

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
February 20, 2018

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 Anton Salome, Councilor Gordy Hicks and Councilor Nick Fleming. Councilor Peter Romero, Councilor Michael Olguin and Councilor Toby Jaramillo were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Bhasker asked for a moment of silence to honor the victims of a recent school shooting in Florida as well as to honor Councilor Romero's mom who recently passed away.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 20, 2018 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. February 5, 2018

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Steven Aguilar, owner of A-1 Quality Redi-Mix in Socorro, stated that Albuquerque Asphalt has been doing several road projects in Socorro and rather than use his local business for asphalt, they are bringing the asphalt in from Albuquerque. Mr. Aguilar stated that he feels the City should support a local business who has 30 employees who live and shop in Socorro. Mr. Aguilar stated that he was not contacted for prices for providing asphalt for any of the projects. Donald Monette, City Administrator, stated that the City projects are being performed under a State Contract through Valencia County that was awarded properly through the State procurement process. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's engineers were asked to get prices from A-1 for the City's projects. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would look into the matter and if prices were not solicited, he would make sure they were requested.

Diedre Vinson, owner of Yo Mama's Grill, inquired about the status of the public hearing for their liquor license. Mayor Bhasker stated that because of the municipal election, he would like to cancel the City Council meeting scheduled for March 5th. Mayor Bhasker suggested that the matter be heard at a special meeting on February 26th at noon. Mayor Bhasker stated that the special meeting will be voted on at the end of the Council meeting.

Bill Stone, the NM Tech liaison, stated that the NM Legislative Session is over and NM Tech officials are reviewing changes and how they may affect NM Tech. Mr. Stone stated that he will be taking over the duties of Lillian Armijo who will be retiring.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. NM Tech Inventers & Entrepreneurs Workshop – Lillian Armijo

Lillian Armijo, from NM Tech, stated that the 3rd Annual Inventors & Entrepreneurs Workshop will be held on April 13th and 14th at New Mexico Tech. Ms. Armijo stated that in previous years, the City has sponsored scholarships for residents and students who would like to attend. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is willing to provide those scholarships again this year.

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b. Application for Special Use Permit

1. Public Hearing

Councilor Hicks made motion to go into public hearing. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Bhasker stated that William Stone is requesting that a special use permit (for three years of non-conforming use) be granted for the property located at 1800 Evergreen Drive so that he can place a single-wide trailer on the property. Mayor Bhasker explained that normal procedure would have been to have the item be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission, who would then give the City Council a recommendation and the City Council would make the final decision. Mayor Bhasker stated that as there is currently not an employee filling the Planning and Zoning Administrator position (who would normally organize and moderate the P & Z meeting), he felt it would be a good idea to bring the item directly to the City Council for consideration.

Several neighbors of the property including Bruce Burnett, Bob Smith, Willie Valles and Paul Savedra spoke against granting the special use permit for reasons including the trailer lowering their property values. Mr. Burnett stated that neighbors were not notified of any information regarding the request. Several parties were concerned about who would monitor the situation to make sure the trailer was removed or brought into compliance in three years. One party suggested the trailer was moved in without procuring the proper permits.

Mr. Stone stated that he procured the proper permits, paid the taxes and received a plate from the Motor Vehicle Division when he moved the trailer onto the property. Mr. Stone stated that he put a single-wide trailer many years ago on the same property and at that time, the zoning permitted the trailer. Mr. Stone stated that he was not aware that the zoning had changed. Mr. Stone stated that there are actually other single-wides in the area. Mr. Stone stated that he has 5 acres, along with his house, on the property.

Mayor Bhasker asked Mr. Stone if there was another place the trailer could be placed to which Mr. Stone replied yes but that his sister wanted to live in the area. Mr. Stone stated that he would make other arrangements if the permit is not approved but he feels he should be allowed to place the trailer on his property. Some discussion followed.

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

2. Consideration of Approval

Councilor Hicks made a motion to disapprove Mr. Stone's request for a special use permit. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez.

