

City of Socorro
Regular Scheduled City Council Meeting
February 18, 2014

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ravi Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 18, 2014 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. February 3, 2014

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

Councilor Pargas reminded the City Council that the minutes are the official record of each City Council meeting and this item on the agenda is the only opportunity to either approve or amend the minutes if they so choose.

Councilor Romero requested a change to the February 3, 2014 minutes. Councilor Romero stated that the item under Committee Reports referring to Lonnie Zamora's UFO sighting should say "50th" rather than "505th". The minutes will be amended to reflect the requested change.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Bhasker introduced Mario Telles, a journalism/communications student from UNM who was recording the City Council meeting for a class assignment. Mr. Telles thanked the Mayor and Council for welcoming him to the meeting.

Dave Finley provided a handout regarding the Civil Air Patrol's Glider Program and gave a brief description of the program. Mr. Finley stated that in 2013, there were 399 glider flights and 220 of those flights were done at Socorro's municipal airport. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Finley for his presentation.

Charles Mandeville stated that he has lived in Socorro for 50 years and has always been interested in the history of the area. Mr. Mandeville stated that he has participated in the Civil War Re-Enactment for 17 years and for 15 of those years, the City provided the event with Lodger's Tax Funds. Mr. Mandeville stated that he provided a request for Lodger's Tax Funds to the Lodger's Tax Committee and his request was approved by the Committee. Mr. Mandeville stated that once the request made it to the Administration, the request was denied and stated that he wanted to know why the request was denied. Mayor Bhasker stated that there were several reasons the Administration denied the request. Mayor Bhasker stated that two years ago, Mr. Mandeville removed the United States flag and placed the Confederate flag upon the City's flagpole without permission and that several citizen complaints were received. Mayor Bhasker stated he feels the re-enactment, as portrayed, has become subjective in nature and only certain ideas about what the Civil War was truly about are being depicted during the local re-enactment. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Civil War Re-Enactment may have their event in the City but that the City cannot financially support the event. Councilor Olguin requested that Mr. Mandeville keep a tally on how many people the event brings into Socorro. Councilor Monette stated that there must be a public awareness regarding events and rules for the events. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City Council can override the Administration's decision (regarding funding) and he would be happy to place the item on the next agenda for consideration as a decision cannot be made under Public Forum. Mr. Salome suggested that Mr. Mandeville provide a list of expenditures to assist the City Council with their decision. Mayor Bhasker stated that while the Lodger's Tax Committee is an advisory committee, the Administration makes the final decision and he would be happy to have the City Council make the final decision regarding this event if they so choose.

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DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Amendment to Engineering Agreement – Dennis Engineering – Waterline Replacement Project

Mable Gonzales, Finance Director, presented an amendment to the engineering agreement with Dennis Engineering for the Waterline Replacement Project. Ms. Gonzales stated that the amount of the amendment is \$5,855.74 and the amendment is needed to comply with testing and reports being required by the State Historic Preservation Office for the project.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve the amendment to the engineering agreement with Dennis Engineering for the Waterline Replacement Project. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

b. Socorro County Substance Abuse Prevention Grant

1. DFL Coordinator Contract

Councilor Pargas stated that the Substance Abuse Prevention Grant requires a program evaluator and that Patricia Lincoln of DFL Associates Inc. is being recommended to fill that position. Ms. Lincoln stated that she is an approved evaluator and her function will be to provide data, provide assessment support, help design the strategic plan, design a logic model and put an evaluation plan in place.

Councilor Pargas made a motion to approve Patricia Lincoln of DFL Associates Inc. to be the program coordinator for the Substance Abuse Prevention Grant. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

2. SCPC Coordinator Contract

Councilor Pargas stated that the Substance Abuse Prevention Grant requires a program coordinator and that Savannah Morris is being recommended to fill that position. Councilor Pargas stated that the final contract is currently being amended and that a draft was provided to the Councilors in the packets. Ms. Gonzales provided a relationship flow chart showing the different grants that Councilor Pargas has helped acquire for which the City is the fiscal agent. Councilor Pargas stated that he is grateful to the City Council and Administration for supporting the grants.

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve Savannah Morris as the Substance Abuse Prevent Grant program coordinator. Seconded by Councilor Pargas, motion passed unanimously.

c. Automatic Aid Agreement – Socorro Fire Department

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, presented an automatic aid agreement between the Socorro Fire Department, San Antonio Fire Department (Socorro County) and Midway Hose Company (Socorro County). Chief Gonzales stated that the purpose of the agreement is to render automatic aid and assistance to one another in suppressing structural fires and to protect and promote public health, welfare and safety to the citizens.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve the automatic aid agreement between the Socorro Fire Department, San Antonio Fire Department (Socorro County) and Midway Hose Company (Socorro County). Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

d. Voting Machine Use Agreement with Socorro County

Mr. Salome presented an agreement between the City of Socorro and Socorro County that would allow the City to use the County's voting machines for the March 4, 2014 regular municipal election.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve the voting machine use agreement between the City and the County. Seconded by Councilor Romero, motion passed unanimously.

