

City of Socorro Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
September 15, 2014

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, stated that the Fire Department has acquired two new ambulances. Chief Gonzales stated that several employees attended the recent EMS Expo. Chief Gonzales stated that the department continues with employee training classes. Chief Gonzales stated that the Fire Department hosted the annual barbecue for Fire School and had 230 attendees.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation/Landfill/Recycling Director, stated that operation at the Landfill, Sanitation and recycling departments are normal. Mr. Lucero stated that crews at the landfill are relocating the pile of tree limbs. Mr. Lucero stated that crews at the landfill will start to spread mulch as per the permit plan. Mr. Lucero stated that one sanitation truck is in for repairs.

Mike Winders, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from August 2014 (112 arrests, 222 citations, 3 DWI arrests, 236 police reports filed, 16 traffic accidents, 3,435 calls received by dispatch, etc.). Chief Winders thanked the City Council for approving the resolution which increases the salary for police officers. Chief Winders stated that one of the new hires recently started at the Police Academy. Chief Winders stated that the department ordered two new police cars. Chief Winders stated that Officer Bobby Aragon has taken the School Resource Officer position. Chief Winders stated that Officers Padilla and Aragon spoke at Career Day at Parkview Elementary School.

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, stated that she attended the New Mexico Municipal League conference where they encouraged all cities to make their city photogenic. Ms. Gonzales stated the speakers encouraged the cities to place photos of their city on their websites as it is free advertisement for New Mexico. Ms. Gonzales stated that she conducted a rate analysis concentrating on commercial meter sizes and classifications and will bring her findings to the Utility Committee.

Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that the levy certification process is still ongoing.

Jay Santillanes, Utilities Division Director, stated that the Street Department has been working at the rodeo grounds, working on the weed pickup list and putting up (and taking down) the tents for events. Mr. Santillanes stated that the rodeo arena has been inspected and the City is now working on placing signage and grading the area in and around the arena. Mr. Santillanes stated that he attended the recent aviation conference where he received updates from the FAA. Mr. Santillanes stated that the M Mountain Fly In will be held September 27th and crews are getting the area ready. Mr. Santillanes stated that Gas Department crews continue natural gas line replacement on Leroy Street. Mr. Santillanes stated that bids will be received soon for the levy project.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Olguin read a letter from Jocelyn Garcia and Miguel Armendariz who are requesting water service at their residence located at 1202 Pinon Drive. Mayor Bhasker stated that the area in question is an unfinished subdivision and that the developer is responsible for placing the correct infrastructure in the subdivision. Mr. Salome stated that it is the City's responsibility to place a meter but it is the developer's responsibility to extend the lines to the individual lots and homeowner's responsibility to get a permit. Mr. Salome stated that the problem could also be that a permit was not acquired by the homeowner to put the home on the lot. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would be happy to meet with the residents to find out why there is no service and explain the subdivision rules if necessary.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has engaged an appraiser to appraise Socorro Electric Cooperative assets in the City Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that he met with the Director of the NM Rural Electric Cooperative Association to discuss the SEC and to also assure them that the City is trying to work out issues with the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that in a recent letter from Ann Dorrough, SEC Board President, Ms. Dorrough states that she will not entertain a yes/no vote from member/owners at this time. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City is not interested in condemnation or filing of eminent domain but would simply like the member/owners to be able to vote on what direction they would like to take with the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the cost of electricity would go down 20% if someone other than the SEC provided electricity. Mr. Salome stated that right now there is no one representing the member/owners and they should be able to decide if they are content with the way the current SEC Board and management are managing the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Administration is asking a consultant to see what the SEC is costing the City as it relates to economic development as well as a review of SEC rates and the morale of member/owners.