

**Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting
20 Apr/4 MAY 2026
Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick**

All Councilors attended the 20 Apr and 4 May 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 were allowed two minutes at the 20 Apr meeting and one minute at the 4 May meeting for public comment. Seven members of the public spoke against a proposed budget cut to Flamenco Works. The most recent budget year awarded them \$95K, while the proposed budget proposes \$0. Speakers included parents of dance students and the operators of Flamenco Works, which operates in downtown Albuquerque.

Executive Director for Safety EC-26-82

At the 20 Apr meeting, the Council voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Raul Bujanda as Executive Director of Public Safety. This is a newly created position which oversees the Fire, Police, and Albuquerque Community Safety Departments. Chief Administrative Officer Stengel clarified that although this is a new position, it is not new funding. The funding comes from elimination of the Deputy Administrative Officer position. Several Councilors spoke positively about Mr. Bujanda. Two public commenters questioned the necessity of creating this position. The Deputy Administrative Officer's job description is linked here: [Executive Director of Public Safety](#) .

Chief of Police EC-26-83

At the 20 Apr meeting, the Council voted unanimously to approve Cecily Barker as Chief of Police. She had served as interim Chief, following her predecessor's retirement. Chief Barker is the first female Chief of Police in Albuquerque. Several Councilors spoke highly of the new Chief. After the vote, Councilors rose from their seats to applaud her, with the exception of Councilor Champine, who remained seated.

Cooling System Performance Requirements O-26-47

At the 20 Apr meeting, the Council considered amending an existing ordinance which requires landlords to provide cooling systems for tenants. The amendment, sponsored by Councilor Fiebelkorn, added performance standards that the system be capable of maintaining an indoor temperature at least 15 degrees lower than the outdoor temperature. In proposing this standard, she discussed the recent March heatwave and the many complaints of overheated apartments her office received. Two members of the public also mentioned the March heatwave and the difficulty some residents had. Four property owners spoke in opposition, stating this standard is problematic because some

heating/cooling systems in Albuquerque, particularly older systems, cannot have both systems on at the same time. Once the switch from heating to cooling is made, heating is no longer available for tenants, and that fluctuating spring temperatures can leave tenants in the cold. The proposed standard was amended, by a 5-4 vote, to change to a date-based standard requiring cooling systems to be operational during a cooling season: May 1 through September 30.

Councilor Fiebelkorn attempted to withdraw the bill. After discussions about procedure and consulting the rulebook, Council President Peña determined withdrawal was not allowed. Instead, Councilor Fiebelkorn removed her name as the original bill sponsor, stating the new date-based standard left residents worse off than before. Councilors Champine, Grout, and Bassan added their names as new sponsors and the Cooling System Performance Requirement amendment passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, and Peña) to four opposed (Baca, Fiebelkorn, Rogers, and Telles).

Mayor Keller vetoed the bill on 1 May. However, at the 4 May Council meeting, the Council failed to override the veto. Link to ordinance history and language: [O-26-47](#)

Enhanced Service and Safety Zone Ordinance O-26-14

At the 4 May Council meeting, the Council passed an ordinance sponsored by Councilor Baca which prohibits sitting, sleeping, laying, or camping on public streets, alleys, or sidewalks within an established Enhanced Service and Safety Zone. The ordinance establishes criteria by which the mayor designates the zone which is then approved by the City Council. The penalty for sitting, sleeping, laying, or camping is a fine up to \$500 or up to 90 days in jail. (Revised Ordinances of Albuquerque Section 1-1-99 General Penalty).

Public comment included four individuals who spoke in favor of this ordinance, stating their downtown properties or businesses are negatively impacted by people who sit, sleep, and even defecate nearby. Nine individuals spoke in opposition of the ordinance, asserting that laws already exist to address these issues, that sweeps of encampments already happen which have not fixed the overall problem, and that this is criminalization of poverty.

The ordinance passed by a vote of 6-3, a veto-proof majority. Votes in favor: Baca, Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Peña. Votes opposed: Fiebelkorn, Rogers, Telles. Link to ordinance history and language: [O-26-14](#)