



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, May 26, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: POLICE CHIEF HONDA

SUBJECT: WATSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT STATUS REPORT –
JANUARY TO JUNE 2021

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

Status report for the Watsonville Police Department to the Revenue Oversight Committee.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Motion accepting the Watsonville Police Department status report for January 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

On March 3, 2020, the voters approved Measure Y (formally known as Measure G) to renew the existing local sales tax to maintain adequate staffing levels of firefighters and police, continue funding youth prevention and development programs, and include the Parks & Community Services Department as a new partner to the Police and Fire Departments. Since the Measure was approved, the Watsonville Police Department (WPD) continues its commitment to public safety through engagement, education, enforcement and professional development by impacting the community in positive ways, every day, through strong relationships and problem solving.

The sales tax measure helps maintain adequate staffing levels and has improved the efficiency of the police divisions by funding the following personnel:

- 7 Police Officers, these officers support the coverage needed to respond to calls for service from the community.
- Police Service Specialist, this position supports the patrol officers by responding to calls for service involving past tense property related crimes, assisting with traffic control, road closures, towing vehicles and helping search for missing persons.
- Property and Evidence Technician, assists in receiving, processing, accounting and warehousing property and evidence.
- Crime Analyst, helps the investigation unit on existing cases and interprets data to help law enforcement intervene in crime patterns, trends and hot spots.
- Youth Specialist, supports the youth and families participating in the Caminos hacia el Éxito program by determining eligibility, conducting assessments and referring participants to the appropriate resources.

During the reporting period, Measure Y continued to fund trainings, vehicles, specialized equipment and technology:

- Training personnel is essential in order to maintain high standards and increase the effectiveness and safety of the department and community. Trainings funded during the reporting period include field training officer courses, emergency vehicle operations center (EVOC) instructor courses, critical incident response/de-escalation and the basic police academy for 3 newly hired police officer trainees.
- Replacing old, high-mileage vehicles with major service issues is a priority for the department, the following vehicles were purchased: a motorcycle for the traffic unit and (2) patrol vehicles along with the equipment needed to outfit them.
- Specialized department equipment and technology includes:
 - Bulletproof vests, protective equipment that is uniquely fitted to the individual police officer. Timely replacement and maintenance of these vests is crucial to maintain the required level of protection; they are replaced when damaged or every 5 years due to the lifespan. The WPD has a Bulletproof Vest Grant that funds 50% of the vests but the other 50% is funded by Measure Y, during the reporting period, 13 bulletproof vests were purchased.
 - The Desk Officer Reporting System (DORS) has enhanced community service by enabling anyone to file a report online, its available 24/7 and a convenient option for residents. Some of the online reports that can be filed include lost property, theft, vehicle burglary and harassing phone calls.
 - Accurint, a cutting-edge investigative technology that can expedite the identification of people and locations by providing instant access to a comprehensive database of public records that would ordinarily take days to collect. The crime analyst uses this tool to help the detectives in reducing investigation time and solving crimes.

Crisis Assessment Response & Engagement Team (CARE): is a collaborative effort between the Watsonville Police Department and the County of Santa Cruz Behavioral Health Services. The mission is to provide a coordinated and compassionate response to individuals and families affected by mental illness. This team consists of two (2) full time Watsonville police officers and a mental health clinician. Some of the services include assessments, crisis intervention, linkage to ongoing primary care, behavioral health and substance abuse.

Caminos hacia el Éxito (Caminos): is a juvenile diversion program for first time offenders who commit a first offense (misdemeanor). It uses evidence-based approaches to hold youth accountable for their actions, approaches such as counseling, case management and pro-social activities among others. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the mental health of the Caminos youth and their families, case managers noticed increased symptoms of depression, anxiety and trauma. In order to address some of these symptoms beyond the existing services, the Caminos team incorporated yoga classes for the youth. Also, in partnership with Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, the youth participated in "Wellness Through Turbulence Workshops", which offered six (6) interactive workshops that focused on building and understanding healthy relationships, coping with stress, saving money, education and motivation. In April 2021, the Caminos team organized a virtual art

night attended by youth and their parents. These events had positive benefits for the participants, by reducing stress and reinforcing positive interactions between youth and their parents. Measure Y has funded the services provided to 174 youth. However, since the inception of the program, 508 youth have participated and of those who successfully completed the program, 86% have not re-offended.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The Watsonville City Council made Public Safety a priority in the Strategic Plan and the Watsonville Police Department has used the local sales tax to support this priority. The personnel, public safety equipment and youth programming has enhanced the services provided to the Watsonville community.

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.