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e. Resolution No. 14-02-18 – Application for Funding – Drainage System Improvements Project

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 14-02-18 which, if approved, allows the City to apply for funding from the New Mexico Water Trust Board for a drainage system improvements project for the Cuba Road area.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-02-18. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR REPORTS

Mable Gonzales, Finance Director, reminded utility customers about the importance of looking at their utility bill each month to watch the usage for problems such as leaks.

George Van Winkle, Police Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Police Department stats from January 2014 (90 arrests, 131 citations, 3 DWI arrests, 219 police reports filed, 11 traffic accidents, 8,234 calls received by dispatch, etc.). Chief Van Winkle reminded the public that damage to or removal of political signs is a crime. Mr. Salome stated that home owners and property owners should be asked before a sign is placed on their property.

Joe Gonzales, Fire Chief, provided a handout to the Mayor and Council of Fire Department stats from January 2014 (145 ambulance runs, 8 fire calls, etc.). Chief Gonzales stated that there will be an ISO audit in May. Chief Gonzales stated that he will receive notification about a vehicle purchase grant in April. Chief Gonzales stated that Chris Padilla will be retiring at the end of February and he will be advertising for two positions. Chief Gonzales stated that Magdalena EMS suspended their certification and the Socorro Fire Department has been responding to their calls.

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, stated that the JO Gallegos Road project is underway and should be completed in 2 to 3 weeks. Mr. Santillanes stated that there are some extra funds from the project and the engineer would be making a recommendation on how to utilize the funds. Mr. Santillanes stated that a possible project could be landscape rock along the sidewalk, fog sealing the road or reconstructing the truck entrance to Super 8. Mr. Santillanes stated that the Gas Department is replacing natural gas lines in the Skylark Street area. Mr. Santillanes stated that natural gas to Dicaperl was turned off briefly when it was cold but that it has already been turned back on and has been in use for about a month. Mr. Santillanes stated that Street Department crews are doing cleanup in the Industrial Park area and by the flood control. Mr. Santillanes stated that Richardson and Richardson is working on the drawings for the rodeo area cover.

Jennifer Gonzales, Tourism Director, stated that she is currently working on the “Visit Socorro” branding and the City’s tourism website. Ms. Gonzales stated that she is working on the Heritage Center’s displays to make it a more interactive museum. Mayor Bhasker stated that the Tourism Department provided 70 gift bags for a recent Socorro Gun Club event.

Mike Czosnek, Building Inspector, stated that construction started on a new house and that there were 2 more new houses anticipated in March. Mr. Czosnek stated that the remodel of the old Taco Bell has started and that it will soon be a Little Caesar’s Pizza. Mayor Bhasker stated that Little Caesar’s Pizza is currently accepting job applications. Mr. Czosnek stated that we expect a submittal from FEMA in 10 to 12 days regarding the levy certification. Mr. Czosnek stated that once certified the flood zone area will not expand as was originally suggested by FEMA. Mr. Czosnek stated that the old Motel 6, which will soon be a Rodeway Inn, is bidding for heating and cooling units. Mr. Czosnek also stated that Town and Country Realty is doing an addition to their building.

Paula Mertz, Library Director, stated that the library received the McHune Grant in the amount of \$2,000 which supports the summer reading program. Ms. Mertz stated that the Friends of the Library recently had their annual meeting and program and had 50 attendees. Ms. Mertz stated that she is waiting on a reimbursement in the amount of \$1,670 from GO Bond 10. Ms. Mertz stated that there are tax forms available at the library.

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Lloyd Martinez, Parks/Production/Water/Special Projects Superintendent, stated that water and sewer line installation has been completed at the RV park at the soccer fields/rodeo grounds. Mr. Martinez stated that the modular building will be installed at the soccer fields/rodeo grounds next week. Mr. Martinez stated the bathrooms at the soccer fields/rodeo grounds will be completed mid-April. Mr. Martinez stated that there may be a soccer event at the new soccer fields in March. Mr. Martinez stated that Water Department crews finished installing water connections at the Industrial Park (in preparation of paving the road) and will now start installing sewer connections. Mr. Martinez stated that crews will do a hydrant flush in the spring and also a hydrant inventory. Mr. Martinez stated that the Production Department is upgrading the Hefner lift station and will also work on the JO Gallegos lift station. Mr. Martinez stated that the arsenic treatment plants are operating within guidelines and are running 1/3 below the estimated the budget. Mr. Martinez stated that preparation (for summer use) has started on the swimming pool. Mr. Martinez stated that crews will do a spring flush of manholes and spray for cockroaches in the manholes. Mr. Martinez stated that crews are working on blowers and have installed a gas detection alarm at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Michael Lucero, Sanitation/Landfill/Recycling Director, stated that all landfill equipment is running properly. Mr. Lucero stated that the tub grinder is currently being repaired. Mr. Lucero stated that crews have been hauling rip rap from the soccer fields, baling tires and picking up litter. Mr. Lucero stated that one of the residential sanitation trucks is being repaired. Mr. Lucero stated that recycling pickup for local business is currently ongoing.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

