.

PUBLIC FORUM

a. Civil Air Patrol – 2017 New Mexico Wing Conference

Dave Finley thanked the City for supporting the Civil Air Patrol. Mr. Finley stated that the Civil Air Patrol was formed 75 years ago and Socorro has had a squadron for ten years. Mr. Finley stated that at the last Wing Conference, the Socorro Squadron received many recognitions including NM Squadron of the Year and Squadron Commander of the Year (Dennis Hunter). Mr. Finley stated that the CAP is preparing for several events including the summer glider encampment, search and rescue exercises, Memorial Day and Veteran's Day ceremonies, the Captain Laura S. Haines M Mountain Fly-In and hosting the 2017 NM Wing Conference. Mr. Finley stated that the composite squadron has 21 cadet/adult members and the high school squadron has 16 cadet members. Dennis Hunter also attended the meeting.

b. Cottonwood Valley Charter School – Maggie Olguin

Tommie McSherry introduced the Cottonwood Valley Charter School Science Olympiad Team. Ms. McSherry stated that the team recently competed at the regional and state levels. Each student introduced themselves and listed the event they participated in and the awards they won. Mayor Bhasker and the City Council congratulated the team.

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State Representative Gail Armstrong stated that she will be attending the special legislative session soon and she will continue to advocate for Socorro County. Representative Armstrong stated that she will also be attending the community meeting on May 2nd.

Bill Stone, the NM Tech liaison, stated that higher education took a 7.5% cut last year and a 3-4% cut this year would mean layoffs for NM Tech employees. Mr. Stone stated that the number of incoming students is down due to potential students not knowing what tuition will be. Mr. Stone stated that graduation day will be May 13th and this year there is a large graduating class.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Legislative Session Update – Senator Howie Morales

Senator Morales stated that he has been working along-side Representative Armstrong in supporting Socorro.

Councilor Hicks arrived.

Senator Morales stated that the legislature is working on the 2018 budget and he is hopeful that there will not be hiring freezes or furloughs. Senator Morales stated that he is very concerned about the budget cuts to higher education. Senator Morales stated that the budget cuts to higher education will affect Socorro and he hopes to address the matter during the special session. Senator Morales stated that he is afraid that budget cuts to higher education will send a message to students saying that New Mexico doesn't value higher education and they may choose to attend school out of state. Senator Morales stated that the State may have to move forward with tax increases as there is nowhere left to cut the budget. Senator Morales stated that he is confident the budget can be fixed but that he is concerned about long-term effects. Senator Morales stated that he hopes everyone can come together and do what is best for the State. Some discussion followed. Mayor Bhasker thanked Senator Morales for attending the meeting. Senator Morales thanked the Mayor and Council for having him and reminded everyone that he is always available to listen to concerns.

b. Employer Services – NM Workforce Connection - Discussion

Tony Kessel, from the NM Workforce Connection, stated that the Southwest Area Workforce Development Board has federal funding to offer multiple services to small communities. Mr. Kessel provided a handout detailing services for in-school youth such as tutoring, training, job readiness and work experience. Mr. Kessel stated that the program also offers adult services. Mr. Kessel stated that NM Workforce Connection can allocate money to businesses for training reimbursement. Mr. Kessel asked the City to explore the programs they offer to see if they can be of help to the City. Councilor Olguin stated that the City might be able to utilize the training reimbursements. Some discussion followed. Tiffany Acevedo, also from NM Workforce Connection, attended the meeting. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Kessel and Ms. Acevedo for attending the meeting.

c. Resolution No. 17-05-01a – Water Conservation Plan

Mable Gonzales, City Clerk/Treasurer, presented Resolution No. 17-05-01a which, if approved authorizes a planning grant agreement between the City of Socorro and the New Mexico Finance Authority in the amount of \$34,676.46 for the purpose of financing the costs of a water conservation plan.

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Councilor Hicks made a motion to approved Resolution No. 17-05-01a. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 17-05-01b – City of Socorro RV Park

Donald Monette, City Administrator, presented Resolution No. 17-05-01b which, if approved authorizes the City of Socorro to operate and maintain an RV park located and the rodeo and sports complex. This item was postponed from the last City Council meeting. Mr. Monette stated that the resolution contains the changes that Councilor Olguin requested at the last City Council meeting.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approved Resolution No. 17-05-01b. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

e. Budget Resolutions

1. No. 11 – General Fund – Library Department

Resources are Transfer from Library Trustee Fund – Requirements are Program Expense – Amount is \$6,888.29 – The increase is needed to allow for a transfer from the Library Trustee Fund, as approved by the board, to be used for repair of the library roof.

2. No. 12 – Rodeo Arena/Convention Center

Resources are Miscellaneous – Requirements are Construction – Amount is \$63,736 – The increase is needed to allow for unanticipated revenue.

3. No. 13 – Street Improvement

Resources are Miscellaneous and Transfer from General Fund – Requirements are Street Co-Op Projects and Local Street Projects – Amount is \$40,000 and \$15,000 – The increase is needed to allow for the grant award and transfer to allow for expenditures.

Councilor Romero made a motion to approve Budget Resolutions 11, 12 and 13. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

f. Resolution No. 17-05-01c – A Resolution in Support of NM Tech

Mr. Monette presented Resolution No. 17-05-01c which, if approved encourages the State of New Mexico Legislature and Governor to adopt House Bill 2 and discontinue the unbalanced cuts to higher education. Mr. Monette stated that budget cuts affecting NM Tech could have a negative impact on the Socorro community.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approved Resolution No. 17-05-01c. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Gonzales stated that the next Budget Committee meeting would be May 2nd at noon.

Councilor Hicks asked about the status of providing fuel at the airport. Ms. Gonzales stated that since a new credit card machine was installed, the new software needs to be approved through merchant services prior to use.

Councilor Hicks stated that he took a video of the high school rodeo recently held at the City's rodeo arena. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City can put the video on the website.

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Mayor Bhasker stated that the runway lights at the airport have been installed and the City is waiting on the contracts for the runway resurfacing project.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Chavez-Lopez asked Mayor Bhasker if he would be filling the vacant City Council seat (Councilor Pargas resigned his seat effective May 15th). Mayor Bhasker stated that he did not intend to appoint anyone as that person would have to run for the position in March.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Planning and Zoning Commission Reappointments

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to reappoint Sefie Anaya, Jeanne Hall, Christa Hockensmith and Alonzo Gonzales to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilor Chavez-Lopez made a motion to approve Mayor Bhasker's appointment of Sefie Anaya, Jeanne Hall, Christa Hockensmith and Alonzo Gonzales to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Benny Anaya – 4-6-17 – Recycling – Termination

William Brannan – 4-17-17 – Police – Completed Probation – A-35 to A-37

Elvires Otero – 5-1-17 – Fire – Promotion to Lieutenant – C-40 to C-42

Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Helping Hands Construction LLC – Outside City Limits – 1417 Lopezville Road – Barbara Romero – General Builder

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

d. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting will be held on Monday, May 22, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. Mayor Bhasker stated that the meeting will be held a week later than normal so that the Finance Department has time to prepare the preliminary budget.

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ADJOURNMENT

At 7:36 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