

CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 P.M., COMMISSION CHAMBERS

JANUARY 31, 2017

RICHARD BOSS, MAYOR	AL HERNANDEZ, MAYOR PRO-TEM
JASON BALDWIN, COMMISSIONER	ERICA MARTIN, COMMISSIONER
NADIA SIKES, COMMISSIONER	MAGGIE PALUCH, ACTING CITY MANAGER
JENNY TURNBULL, COMMISSIONER	CANON STEVENS, INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY
SUSAN PAYNE, COMMISSIONER	RACHEL HUGHS, CITY CLERK

Mayor Boss said he wanted to make a personal statement, this is him personally and not the Commission. He stated “He spent many hours researching why the Department of Energy is pursuing this technology for disposal of high level nuclear waste. This Country spent billions of dollars to develop a storage facility in Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Americans were told that this investment would be a long term solution to the critical problem of high level waste, nuclear waste disposal. From about 2002 until 2008, the U.S. had invested 9 billion dollars in the Yucca Mountain Project. Close to one half billion dollars of that amount was spent on a special chamber drilling tool. That special designed equipment is parked in one of the tunnels of Yucca Mountain. During the 2008 Presidential Campaign, President Obama promised to abandon the Yucca Mountain Project to enlist the support of Senator Harry Reid in the 2008 Primary Campaign and he honored that pledge, he funded that project when he became President. Harry Reid and others were against nuclear waste in the Nevada desert. This is the classic “Not in my Back Yard”. In 2010, with the support and request of Senator Reid, then President Barack Obama signed an executive order to stop development of Yucca Mountain as a high level nuclear waste depository. The program was simply defunded with the whisk of a pen. President Obama directed the DOE to come up with an alternative site or method for disposal of high level radioactive waste. In October of 2011, a workshop was held in Albuquerque. The workshop attendees were scientists from Sandia National Lab and other facilities and Universities in our Country. The workshop, I believe, solidified the deep borehole concept for disposal of high level nuclear waste. As a result of that workshop and other discussions, we are here tonight, hearing why we should support a deep borehole in our backyard. The estimated cost of this project is 35 million dollars. I don’t believe Otero County would receive that much of an economic benefit. Our part will be minimal. I could not find an estimated total cost of the overall deep borehole disposal method, but I am sure it is a very large number.

Currently, high level radioactive waste from nuclear power utility plants is stored on-site, in pools of water contained in a heavy fortified steel and concrete cast. The high level radioactive waste and government waste creation, remains at their respective research labs. The waste is piling up at an ever increasing rate. There have been cases where waste has leaked into our environment. The Department of Energy said that even if deep borehole disposal becomes a reality, it will still want to construct the traditional geologic repository to replace something like Yucca Mountain. I am not a nuclear scientist or geologist, I am merely a retired accountant and home builder, and however, I have seen our Government in action over many years. I have seen the power of the pen in the President's hand. An executive order can override almost any directive or agreement entered into by our Government. We have seen the use of the pen by our recently passed President, and we are seeing it now by our current President. Quite frankly, I would have very little confidence that an agreement signed by the DOE guaranteeing that the disposal of test borehole would never receive high level of nuclear waste. My thoughts regarding this matter are much like Senator Reid's and others. I don't want to Google Alamogordo, New Mexico on my computer and read "Home of the first test borehole or high level nuclear waste". I do believe the hole would eventually be used for waste disposal, in spite of the promises and agreements. I don't want to pick up the Alamogordo Daily News and read the headline article, like what happened in our WIPP site in Carlsbad, NM, about an accident in handling the waste, or an accident from the source of the waste to the disposal site. In conclusion, I personally do not support the proposed Deep Borehole subsurface research project in Otero County. I believe a better option would be for our current President Trump, to pull out his pen, reactivate Yucca Mountain storage facility. Instead of the pen, a novel approach would be to Congress as deemed by our Constitution, this is a disposal infrastructure that already exists, Yucca Mountain is. Many billions of tax dollars would be saved, the savings could be utilized to reduce our debt, build new roads, repair dams and bridges, support our Veteran's in war. I believe New Mexico has contributed its share of support to nuclear programs. We provided a site for transuranic waste at WIPP in Carlsbad. We have provided a place for Sandia Labs to develop and research nuclear technologies. We provided a site for the first test of the Atomic bomb in 1945. We've done our share".