

City of Socorro
Regular City Council Meeting
March 3, 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 Toby Jaramillo, Councilor Nick Fleming, Councilor Ernest Pargas, Councilor Michael Olguin, Councilor Gordy Hicks, Councilor Peter Romero and Councilor Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez. Councilor Donald Monette was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bhasker led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 3, 2014 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to add Resolution No. 14-03-03b (request for MAP funding) to the agenda.

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

Councilor Monette arrived.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

a. February 18, 2014

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

Mayor Bhasker stated that the February 18, 2014 minutes reflect that Councilor Olguin abstained from a vote regarding the voucher run without providing a reason. Mayor Bhasker explained that the Governing Body Rules of Procedure, which are approved by the Governing Body, state that an abstention must be followed by a reason for the abstention. Mayor Bhasker asked Councilor Olguin to provide his reason for abstaining from voting on the voucher run. Councilor Olguin asked whether or not he needed to answer the question. Mr. Salome explained that at the same meeting, Councilor Chavez-Lopez abstained from voting on the personnel changes and stated that the abstention was because her son was on the list. Mr. Salome stated that Councilor Chavez-Lopez's abstention was done in conjunction with the Governing Body Rules of Procedure and duly noted. Mr. Salome read that section of the Governing Body Rules of Procedure that applies to voting. Mr. Salome stated that without a reason, there is no way to tell if Mr. Olguin is abstaining from the entire voucher run or a portion of the voucher run. Mr. Salome stated that the purpose of an abstention is to clearly and openly identify the conflict. Councilor Olguin did not comment further and did not provide a reason for the abstention.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Bhasker introduced Representative Don Tripp. Representative Tripp stated that the Legislature just completed a 30-day session. Representative Tripp provided a handout regarding capital outlay projects for Socorro. Representative Tripp stated that the City of Socorro received \$300,000 for the rodeo and soccer facilities and \$400,000 for upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant. Representative Tripp stated that other projects receiving funding include \$100,000 for road improvements to Enterprise Road/Grefco Road and \$1,000,000 for the San Acacia Levee project. Representative Tripp also discussed the sole community provider issue and how it affects Socorro General Hospital, the status of the lottery scholarship and the hold harmless rule. Mayor Bhasker stated that the two projects the City received funding for are on the City's ICIP. Mayor Bhasker thanked Representative Tripp for providing the update.

Mike Alderete, of the City's Parks Department, stated that the City's Parks Department had been given a plaque from AYSO in appreciation for the City's work on the soccer fields. Dennis Walsh, AYSO President, stated that the new soccer fields are great and the soccer program could not work without the help of the City of Socorro. Mayor Bhasker stated that the new lighting at the soccer fields would be turned on after the Council meeting and invited everyone to go view the lighted fields.

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Brad Winton, soccer coach at NM Tech, stated that NM Tech would be hosting a one-day tournament in late March with teams from Colorado and Texas and they are excited to use the new fields. Mr. Winton stated that in the future, he would like to have the tournament be at least two days long.

Mr. Alderete also introduced Mike Gaines, a teacher at Socorro High School. Mr. Alderete stated that Mr. Gaines and his class recently made two signs for Sedillo Park. Mr. Gaines stated that the new vocational building at Socorro High School houses several classes including wood shop, auto shop, agricultural mechanics, metals, welding, FFA leadership, etc. Mr. Gaines stated that his class used a plasma cutter to make the signs for the City and that his class would be happy to assist with more signs if the City ever needs any. Mr. Gaines stated that the purpose of the new vocational classes is to promote additional education for the students to make them employable. Mr. Gaines provided a handout listing the classes available. Mayor Bhasker stated that it is great that Socorro Schools offer vocational training for students. Mayor Bhasker thanked Mr. Gaines and his class for providing the new signs for Sedillo Park.

James Cherry, the webmaster for www.informedcynic.com, provided the Mayor and City Council with a packet of information which includes information regarding the Socorro Electric Cooperative.

Charlie Wagner, a Socorro Electric Cooperative Trustee, read a letter on behalf of Joseph Herrera, SEC General Manger, in which Mr. Herrera requests use of Finley Gym for the April 26, 2014 annual member meeting.