After some discussion, Councilor Chavez-Lopez withdrew her second to Councilor Hicks' motion. The motion then died for a lack of a second.

Several Councilors expressed their concern that the proper procedure regarding notifying neighbors and holding a hearing at the P & Z meeting had not been followed. Mayor

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Bhasker suggested that a decision on the item be postponed until such time as the proper procedure for this type of application be followed.

c. Resolution No. 18-02-20a – Application for 18-19 NMDOT MAP Funds

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 18-02-20a which, if approved, authorizes the submittal of an application for the 2018-2019 NMDOT Municipal Arterial Program (MAP) funds for street and drainage improvements to Fairgrounds Road from State Road 1 to Rodeo Road. Mayor Bhasker stated that project will include sidewalk, gutters and bicycle lanes.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 18-02-20a. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution No. 18-02-20b – Funding for Escondida Bridge Project

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 18-02-20b which, if approved, commits \$50,000.00 over FY 2019 and 2020 for the purpose of funding a location study for the placement of a north-south access bridge over the Nogal Arroyo in Escondida, NM. Glen Duggins, a Socorro County Commissioner and a member of the MRGCD Board of Directors, explained that he feels a bridge is necessary for safety reasons. Mr. Duggins stated that every day, school bus drivers and elderly drivers have to get on the fast-moving freeway in order to get to and from Socorro. Mr. Duggins stated that this bridge will allow drivers to access Escondida without having to merge with faster traffic. Mr. Duggins stated that the project will cost \$4.5 million but with the monies from Socorro County, the City of Socorro and the MRGCD, the NMDOT will be able to begin the environmental impact study and possibly the engineering. Mr. Duggins stated that he has letters of support from Socorro Schools, the State Police and the Sherriff's Office.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 18-02-20b. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Ruby Lopez, General Ledger Clerk for the Finance Department, stated that there are new employees in the department who are currently in training. Ms. Lopez stated that she has started work on the budget for next fiscal year. Ms. Lopez stated that gross receipts revenues have decreased. Mayor Bhasker stated that that the City has received final audit approval for FY 2017 from the State of New Mexico. Mayor Bhasker stated that the report can now be released.

Chelsea Lyons, Library Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council. Ms. Lyons stated that she has some concerns about the outside of the library as people are leaving trash and pulling up plants/flowers. Mayor Bhasker suggested that the library research placing a fence around the library to prevent those issues. Ms. Lyons stated that employees are working on the Love Your Library Campaign. Ms. Lyons invited everyone to the upcoming Holi event. Ms. Lyons stated that the recent Chines New Year event was very successful.

Cindy Rivera, from the Recreation Department, invited everyone to attend a walking parade with the kids from the Youth Center on February 28th at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Rivera stated that the parade is to support the Say No to Drugs & Alcohol Program. Ms. Rivera state that youth flag football and youth cheerleading had

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started. Ms. Rivera stated that the annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held on March 31st. Ms. Rivera stated that the department will start to accept enrollment forms for the summer youth program in April. Ms. Rivera stated that a new garden will be planted at Finley Gym and the front of the gym will be landscaped.

Isacc Angel, Gas Superintendent, stated that employee training is ongoing. Mr. Angel stated that two department employees are working on a gas meter audit. Mayor Bhasker stated that the two employees working on the meter audit are return to work retirees. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City employs several return to work retirees but they have all returned as regular employees and not supervisors which has allowed employees to advance in their departments.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that there are no issues with vehicles or equipment. Chief Gonzales stated that the new ambulance will arrive soon. Chief Gonzales stated that applicants for the open position in the department will be tested on March 12th.

