



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

October 5, 2024

City of Watsonville
Community Rooms
275 Main Street, Top Floor

9:05 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Mayor Quiroz-Carter, Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco, and Council Members Clark (left at 12:20 p.m.), Dutra, Montesino, Parker, and Salcido were present.

Staff members present were City Manager Vides, City Clerk Ortiz, Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, Administrative Services Director Duran, Community Development Director Merriam, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Library Director Martinez, Airport Director Williams, Deputy City Manager Manning, Housing Manager Landaverry, Police Captain Radich, Division Fire Chief Avila, Battalion Fire Chief Schaefer, Police Services Specialist Navarro, Multimedia and Communications Analyst Vasquez and Deputy City Clerk Pacheco.

Others present were Burke, Williams, & Sorensen Attorney Mary Wagner, Human Services Department Housing for Health Division Director Robert Ratner, and Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools Faris Sabbah.

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

2. NEW BUSINESS

2.a. WORKSHOP TO ESTABLISH AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS HOMELSSNESS IN WATSONVILLE

The first part of the staff presentation was given by City Manager Vides, Santa Cruz County Human Services Department Housing for Health Division Director Ratner, Attorney Wagner, Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, Police Captain Radich, Division Fire Chief Avila, Parks & Community Services Director Calubaquib, Library Director Martinez and Community Development Director Merriam.

Breakout Group 1 – What does solving this homelessness problem in our community mean to you?

In answering Member Montesino, Police Captain Radich spoke about Police's participation in the recent Pajaro levee clean-up by City staff.

Police Captain Radich, in answering Member Salcido, spoke about Police and Fire's response to drug overdoses and use of Narcan, including among the homeless population. City Manager Vides added that the County Health Department performed outreach at the levee, including distribution of Narcan kits. She stated that data was tracked and could be provided to Council.

In answering Member Parker, Library Director Martinez, Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, and Police Captain Radich spoke about the funds used for homelessness response by each of their departments.

Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg, in answering Member Parker, stated there were funds dedicated to a Field Services crew and spoke about challenges due to increased need for response.

City Manager Vides added that the funds dedicated to Field Services, including encampment cleanup, were not meeting the City's current needs and spoke about challenges with funding.

In answering Member Parker, Division Fire Chief Avila spoke about Fire's costs for homelessness response.

City Manager Vides, in answering Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco, spoke about taking into consideration homelessness among Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) students in preparing the City's action plan.

In answering Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco, Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools Sabbah spoke about the number of PVUSD students experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Staff presentation continued by Housing Manager Landaverry.

Breakout Group 2 – Opportunities to enhance prevention

Staff presentation continued by Housing Manager Landaverry.

Breakout Group 3 – Opportunities to enhance housing

Staff presentation was continued by Public Works & Utilities Director Lindberg and Police Captain Radich.

Breakout Group 4 – Opportunities for management and enforcement

Staff presentation continued by Library Director Martinez and Police Captain Radich.

Breakout Group 5 - Opportunities to enhance services and resources

Staff presentation continued by City Manager Vides.

Member Parker spoke about the need for more funding to address homelessness. She spoke in support of allocating funds to help local students and families experiencing homelessness.

Member Salcido expressed interest in exploring rent control ordinances and rental increase reporting tools.

Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco spoke in support of collaborating with PVUSD to provide resources for students experiencing homelessness. She spoke about the importance of collaboration among various organizations. She requested exploring expansion of the Police's PSS Pilot Program – Homeless Navigator Collaborative with Community Action Board Santa Cruz County.

Member Dutra spoke about the need to address the mental health and addiction aspects contributing to homelessness in addition to providing housing. He spoke about the success of youth prevention programs and applying the same principles to address homelessness.

Member Montesino stated community education and engagement was necessary to address homelessness. He spoke about collaborating with other organizations, including non-profits and other municipalities, to ensure cohesive efforts.

Mayor Quiroz-Carter spoke about the importance of collaboration with other organizations and cities. She spoke about providing support for students experiencing homelessness.

Staff presentation continued by City Manager Vides.

Member Parker spoke about pursuing funding opportunities for addressing homelessness.

Member Montesino stated it was important to have a spending plan to pursue funding opportunities.

Mayor Quiroz-Carter expressed interest in pursuing funding for critical case management, exploring rent control ordinances, pursuing State and Federal funding, mixed zoning opportunities, transitional housing, navigation centers with wraparound services and hiring a City homeless coordinator.

In answering Mayor Pro Tempore Orozco, Attorney Wagner spoke about the possibility of adding local preference provisions to the City's affordable housing ordinance.

Attorney Wagner, in answering Member Montesino, spoke about rent control ordinances in other jurisdictions.

In answering Member Salcido, Attorney Wagner spoke about rent increase oversight and reporting.

Attorney Wagner, in answering Member Salcido, spoke about ordinances regarding homeless transport.

In answering Member Montesino, Attorney Wagner spoke about challenges with affordable for-sale housing opportunities and potential for incentivizing developers to build for-sale housing.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Vanessa Quiroz-Carter, Mayor

ATTEST:

Irwin I. Ortiz, City Clerk