

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

March 23, 2024

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

**9:03 a.m.**

**1. ROLL CALL**

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

Staff members present were City Manager Mendez, City Clerk Ortiz, Assistant City Attorney Bazzano, Assistant City Manager Vides, Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, Police Chief Zamora, Fire Battalion Chief Goulding, Community Development Director Merriam, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Housing Manager Landaverry, Public Information Officer Pulido, and Deputy City Clerk Pacheco.

Also present were US Interagency Council on Homeless Senior Regional Advisor Helene Schneider, County of Santa Cruz Director for the Housing for Health Division Robert Ratner, Community Action Board Santa Cruz County (CAB) Homelessness Prevention and Intervention Services (HIPS) Interim Administrative Director Emily Watson, and CAB HIPS Programs Coordinator Elyssa Sanchez.

**1.a. MOTION TO EXCUSE ABSENT COUNCIL MEMBER(S) – None**

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

**2.a. WORKSHOP TO EVALUATE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN WATSONVILLE &  
CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A STRATEGIC PLAN**

***Connecting Federal Resources to Local Efforts***

**Report by Helene Schneider, Senior Regional Advisor, US Interagency Council on Homeless**

**Current Efforts by City and The Cost**

***Report by the following staff:***

Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg

Police Chief Zamora

Fire Battalion Chief Goulding

Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib

Library Director Martinez

Community Development Director Merriam

**Breakout Session – How has the Situation Affected our Community?**

## **County of Santa Cruz Housing for Health Partnership**

### ***Report by Robert Ratner, Director for the Housing for Health Division, County of Santa Cruz***

In answering Member Montesino, Housing for Health Division Director Ratner spoke about Project Homekey and potential for additional funding.

Housing for Health Division Director Ratner, in answering Member Dutra, spoke about the importance of fostering trust and providing options for housing to better assist the homeless.

Member Dutra expressed concerns with the mental health and addiction aspects related to homelessness and stated both needed to be addressed in conjunction with providing housing.

In answering Member Dutra, Housing for Health Division Director Ratner spoke about challenges with providing treatment for those that needed it, about the importance of improving the structure of services, and the need for better collaboration among agencies providing services.

## **Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County**

### ***Report by CAB HIPS Interim Administrative Director Emily Watson and CAB HIPS Programs Coordinator Elyssa Sanchez***

## **Components of a Homeless Strategic Plan**

### **Breakout Exercise – What are the Opportunities to Improve the Situation?**

#### **Public Input**

Eric Sturm requested a mission statement prior to the preparation of a Homeless Strategic Plan.

Lieutenant Nayeli Gonzalez, Salvation Army, spoke about exploring options for those utilizing their shelter after its impending closure and expressed concerns that they would lose access to necessary services.

Bernie Gomez, District 1, spoke about establishing the proper infrastructure to provide services to homeless people and the need for mental health services.

Maria Elena de la Garza, CAB Chief Executive Officer, expressed concern over the impending closure of the Salvation Army shelter, spoke about the importance of the tiny homes project, the need for continuing resources, in support of the Watsonville Works program, and about homeless residents helping others during the flood. She spoke about the positive impact CAB had seen since the new restrooms had been installed at the City Plaza.

#### **Council Questions**

In answering Member Clark, Housing for Health Division Director Ratner spoke about funding from Proposition 1 potentially being utilized for treatment facilities and supportive housing. He expressed concerns with availability of locations, funds, and staffing to build and run those facilities.

Mayor Quiroz-Carter spoke about experiencing homelessness as a child and the importance of addressing homelessness and seeking solutions at all levels.

Member Dutra spoke about seeking solutions for the increase in homelessness throughout the City and taking care of the community.

Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco stated the diversity of the homeless population required exploring multiple solutions. She spoke about the potential for seeking Federal funding, keeping track of service referrals, and addressing the need for more housing.

### **Recap and Next Steps**

### **3. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Vanessa Quiroz-Carter, Mayor

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Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk

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