

City of Socorro Regular City Council Meeting
City Hall, 111 School of Mines Road, Socorro, NM 87801
November 3, 2014

Mayor Ravi Bhasker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pat Salome, City Clerk, took roll call. Members present at roll call were: Mayor Ravi Bhasker, Councilor Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Donald Monette, Councilor Ernest Pargas and Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez. Councilor Peter Romero were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 3, 2014 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. October 20, 2014

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

PUBLIC FORUM

Charles Dazey, a local resident, stated that he feels drivers who park in a handicap parking space, who do not have the proper credentials to do so, should be cited by police officers. Mayor Bhasker asked the Police Chief to look into the matter.

John Mann, a local resident, stated that there are still cars speeding through the school zone located near Newberry Road. Mr. Mann stated that he feels a speeding ticket would be more effective than a warning. Mr. Mann stated that there is not a speed limit sign on Fatima Road. Mr. Mann stated that the pile of trash on Fatima Road that was brought up by another resident at a past City Council meeting is still there. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would address the trash issue with the Code Enforcement Officer. Mr. Mann asked about the status of the "drug dealers". Mayor Bhasker stated that the Police Department is working on the matter. Mr. Mann stated that he feels law enforcement needs to be supported and they need to be given the resources they need to be able to do their job.

Deb Caldwell, Chamber of Commerce Director, stated that there will be a Social Security meeting on November 5th at 4:30 p.m. at Bodega Burger. Ms. Caldwell stated that there will be Business After Hours at Black Smugglers Winery on November 6th. Ms. Caldwell stated that there will be Business After Hours at the Chamber on November 7th. Ms. Caldwell stated that there will be an Economic Development SWOT meeting on November 13th at the NM GRADS building. Ms. Caldwell stated that the community awards will be awarded soon and that nomination forms are available. Ms. Caldwell stated that NM Ideas will hold a conference from November 5th through 7th at NM Tech. Ms. Caldwell stated that she is working with the City's Treasurer to finalize financial reports from the Socorrofest event.

SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES – CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL

a. Ordinance No. 14-10-06 – Land Exchange – Highlands Pond

Mr. Salome stated that the agenda did not reflect that a public hearing would be held for this item. Mr. Salome suggested that the City Council table the item to the next City Council meeting. Mr. Salome stated that the Administration would advertise that the public hearing and consideration would take place at the next City Council meeting.

Councilor Olguin made a motion to table the item to the next City Council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

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DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Socorro County Diversion Program/Teen Court Introduction & Update

Councilor Pargas introduced Judge Bobbi Sanders, the Program Director for Teen Court in Socorro. Judge Sanders stated that the teen court program started in 2013. Judge Sanders stated that to date, there have been 235 cases referred to teen court. Judge Sanders stated that cases are referred by Socorro Schools or the Juvenile Probation and Parole Office. Judge Sanders stated that among other things, teens are referred for matters such as truancy, battery and shoplifting. Judge Sanders stated that she would like to incorporate more traffic education for teens and their parents. Judge Sanders stated that to date, there have been 1,015 hours of community service put into the community. Judge Sanders stated that the program is running well and that the community has been supportive of the program. Judge Sanders stated that there is also a Teen Center available that gives various classes and participates in community service.

b. Socorro County Juvenile Justice Annual Report/MOU Approval

Mayor Bhasker stated that there is an annual report from the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board in the packet. Mayor Bhasker presented the following agencies for approval as part of the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board:

Ernest Pargas, City Councilor, Co-Chair
Don Tripp, State of New Mexico Representative, Co-Chair
Rita Cragun, CYFD
Elizabeth Beers, Socorro General Hospital
Lee Deschamps, Attorney
John Gordon, Mental Health Liaison
Phillip Montoya, Socorro County Sheriff
Anton Salome, Socorro Schools
Matthew Reynolds, District Court Judge
Nadine Ulibarri-Kellar, Department of Health
Clint Wellborn, District Attorney
Chuck Zimmerly, Retired
Savannah Morris, Socorro County Prevention Coalition
Paul Silva, Presbyterian Medical Services
Jason Green, NM State Police
Pat Salome, City of Socorro
Pauline Jaramillo, County Commissioner
Kirsten Kellar, Continuum Coordinator
Vacant, Faith Community
Vacant, Socorro Mental Health

Councilor Pargas made a motion to approve the agencies as part of the Socorro County Juvenile Justice Board. Seconded by Councilor Hicks, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mable Gonzales, City Treasurer, stated that she would like to have a Utility Committee meeting on November 12th at noon.

Mr. Salome stated that the Police Oversight Commission continues to meet once a month.

