

# Agenda Report



**MEETING DATE:** Wednesday, November 6, 2024

**TO:** Measure Y Oversight Committee

**FROM:** POLICE CHIEF ZAMORA

**SUBJECT:** WATSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT STATUS REPORT –  
JULY TO DECEMBER 2024

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## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

It is recommended that the Revenue Measure Oversight Committee accept by motion the Watsonville Police Department status report for July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On June 3, 2014, Measure G was approved by the voters to establish a one-half cent local sales tax with a seven-year sunset clause. That measure provided a secure, local revenue stream to the City of Watsonville that was used entirely to provide additional police and fire personnel, update public safety equipment, facilities and services, and enhance youth violence prevention programs to protect our community. On March 3, 2020, the voters approved Measure Y (formally known as Measure G) to renew the existing one-half cent local sales tax to maintain adequate staffing levels of firefighters and police, continue funding of youth prevention and development programs, and include the Parks and Community Services Department as a new partner to the Police and Fire Departments.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Watsonville Police Department (WPD) strives to create a healthy, safe and thriving Watsonville through our mission: committing ourselves to public safety through engagement, education, enforcement, and professional development by impacting our community in positive ways, every day, through strong relationship and problem solving. WPD is dedicated in providing public safety to the community using the core values of character, competency, compassion and communication. The department will continue to provide services and prioritize the safety and well-being of the Watsonville community.

This public safety sales tax measure supports the WPD's mission by funding sworn and professional personnel, it allows the department to continue to maintain adequate police emergency response times; neighborhood patrols; and youth intervention and suppression efforts. In addition, the sales tax continues to support the upgrade of equipment and technology to help solve crimes and enhance community services while increasing efficiency.

Below is a list of the personnel funded by the local sales tax:

<b>Position</b>	<b># of Positions July – December 2024</b>	<b>Status</b>
Police Officers	7	4 Filled
Police Service Specialist	1	Filled
Property & Evidence Technician	1	Filled
Crime Analyst	1	Filled
Youth Specialist	1	Filled
Administrative Analyst	1	Filled
Communications & Media Assistant	1	Filled
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	

The WPD continues to enhance community engagement programming to foster trust and develop coordinated efforts with the community and local nonprofits. During the reporting period, the WPD organized or will be organizing the following events:

- Agua con la Chota: an educational program that is aimed at engaging local farm workers to speak about topics that matter to them. This builds stronger community relationships with local farmworkers, sponsors and collaborating non-profit organizations.
- Cadet Program: provides youth with the opportunity to explore the law enforcement field as a possible career choice. This program was placed on hold due to the pandemic, however, the WPD started recruiting new members.
- WPD Youth Academy: offers Watsonville youth the opportunity to gain basic knowledge of the law enforcement field, develop life skills, build confidence and become empowered.

Measure Y also funds trainings, facility maintenance, vehicles, specialized department equipment and technology:

- Trainings continue to help officers respond to the needs of the community. Trainings such as classes for canines and their handlers; canines can search large areas and buildings in a relatively short period of time, assist with apprehension of suspects and are able to detect narcotics. Detectives attend classes that helps them prepare legal demands to lawfully obtain evidence and intelligence located in cellular phones, phone company records, and third-party data sources that assist with investigations. In addition, sworn personnel participated in a post-certified first aid training course that allowed them to get certified in CPR and First Aid.
- Specialized department equipment and technology includes:
  - Unmanned aerial systems (UAS/Drones), equipment used to help solve crime, as well as protect life and property. Some of the uses include search and rescue, photographic evidence collection, overwatch during emergency incidents, response to calls for service, accident and crime scene reconstructions.
  - DORS, a desk online reporting system that allows community members to report crimes online. DORS has improved response times because it allows

- officers to attend to higher priority calls and it provides the community with a secure online reporting system that's available 24/7.
- Cellebrite Inc, software that allows law enforcement to have access to critical digital evidence from smartphones to uncover leads faster and expedite case resolution.

### **Caminos hacia el Éxito**

Measure Y funds the Caminos hacia el Éxito Program, a diversion program for Watsonville youth who commit a first offense (misdemeanor), it uses evidence-based approaches to hold the youth accountable for their actions. Eligible youth and their families are provided with evidence-based activities such as case management, cognitive behavior therapy, counseling, Teen Peer Court/Restorative Circles, Neighborhood Accountability Board, mentoring, pro-social activities and Guiding Good Choices, a program proven to reduce juvenile delinquency that improves parents' skills and bonding. To date, 254 youth have accepted to participate in Caminos under the Measure Y funding and 201 have successfully completed the program. Of the youth that completed the program successfully, 89% remain arrest free. The WPD attributes the success of this program to the strong collaboration with our partners: Pájaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Inc., Santa Cruz County Office of Education, Police Activities League, Pájaro Valley Unified School District and the County of Santa Cruz Probation Department.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact. Measure Y funds are being utilized as directed by the voters.

### **ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

No reasonable alternatives are known at this time.

### **ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

None.