

**Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting
20 May/3 June 2024
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All nine councilors were present at the and May 20 and June 3: 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.

Amending Albuquerque’s Immigrant Friendly Policy

During the June 3 meeting the council considered resolution [R-24-45](#), introduced by Councilors Bassan and Grout, which would deny the city’s immigrant friendly 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...”

The bill failed by a vote of four in favor (Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis) to five opposed (Baca, Fiebelkorn, Peña, Rogers, Sanchez).

Forty members of the public (including the Archbishop of the Santa Fe Diocese) spoke in opposition to this resolution, citing concerns about lack of due process, racial profiling, and fear of calling the police or other authorities. Many stated this fear could result in unreported crimes and make immigrants vulnerable to wage theft and exploitation. Comments were limited to one minute, rather than the usual two minutes.

One member of the public spoke in support of the resolution citing concerns about crimes and terrorism committed by immigrants. (This speaker closed by saying “...hopefully it doesn’t happen...but I hope it happens. Maybe they go to there next week and they uzi machine you guys next week so you guys stop molesting children.” See his comments at [YouTube City Council 6.3.24](#), time stamp 3:15:50.

Proposed Changes to City Charter Election Thresholds

During the June 3 meeting the council considered numerous bills calling 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 propositions would change the number of minimum votes required for election of a mayor or council candidate and the hiring and dismissal of certain city officials.

- [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)

The council deferred the vote to June 17th in order to allow for three hearings, as required by the city charter. During the comment periods over 20 people spoke in opposition to these propositions, citing concerns such as a reduction in buy-in from the electorate if officials are elected by only 40%. Other comments included a perception the propositions would be a general dilution of democracy. Councilor Fiebelkorn brought up an issue of whether the requirement for three hearings on a proposed proposition was fulfilled by simply allowing public comment at regular council meetings, particularly when the related comment period does not begin until 9pm. Comments were limited to one minute rather than the usual 2 minutes.

FY25 Budget [R-24-36](#)

At the May 20th meeting the city council passed a \$1.4 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2025. The new fiscal year begins July 1. The budget passed with eight votes in favor (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Peña, Rogers, and Sanchez) and one vote against (Lewis). Councilor Lewis did not express his reasons for the no vote. This resolution was signed by Mayor Keller on May 31, 2024.

Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (MRGHC)

At the May 20th meeting the city council considered a resolution adopting one-year objectives for the City of Albuquerque to meet five-year goals. [R-24-40](#) During this process the council amended the proposed objectives to include a goal related to the MRGHC: "Support and seek funding for the MRGHC's work to create new affordable housing units." The amendment to add this objective passed with eight voting in favor (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, Rogers, and Sanchez) and one voting against (Peña). Councilor Peña offered no comment on her no vote. This objective is listed as Objective 19 under the Human and Family Development goal. This resolution was signed by Mayor Keller on May 31, 2024.

Providing Day Labor for People Experiencing Homelessness [F-24-41](#)

During the June 3 meeting the council passed a resolution proposed by Councilors Champine and Grout creating a pilot program to provide day labor for people experiencing homelessness. The measure passed with eight councilors voting for (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, Rogers, and Sanchez) and one opposed (Peña).