Councilor Hicks stated that in regards to the Airport Committee, the old radio station has placed a light on their tower. Mayor Bhasker stated that in honor of Laura Haines, who recently passed, the name of the M Mountain Fly In has been changed to The Captain Laura S. Haines M Mountain Fly In.

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NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Hicks stated that the Socorro Valley 100 Race was recently held in Socorro. Councilor Hicks presented a t-shirt to the Mayor and provided a bottle of tea for everyone that was supplied by one of the sponsors. Councilor Hicks stated that there were 70 riders in the event.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Bhasker stated that in response to two recent letters to the editor in the El Defensor Chieftain (from Pablo Lopez and Councilor Michael Olguin), he wanted to make it clear that his specific complaint regarding Gary Jaramillo's October 2, 2014 letter to the editor was regarding the accuracy of the items contained in the letter – not the fact that the letter was printed in the newspaper. Mayor Bhasker stated that contrary to Mr. Jaramillo's claim that "businesses are closing at an alarming rate", there are new businesses coming to Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that Mr. Jaramillo's claim that "hotels are mostly empty" is untrue. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to Mr. Jaramillo's comment "vast amounts of money are spent on the Mayor's money pit out on Highway 60", the City built the rodeo/recreation for quality of life for Socorro residents and as an attempt to bring events to Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to Mr. Jaramillo's statement "we all know that most of you now make as much or more than some full-time city employees by implementing much larger raises for yourselves on a regular basis", the minimum City employee makes two to three times more than the City Council. Mayor Bhasker stated that Councilor Olguin did vote in favor of increasing City Council compensation the last time the matter was brought before the City Council for a vote. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to Mr. Jaramillo's statement "Where's our drug czar Councilor Pargas? Where's our rehab center and all of the wonderful things everyone is promised", Councilor Pargas and his team just gave a marvelous presentation earlier in the Council meeting regarding the progress that has been made. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to Mr. Jaramillo's statement "Acquiring the SEC because the mayor doesn't play well with others is really just dumb" and Councilor Olguin's statement that acquiring the SEC is not his (Councilor Olguin's) main priority (and that economic development is his main priority), the SEC has \$60 million in debt and is in the top three highest charge per kilowatt hour for co-ops in the State. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro has commercial electric rates that are 34.98% higher than the NM average, residential electric rates that are 36.5 higher than the NM average and industrial electric rates that are 83% higher than the NM average (taken from the Electricity Local website). Mayor Bhasker stated that high electric rates will prevent economic development and that Mr. Olguin should take concern with co-op rates. Mayor Bhasker stated that in regards to Mr. Jaramillo's statement "It's about the mayor — and it always has been", the Mayor stated the City Council is responsible for final action on all policy and budget items. Mayor Bhasker stated that the latest unemployment rate for Socorro is 5.4% which is lower than many other counties including Valencia, Sierra, Luna and many other counties similar in size to Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that in response to Councilor Olguin's letter, the freedom of speech also applies to himself and it is unfortunate that Councilor Olguin did not voice his opinion at a City Council meeting so that it could be made a part of the official minutes. Mayor Bhasker stated that the function of the City Council and the City Administration is to discuss matters during the City Council meetings which is a public setting. Mayor Bhasker stated that it is unfortunate that Councilor Olguin used the newspaper as the avenue by which to voice his opinion.

a. SEC Update

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next SEC meeting will be held on November 15th at Finley Gym and he plans on giving a presentation to the public. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Administration is working with the attorney on an appraisal amount. Mayor Bhasker stated that he felt it was important for the elected officials to divulge whether or not each official has a financial interest in the SEC. Mayor Bhasker and the City Councilors present stated that they did not have a conflict of interest in the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the acquisition is moving forward and a plan will be brought to the City Council in the future.

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b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Felix Saavedra – 9-29-14 – Wastewater – Certification (WW III) & Promotion to WW Technician III – L-27 to L-31

Luis Espino – 11-1-14 – Fire – Completed Probation – A-26 to A-27

Toby Jaramillo – 11-1-14 – Fire – Completed Probation – A-30 to A-31

Eloisa Romero – 11-4-14 – Library – New Hire (Circulation Assistant) – A-17

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously. Councilor Jaramillo abstained and stated that Toby Jaramillo is his son.

c. Business Registrations

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

Blankets and Toys 99 Cents – C-2 – 1009 N California Street – Wu Ji Dong – Blankets and Toys Sales

Kirkland Construction RLLP – Out of Town – Rye, CO – James & Mary Kirkland – Heavy Highway Construction

Flintco LLC – M1 – 1001 Grefco Road – Corporation – General Contractor

Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

d. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting would be held on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:08 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/
Pat Salome, City Clerk