In light of recent events, Mayor Bhasker asked Mr. Czosnek to explain the transient vendor process. Mr. Czosnek stated that the City has a transient vendor ordinance which states vacant property owners must apply for a special use permit in order to allow transient vendors to sell merchandise on their property. Mr. Czosnek stated that he had to move several vendors on Valentine's Day who had set up on property that did not have the special use permit. Mr. Salome stated that the ordinance was approved to preserve and protect local businesses who must comply with zoning, etc.

a. Socorro Electric Cooperative Franchise Update – Discussion of Options

Mayor Bhasker stated that he had met with the City's attorney in regards to the SEC franchise agreement, and other general issues, and discussed several options. Mayor Bhasker stated that those options include: 1) leaving everything the way it currently is, 2) try and have a dialogue with the SEC manager to create a new relationship between the City and the Co-Op, 3) put the electric franchise up for bid or 4) have the City purchase that portion of the Co-Op that is inside the City limits. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels SEC trustees are making decisions that adversely affect Socorro citizens such as holding their meetings on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. so not everyone can attend. Mayor Bhasker stated that 4 out of the 5 trustees live outside of the City of Socorro and members in the City are not being served as they should. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like the City Council to discuss getting an appraisal of that portion of the Co-Op inside the City limits and find out what the debt service is. Mayor Bhasker stated that in 2012, the SEC paid \$14 million for electricity and billed approximately \$24 million. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City has been unable to get any useful information from the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City can handle the electricity if it has to and if the trustees are unwilling to work with the City, the City may look into purchasing the SEC (within the franchise area). Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Belen offered their boom truck and helped the City put up Christmas lights because the SEC was unwilling to do so without charging a fee. Mayor Bhasker stated that he feels the SEC must be more responsive to the public. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's attorney, Nann Winter, has tremendous experience in franchise agreements and is advising the Administration.

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b. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Chris Padilla – 2-28-14 – Fire – Retirement

Humberto Lucero – 3-1-14 – Fire – Completed Probation – A-25 to A-26

Temporary New Hires: Tony Silva, Peter Maldonado

Temporary Renewals: Emena Gonzales, Rick Griego, Daniel Chavez, Paul Marquez, Carlos Alvarado, Ramiro Garza, Albert Hernandez, George Romero, Mike Jojola, Elias Jacquez, Dolores Medina, Regina Valencia, Sergio Cuevas, Angelica Vega, Michael Padilla, Jeremy Chavez, Brittany McDaniel

Student Workers: Matthew Jojola, Tamera Chavez, Maria Alderete, Giovanna Rosas, Angelica Lopez, Deanna Blair, Samantha Maldonado, Geir Hareland

Referees (7), Zumba (2)

The motion was seconded by Councilor Fleming. Councilor Pargas, Councilor Jaramillo, Councilor Olguin, Councilor Fleming, Councilor Monette and Councilor Romero voted in favor of the motion. Councilor Chavez-Lopez abstained from the vote and in accordance with the Governing Body Rules of Procedure, stated that her son was on the list to be approved. Motion passed.

c. Business Registrations

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

Scooter's Computers – C-2 – 1101 State Road 1 – Corporation – Service

Rick Blank – Out of Town – Duchesne, UT – Rickey Griffin – Blanket Sales

Pat Alexander Enterprises – Out of Town – Albuquerque, NM – Corporation - Contractor

Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

d. Voucher Run

Councilor Fleming made a motion to approve vouchers 128959 to 129299 in the amount of \$1,166,880.47, plus Payroll Transfers (\$311,165.57), for a total of \$1,478,046.04.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pargas. Councilor Pargas, Councilor Jaramillo, Councilor Chavez-Lopez, Councilor Fleming, Councilor Monette and Councilor Romero voted in favor of the motion.

Councilor Olguin abstained from the vote (no reason given). Mr. Salome stated that the abstention (on the voucher run) must be for a financial reason or other conflict of interest. In contrast to Councilor Chavez-Lopez (above) and to the City's Governing Body Rules of Procedure, no reason for abstaining was given by Councilor Olguin, therefore, no reason is being recorded in the minutes to support and explain the official action. Motion passed.

e. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

Mayor Bhasker stated that the next City Council meeting would be held on Monday, March 3, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:50 p.m., Councilor Monette motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Fleming, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/ _____

Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ _____

Pat Salome, City Clerk

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