DISCUSSION AND DELIBERATION

a. Representative Don Tripp – Legislative Update on Funding for City’s ICIP

See Public Forum above.

b. Funding for Civil War Re-Enactment Event – Charles Mandeville

There was not a representative from the Civil War Re-Enactment present at the City Council meeting, therefore, the topic was not discussed.

c. Socorro Electric Cooperative Franchise Agreement/Acquisition - Discussion

Mayor Bhasker stated that after attending a recent Socorro Electric Cooperative board meeting, and after hearing the issues brought forth during a series of public comments during City Council meetings, he feels the City should consider acquiring the Socorro Electric Cooperative (City limits) rather than spending money on updating the franchise agreement. Mayor Bhasker stated that 4 out of 5 of the SEC trustees live outside of the City limits and he feels the City of Socorro is not well-represented. Mayor Bhasker stated that he has spoken with Larry McGraw of USDA and Sandy Jones of the PRC regarding his concerns about the SEC. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City of Socorro has eminent domain over that part of the SEC that is in the City limits. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City could also do a referendum and ask the public. Mayor Bhasker stated that a feasibility study would need to be completed. Mayor Bhasker stated that he would like to have input from the City Council as to how they would like to proceed.

Charlie Wagner, a current SEC trustee, stated that the City has other options including inviting another provider into Socorro or merging with another cooperative. Mr. Wagner stated that the membership, and not the SEC Board of Trustees, should be writing the by-laws of the SEC.

Mayor Bhasker stated that he would invite the City’s attorney, who was originally contracted to assist with the franchise agreement, to speak at a City Council meeting regarding the City’s options.

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d. Resolution No. 14-03-03a – Socorro Mental Health/PMS Ground Lease Transfer

Mayor Bhasker presented Resolution No. 14-03-03a which, if approved, would transfer the assignment of the Socorro Mental Health grounds lease to Presbyterian Medical Services.

George Zamora, with the Socorro Mental Health Foundation, stated that the SMHF has been a community-based mental health services provider in Socorro for over 20 years. Mr. Zamora stated that the SMHF building is located on City property. Mr. Zamora gave a brief history of SMHF and the programs that they offer. Mr. Zamora stated that in recent years, due to cut-backs in funding, SMHF programs and staff are facing cuts in order to remain viable. Mr. Zamora stated that the SMHF Board started to look for outside funding sources and found a partner in Presbyterian Medical Services.

Genevieve Robran, Regional Director for PMS, stated that PMS is happy to be partnering with SMHF. Ms. Robran stated that PMS is attempting to retain SMHF staff. Ms. Robran stated that PMS also has a clinic at Socorro High School.

Mayor Bhasker thanked SMHF for the services that have been provided to the Socorro community for many years. Mayor Bhasker stated that through the transfer of the lease and as per the lease, he would like to see PMS continue to offer mental health service. Mayor Bhasker stated that the City's attorney had not yet seen the transfer but that he would be given a copy for review. Mr. Salome stated that the resolution also authorizes Mayor Bhasker to execute the consent assignment.

Councilor Monette made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-03-03. Seconded by Councilor Chavez-Lopez, motion passed unanimously.

6e. Resolution No. 14-03-03b – Request for MAP Funding

Jay Santillanes, Division Director, presented Resolution No. 14-03-03b which, if approved, allows the City to prepare and submit an application to the New Mexico Department of Transportation for Municipal Arterial Program funding. Mr. Santillanes stated that if awarded, the funds will be used to plan, design and reconstruct Fairgrounds Road from State Road 1 to the rodeo/soccer field facility. Mr. Santillanes stated that he would add some additional details to the resolution to include more of a description of the work to be done.

Councilor Hicks made a motion to approve Resolution No. 14-03-03b. Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Hicks stated that approximately 7 pilots came to Socorro to do some training recently at the City's airport. Councilor Hicks stated that the pilots complimented the airport and stated that they would like to see wi-fi there. Mr. Santillanes stated that he is in the process of getting wi-fi set up at the airport.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the El Camino Real Housing Authority is having a poster contest for youth in grades 1 through 8. Councilor Chavez-Lopez stated that the theme of the contest is "Everyone is Welcome in My Neighborhood" and that prizes will be awarded.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

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MAYOR'S REPORT

a. Reporting on Personnel Changes

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

Steven Kimbrell – 2-3-14 – Police – Resignation

Jaime Hidalgo – 2-28-14 – Gas - Resignation

Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

b. Business Registrations

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

Sefnco Communications Inc. – Out of Town – Centennial, CO – Corporation – Construction

JH Construction Inc. – Out of Town – Belen, NM – Corporation - Construction

Seconded by Councilor Monette, motion passed unanimously.

c. Next City Council Meeting Announcement

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:28 p.m., Councilor Hicks motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Jaramillo, motion passed unanimously.

THE CITY OF SOCORRO – a municipal corporation

/s/ _____
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ _____
Pat Salome, City Clerk