

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ (CM)

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE CONFIRMING AND CLARIFYING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL HAS DIRECTED STAFF TO INITIATE THE PROCESSES FOR POTENTIAL DEACTIVATION OF MUNICIPAL AIRPORT RUNWAY 9/27 (CROSSWIND RUNWAY), AND HAS NOT DECIDED TO DEACTIVATE OR COMMITTED TO DEACTIVATING THE CROSSWIND RUNWAY**

**WHEREAS**, on March 19, 2024, at a regularly scheduled and noticed meeting, the Watsonville City Council discussed Item 12a: “Direction on the Future of Watsonville Municipal Airport Runway 9/27,” which is also known as the Crosswind Runway; and

**WHEREAS**, the discussion included an extensive presentation by City staff, which explained the various procedural steps required before the City could decide to shorten or deactivate the Crosswind Runway, Municipal Airport Runway 9/27 (“Runway”), including but not limited to procedures delineated by the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) and performing an analysis and preparation of any documents required by the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and the National Environmental Quality Act (“NEPA”). City staff repeatedly noted that deactivating a runway is a years-long and complicated process, of which the March 19 process and associated direction from the City Council were only the beginning and that, should Council wish to further consider shortening or deactivating the Runway, staff would seek further clarification on the required procedures and costs associated with this action and return to Council with suggested next steps; and

**WHEREAS**, at the March 19 meeting, following staff presentations and public comment, Councilmember Montesino made a motion to deactivate the Runway, which was seconded by Councilmember Salcido. City Attorney Samantha Zutler stated that she had not heard the motion and asked if the motion was to give direction to staff to explore deactivation of the runway, and Councilmember Montesino confirmed that it

was by nodding his head affirmatively (as reflected in the Video of the Meeting at 2:32, which Video is located online at <https://pub-cityofwatsonville.escribemeetings.com/Players/ISIStandAlonePlayer.aspx?Id=d0349002-2283-4dbe-9375-194c37b9fcf4>); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council discussed the motion, as clarified by Councilmember Montesino in response to the City Attorney’s question, and gave direction to staff to explore deactivating the Runway, and return to Council for discussion of next steps, and ultimately passed the motion accordingly, by a 4 to 3 vote (see, e.g. 2:32, 2:40, 3:14, 3:16-3:18 of the Meeting Video identified above); and

**WHEREAS**, on April 22, 2024, the Watsonville Pilots Association (“WPA”) notified the City Council that the WPA intended to sue the City regarding what the Watsonville Pilots Association characterized as a Council “motion to close Runway 9-27”; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to the notification from the WPA, counsel for the City explained, in writing, to the WPA – twice, with citations to the record – that the Council had not decided to deactivate the runway and, instead, had given direction to staff to explore deactivation of the runway and to bring back the item for future discussion; and

**WHEREAS**, nevertheless and despite the above, WPA filed and on May 6, 2024, served the City with a lawsuit alleging that the Council decided to deactivate the Runway, in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act and other law, including without limitation by allegedly deciding to deactivate the Runway before conducting requisite environmental review (*Watsonville Pilots Association v. City of Watsonville*, Santa Cruz County Superior Court Case No. 24CV01156). WPA prays for writs of mandate ordering the City Council to set aside the motion discussed above and an

order enjoining the City from pursuing processes for potential deactivation of the Runway.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, AS FOLLOWS:**

The City Council has not made a determination to deactivate Watsonville Municipal Airport Runway 9/27. It did not do so at the City Council meeting on March 19, 2024, and it has not done so since or prior thereto. The Council has not taken any action that commits the City to deactivation of the Runway. To date, the Council has given direction to staff to explore the procedures required for deactivation of the Runway, and to return to the Council for a discussion of those procedures. If, at a future meeting, the City Council makes a decision to deactivate the Runway, it will only do so after all required procedures, including but not limited to any required analysis under CEQA and NEPA.

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