



MINUTES SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

January 27, 2023

City of Watsonville
Civic Plaza Community Rooms
275 Main Street, Top Floor

8:35 a.m.

Mayor Montesino, and Council Members Dutra and Quiroz-Carter were present. Members Clark, Orozco, Parker, and Salcido were absent.

Also present were Senator John Laird (17th Senate District), District Representative Jonathan Engleman for Senator Laird, Congressional Staffers James Schwab, Zahra Hajee and Margaret Arechiga for U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, Assembly Member Robert Rivas (30th Assembly District), District Director Dominic Dursa for Assembly Member Robert Rivas, and Congressional Staffer Christian Mora for Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (18th Congressional District).

Staff members present were City Manager Mendez, City Clerk Ortiz, Assistant City Manager Vides, Interim Public Works & Utilities Director Vides, Police Chief Zamora, Fire Chief Lopez, Interim Administrative Services Director Duran, Community Development Director Merriam, IT Director Gill, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Library Director Martinez, Airport Director Williams, Deputy City Manager Manning, Assistant Community Development Director Allen, Principal Planner Orbach, Principal Planner Meek, Assistant Planner Madrigal, Administrative Analyst Ortiz, Housing Manager Landaverry, Environmental Projects Manager Yasbek, Multimedia & Communications Analyst Vasquez, Public Information Officer Pulido, JEA & Associates President Arriaga, JEA & Associates Chief Legislative Representative Johnson, and Deputy City Clerk Pacheco.

1. MAYOR'S WELCOME

4. LEGISLATORS PRESENTATIONS & QUESTIONS

Senator Laird spoke about continuing efforts to move forward with the Pájaro River Levee Restoration Project and the impact of recent flooding due to storms. He spoke about potential challenges with the State's budget and efforts by Governor Newsom to mitigate possible negative impacts. He provided details on bills he had recently introduced and gave an overview of funding and legislation efforts that would continue into the year.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

3. STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1) City Manager "State of Watsonville"

City Manager Mendez spoke about the impact of recent storms, staff response, and community organizations and residents that provided assistance. He spoke about the City's response to the pandemic, and other recent challenges and provided an overview of continuing goals, including economic development,

expanding services, and completion of the 2050 General Plan and the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan.

2) Roads & Infrastructure

Environmental Sustainability Manager McCloud spoke about the importance of legislation, grant funding, climate justice and resiliency in order to maintain, repair, and improve the City's infrastructure.

Assemblymember Rivas expressed appreciation for the City's continuing efforts to bring positive and meaningful change for its residents. He spoke about continuing work to address homelessness, nutrition, and infrastructure needs across California. He stated addressing climate change was a priority for legislators.

Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Fontes spoke about the City's primary funding sources for transportation related projects and challenges on meeting competitive grant funding requirements due to the amount of staff time needed to complete the extensive applications. He requested legislators consider reducing the number of requirements and thanked them for their efforts in continuing to assist the City.

3) Homelessness

Police Chief Zamora spoke about challenges related to homelessness and lack of sufficient mental health services. He stated the importance of continued collaboration by local government and state legislators to address these issues.

4) Cyber Security

IT Director Gill spoke about the importance of cybersecurity and challenges in continued monitoring of concern areas, including the complexity of the grant application process.

4. LEGISLATORS PRESENTATIONS & QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Congressional Staffer James Schwab spoke about efforts to continue assisting in addressing the City's needs through legislation.

Congressional Staffer Zahra Hajee encouraged staff to contact Senator Padilla's office during the storm recovery process and stated the Senator was committed to continue advocating for resources and assistance for the City.

Congressional Aide Repass stated Congressman Panetta's office was exploring potential funding to assist with the purchase of Watsonville Community Hospital. He stated they were working to obtain additional funding for the Pájaro River Levee Restoration project. He spoke about the approval of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Santa Cruz County District 4 Supervisor Felipe Hernandez spoke about flood recovery efforts and requested an update regarding pending reimbursements from FEMA. He spoke about efforts to address homelessness, such as Project Home Key, and the importance of expanding local resources in an effort to reduce travel and address climate change.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Eduardo Montesino, Mayor

ATTEST:

Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk

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