

**Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting  
15 April/6 May  
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All nine councilors were present at the and April 15 and May 6: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.

**Proposed Changes to City Charter**

Proposed voter propositions. During the May 6 council meeting numerous bills were introduced which would call for propositions to be put to the voters to change portions of the City of Albuquerque Charter. Proposed changes to the city charter can only be passed by a vote of a majority of the council plus one. These bills are scheduled to be discussed at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- [P-24-1](#) Would change the minimum number of votes required for election of a mayoral or council candidate from 50% to 40%. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Peña)
- [P-24-2](#) Among other changes to the hiring and firing of the City Attorney and City Clerk, the city council could terminate the City Attorney’s employment contract with a two-thirds vote of the council. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Grout)
- [P-24-3](#) Among other changes to the appointment and firing of the Police Chief and the Fire Chief, the city council could terminate the Police and Fire Chief’s contracts with a two-thirds vote of the council. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Peña)

Proposed resolution to amend the immigrant friendly policy.

During the May 6 council meeting, resolution [R-24-45](#) was introduced which would deny the policy’s protections “...when an individual has been charged with a felony involving violence, human trafficking, or trafficking of controlled substances. In such circumstances the City shall contact and cooperate with federal immigration authorities...” (Introduced by Councilors Bassan and Grout). This resolution was referred to the Finance and Government Operations Committee.

Fifteen members of the public spoke in opposition to this resolution, citing concerns about lack of due process, racial profiling, and fear of calling the police or other authorities. This fear could result in unreported crimes and make immigrants vulnerable to wage theft, etc.

**Air Quality Board Appeal**

During the April 15<sup>th</sup> administration question and answer period Council President Lewis asked if the City Attorney had submitted a letter to the court regarding an appeal of the Air Quality Board’s decision. (It was not clarified to which decision he was referring.) The City Attorney’s representative responded that no docking statement was submitted regarding the appeal because it was felt that other parties were adequately representing the positions. She further stated that it was her understanding the appeal would be dismissed because of the lack of the docking statement. Councilor Lewis expressed his disappointment about the status of the relationship between the council and the City Attorney and her ability to be influenced by the administration.

### **Leave Payout to Departing CAO Nair**

During the May 6 administration question and answer period Councilor Sanchez stated he has received calls from upset constituents about a news story involving a leave payout to Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Sarita Nair when she resigned. He maintains the payout of Paid Leave Other (PLO) was not done in compliance with Merit Ordinance 3-1-16. According to current CAO Dr. Sengel, the ordinance states, "Leave with pay may also be authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer for services or activities of an employee outside of the scope of his or her employment which can be reasonably anticipated to directly or indirectly benefit the city." Councilor Sanchez asked the current CAO to report to the city council who authorized the payment.

### **Opioid Settlement Fund Project EC-24-29**

Councilor Baca proposed a bill to expend opioid settlement funds for a pallet home project focused on providing addiction recovery services. The project is to be located on Pan American at the State's vacant former MVD building. Councilor Fiebelkorn objected to using opioid settlement funding for operating costs with no plan for covering the operating costs after the settlement funding is gone. She and Councilor Grout also objected to appropriating Opioid Settlement money prior to completion of a joint city/county comprehensive plan for use of the settlement funds. The measure passed with a vote of 5 in favor (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Peña, and Rogers) and 4 opposed (Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, and Sanchez).

[EC-24-29](#)

### **ABQ Ride - Transit**

During the April 15th administration question and answer period Councilor Fiebelkorn asked the Transit Department representative about a recently implemented policy. The Rules to Ride policy now limits the size of carts that individuals can take onto the bus. According to the discussion the cart size is limited to 16"x16"x43". Councilor Fiebelkorn indicated that seniors often use these carts to haul groceries from the grocery store wondered what effort had been made to educate riders about the change. Discussion ensued about what would be an appropriate size limit. We note that upon checking the Rules to Ride on Transit's website, the limit is now stated as 20"x20"x43".

### **City Lights B.R.A.I.N. System**

During the April 15th administration question and answer period Councilor Rogers asked if the new lighting scheduled for her district would be compatible with the city's Balanced Resource Acquisition and Information Network (BRAIN). This system analyzes data from connected lights and building systems to identify energy saving changes. The administration representative indicated, if possible, all new lights are part of the system. For more information see the CABQ website: [BRAIN System](#).

### **General Public Comment**

Israel/Gaza. At the April 15th meeting 11 members of the public spoke to urge the city council to pass a resolution demanding a cease fire in Gaza and/or discontinuing Albuquerque's sister city program with Rehovot, Israel. After each comment, Councilor Bassan added the phrase "including immediate release of all Israeli hostages."

Chief Medina. At the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting three members of the public spoke to urge councilors to take action to remove Chief Medina from the APD.

Public Library IT Funding. At the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting two individuals asked the council to reinstate \$400K of funding for library IT services. These services were previously funded using revenue bonds, but has been switched in recent years to funding through general operating funds.