

**Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting  
16 Mar/6 Apr 2026  
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All Councilors attended the 16 Mar and 6 Apr 2026 meetings: Stephanie Telles – 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

**Public Comment**

Members of the public at both meetings were allowed one minute each for public comment.

**Ranked Choice Voting [O-26-13 link](#)**

At the 6 April meeting, the council consider an ordinance which would allow ranked choice voting. Members of the public spoke at both the 16 Mar and the 6 Apr meeting on this issue. Between the two meetings, forty people spoke in favor of ranked choice voting, including LWVCNM President Starlyn Brown. People speaking in favor cited the efficiency and cost savings of avoiding a run off election, the disenfranchisement of active-duty military stationed elsewhere who are unable to participate in a runoff, increased voter participation, winning candidates have majority support, and increased civility of campaigns. Ten people spoke in opposition to ranked choice voting, citing the need to educate voters on the process, a perceived lack of transparency of the process,

The proposed ordinance failed by a vote of three in favor (Fiebelkorn, Rogers, and Telles) to six opposed (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, and Pena).

**Proposed Gross Receipts Tax Increase [O-26-16 link](#)**

At the 16 Mar meeting, Councilor Bassan proposed an ordinance increasing the gross receipts tax (GRT) by 0.4875% which would pay for municipal capital projects, related debt service, and municipal operations. She spoke at length that although she is fundamentally opposed to tax increases, this was the only way she could find to finance the increased costs of the water park project in her district. This proposed ordinance was co-sponsored by Councilor Baca. Several amendments to this proposed ordinance were proposed:

- Amendment 1 (Fiebelkorn) changed the wording to dedicate all the amounts for municipal operations to increasing wages for city employees. Passed unanimously.
- Amendment 2 (Fiebelkorn) changed the wording to divide the GRT increase proceeds between capital projects at 30% and increased employee wages at 70%. Passed by six in favor (Champine, Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, Rogers, and Telles) to three opposed (Baca, Bassan, and Peña).

- Amendment 3 (Fiebelkorn) proposed changing the additional GRT tax rate from 0.4875% to 0.1275%. This passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Fiebelkorn, Lewis, Rogers, and Telles) to four opposed (Baca, Champine, Grout, and Peña).
- Amendment 4 (Grout) proposed that voter approval be required for this gross receipts tax increase. The amendment failed by a vote of two in favor (Grout, Rogers) to seven opposed (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Fiebelkorn, Lewis, Peña, and Telles).

During both the general public comment period and the bill-specific comment period, seventeen people spoke against the GRT increase, citing the regressive nature of the tax, the stifling effect of spending, a negative impact on small business, and pointed out that pay increases for employees should be a part of the annual budget process. Twelve people, primarily current city employees, spoke in favor of the wage increases that would come about by this GRT increase. They pointed out that a wage parity study determined that most ABQ city employees' wages are far below those of comparable cities in the region. As a result, there is high turnover and the city is finding it difficult to fill positions. Some employees are forced to work overtime to fill in the gaps.

The final amended version of the bill failed by a vote of one in favor (Fiebelkorn) to eight opposed (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Peña, and Telles). Councilor Bassan, a sponsor of the bill, stated that she could not vote for the tax increase without adequate proceeds going towards the project in her district.

### **Safer Community Spaces Ordinance** [O-26-15 link](#)

At the 16 Mar meeting, the City Council considered a bill to prohibit the use of city property for immigration enforcement. Twenty-three members of the public spoke in favor of the ordinance, citing the negative impacts they are seeing from immigration enforcement, such as impacts on children in school and decreased use of domestic violence and health care services. Two members of the public, both immigrants, spoke against the ordinance, stating they had followed the legal processes to become citizens. The ordinance passed by a vote of five in favor (Baca, Fiebelkorn, Peña, Rogers, and Telles) and four opposed (Bassan, Champine, Grout, and Lewis). The mayor signed the ordinance on 23 Mar.

### **Charter Amendment on the Fall Ballot** [P-26-1 link](#)

At the 6 Apr meeting, the City Council voted to place a proposition on the ballot to amend the city charter. The charter amendment would change the title of the Director of Albuquerque Community Safety (ACS) to Chief. The amendment would also require the appointment of the ACS Chief be confirmed by the City Council. The proposal passed by a vote of seven in favor (Baca, Bassan, Fiebelkorn, Lewis, Peña, Rogers, and Telles) to two opposed (Champine and Grout).