

## MINUTES SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL, SUCCESSOR HOUSING AGENCY, & SUCCESSOR AGENCY MEETING

January 26, 2024

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

### **8:45 a.m.**

Mayor Quiroz-Carter, Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco, and Council Members Clark, Dutra (arrived at 8:59 a.m.), and Parker were present. Members Montesino and Salcido were absent.

Also present were California State Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas (29<sup>th</sup> District), Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (18<sup>th</sup> District), Margaret Arechiga for Senator Alex Padilla, Eileen Cross for Senator John Laird (17<sup>th</sup> District), JEA & Associates President John Arriaga, JEA & Associates Chief Legislative Representative Laurie Johnson, and Santa Cruz County 4<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Felipe Hernandez.

Staff members present were City Manager Mendez, City Clerk Ortiz, Assistant City Manager Vides, Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, Police Chief Zamora, Fire Chief Lopez, Administrative Services Director Duran, Airport Director Williams, I.T. Director Gill, Community Development Director Merriam, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Library Director Martinez, Deputy City Manager Manning, Assistant Community Development Director Meek, Principal Planner Orbach, Administrative Analyst Murillo, Associate Planner Carmona, Housing Manager Landaverry, Project Manager Peralta, Building Official DeSante, Assistant Public Works & Utilities Director Green, Environmental Sustainability Manager McCloud, Financial Analyst Diaz, Police Sergeant Trujillo, Police Officer Garcia, Police Officer Larios, Public Information Officer Pulido, and Deputy City Clerk Pacheco.

1. **MAYOR'S WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**
2. **STAFF PRESENTATIONS (No Action Required)**

#### **1) State of the City Presentation by City Manager Mendez**

City Manager Mendez spoke about the City's priorities, including economic development, public safety, fiscal health, bringing new businesses to Watsonville, and housing. He spoke about efforts such as the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan and the Airport Master Plan, and the focus on engaging the City's youth. He highlighted state and federal funding received over the past year and the sales tax measure approved during the last election, and the ways in which funding generated would be used.

#### **2) Presentation on Parks & Community Services by Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib**

Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib spoke about the City's goals regarding supporting funding efforts for park improvements, equitable access to parks, and opposing legislation that would harm parks and recreation services. He spoke about upgrades that

would be made to Ramsay Park and the City Plaza, deferred maintenance in City parks, and requested support for Assembly Bill (AB) 1567 which would prioritize funding for park renovation projects.

**3) Presentation on Economic Development by Community Development Director Merriam**

Community Development Director Merriam spoke about the General Plan Update and challenges with compatible Airport land uses. She requested legislative support for allowing additional discretion to interpret the California Airport Land Use Planning Handbook, for expediting the Main Street Road diet and converting two City streets to two-way, both of which would require intervention from CalTrans.

**4) Presentation on Water Infrastructure and Environmental Resources by Environmental Sustainability Manager McCloud**

Environmental Sustainability Manager McCloud thanked State and Federal legislation for their support of the Pajaro River Levee Improvement project. She spoke about the need to increase funding for hexavalent chromium maximum contaminant level, affordability, and compliance efforts and requested support for AB 1567 and Senate Bill (SB) 385. She requested the State review achievable compliance periods for the advanced clean fleet rule, spoke in support of Senator Padilla's Low-Income Household Water Assistance program and requested funding improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**3. LEGISLATORS PRESENTATIONS & QUESTIONS (No Action Required)**

**Presentations by City's Local Legislators Regarding Pending & Recent State & Federal Legislative Matters**

Congresswoman Logren spoke about efforts to obtain funding for the community, about the progress of the Pajaro River Levee Improvement project, and stated she would be requesting funding for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She spoke about benefits of the Broadband Equity Access project and efforts to continue funding it and funding for transportation projects. She stated she had authored the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, which would give legal status to undocumented farmworkers.

State Assembly Speaker Rivas spoke about the State's budget challenges and repercussions for residents such as climate change impacts including flooding, and about the importance of equitably representation at the State level. He highlighted partnerships with various legislators over the years to invest funds to improve the communities they serve.

Margaret Arechiga spoke about the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act that Senator Padilla was seeking support for.

Eileen Cross stated Senator Laird had experience with budget deficits and would be working on navigating challenges in the coming year. She reaffirmed the Senator's support for Watsonville Community Hospital and spoke about fundraising efforts. She stated Senator Laird would remain alert regarding future needs for the Pajaro River Levee Improvement project and would prioritize exploring solutions for homelessness across the State.

Santa Cruz County 4<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Hernandez thanked the legislators and their staff for being accessible and collaborating on City and County projects. He thanked City staff for their support with County clean up efforts. He spoke about the opening of the South County Resource

Center and the acquisition of more property to offer additional County resources and allow staff to work and live locally. He highlighted efforts to address flooding concerns, resurface local County roads, and spoke about challenges faced due to various emergency situations including the pandemic, fires, and flooding.

In answering Member Dutra, State Assembly Speaker Rivas spoke about efforts to prioritize housing for middle income residents in relation to AB 1287 and challenges in doing so.

Member Dutra spoke about the importance of building housing for middle income residents, the City's urban limit line which was renewed during the last election, and challenges with finding space to construct single family homes.

In answering Member Dutra, State Assembly Speaker Rivas stated staff would reach out to answer questions regarding distribution of funding for infrastructure improvements at the local level.

Congresswoman Lofgren, in answering Member Dutra, spoke about opportunities for federal funding to address mental health and addiction concerns. She spoke about the need for a wide range of services to address homelessness.

In answering Member Dutra, State Assembly Speaker Rivas spoke about exploring ways to increase services and obtain funding to address homelessness, mental health, addiction, and other housing needs.

Member Dutra invited the legislators and their staff to attend the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Council meeting on exploring solutions for homelessness.

Congresswoman Lofgren spoke about provisions allowing Medi-Cal funding to be utilized for housing dedicated to helping treat mental health issues.

Santa Cruz County 4<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Hernandez spoke about a partnership with Pajaro Valley Health Care District to open mental health services and youth crises centers in the area, and about clean-ups in the Corralitos Creek area.

Member Dutra stated he was not in support of the proposed tiny homes project at the Westview Presbyterian Church.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

ATTEST:

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Vanessa Quiroz-Carter, Mayor

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Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk

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