Demecio Silva, Street Department Director, stated that construction on Fairgrounds Road started approximately 3 weeks ago. Mr. Silva stated that pothole repairs had stalled as all of the providers of cold mix were sold out and now that A-1 Quality has cold mix, pothole repairs have resumed. Mr. Silva stated that the department is currently installing over 150 new poles and street signs throughout the City. Mr. Silva stated that the Hilton Hills road reconstruction project is moving forward.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from January 2018 and all of 2017. Chief Winders stated that through a STEP grant, officers will be working on traffic issues such as speeding. Chief Winders stated that on February 16th, two narcotics warrants were successfully served and the department recovered 40 grams of heroin. Chief Winders stated that the new police officer has started working and is currently in training. Chief Winders stated that he attended an active shooter training at the high school. Chief Winders stated that he is working alongside the Sherriff's Office and State Police to regularly visit local schools and do threat assessments and training. Chief Winders stated that it is important that all three agencies are familiar with the same training.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation, Landfill and Recycling Superintendent, stated that operations are normal in the Sanitation, Recycling and Landfill departments. Mr. Lucero stated that crews continue to pick up litter, grind tree limbs and install new fence at the landfill. Mr. Lucero stated that the landfill passed the annual methane and water tests. Mr. Lucero stated that the department continues to pick up cardboard at local businesses.

Lupe Tarango, Dispatch Director, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Dispatch Department stats from January 2018. Mr. Tarango stated that employee training is ongoing. Mr. Tarango stated that he has been attending meetings to discuss the dispatch center taking over the dispatching for PHI as State Police no longer wishes to do so.

Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk, stated that she and Kristy Padilla have been busy with election duties. Ms. Saavedra stated that to date, 175 people have early voted and 128 people have requested absentee ballots. Ms. Saavedra stated that the last day to early/absentee vote is March 2nd and the election will be held on March 6th. Ms. Saavedra stated that she is currently advertising for the position of Zoning & Code Enforcement Officer.

Mr. Monette stated that he is working on a form for State appropriations. Mr. Monette stated that he has a meeting at NM Tech on February 21st to discuss broadband.

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NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker stated that City police officers need to be more proactive in issuing citations to speeding drivers. Mayor Bhasker stated he has received numerous complaints regarding speeding and most recently, a driver backed into a speed sign on Neel Avenue.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker stated that with the help of Senator Morales and Representative Armstrong, the City received approximately \$235,000 from the NM Legislature to be used for the convention center and rodeo arena.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Final Audit Approval – FY 2017

Mayor Bhasker stated that that the City has received final audit approval for FY 2017 from the State of New Mexico. Mayor Bhasker stated that the report can now be released.

b. Personnel Changes

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

Katy Weaver - 2-23-18 – Tourism - Resignation

Reyes Rosas - 2-28-18 - Auto Maintenance - Retirement

Felipe Romero - 2-1-18 – Tourism - Completed Probation - A-19 to A-21

Marcos Chavez - 2-21-18 – Police - Completed Probation - A-38 to A-40

Weylin Melton - 2-21-18 – Police - Completed Probation - A-38 to A-40

Temporary New Hires: Ever Sedillo

Temporary Renewals: Elias Jacquez, Chris Carrillo, Paul Foulfont, Jerry Griego, Marcella Alvarado, David Chavez, Zach Anaya, Tiara Jojola, Justin Lopez, Ray Aragon, James Chavez, Steven Chavez, Deekota Chavez, Wade Dixon, Marcia Amaro, Eva Chavez

Student Workers: Taylor Saavedra, Ryan Lopez, Ambriel Mauldin, Lucas Madril, Amanda Torres
Referees (5), Zumba/Yoga (5)

Seconded by Councilor Salome, motion passed unanimously.

c. Business Registrations

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

Mick Rich Contractors – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Corporation – General Contractor

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve vouchers 143464 to 143712 in the amount of \$668,571.47 plus Payroll Transfers (\$294,167.32), for a total of \$962,738.79. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

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e. Announcement – Next City Council Meeting Dates and Times

Mayor Bhasker stated that a special meeting will be held February 26, 2018 at 12:00 Noon. Mayor Bhasker stated that due to the municipal election, the March 5, 2018 City Council meeting will be cancelled. Mayor Bhasker stated that the next regular City Council meeting will be held on Monday, March 12, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers and will include the post-election organizational meeting.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve the above meetings. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:59 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Stephanie Saavedra, Deputy Clerk