

EXHIBIT A
SEPARATION AGREEMENT

In Process

SEPARATION AGREEMENT

1. PARTIES

This Separation Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "AGREEMENT") is entered into by and between the City of Watsonville, a California municipal corporation and general law city (hereinafter referred to as "CITY"), and Rene Mendez, an individual (hereinafter referred to as "EMPLOYEE").

2. RECITALS

2.1. EMPLOYEE was hired by CITY as its permanent City Manager, to serve at the pleasure of the City Council, pursuant to an Employment Agreement for the Position of City Manager made and entered into April ____, 2022 ("EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT").

2.2. CITY and EMPLOYEE desire that EMPLOYEE resign and enter into this AGREEMENT whereby EMPLOYEE receives severance compensation in exchange for executing this AGREEMENT including a general release and waiver of any and all claims that EMPLOYEE may have against CITY, including but not limited to its elected and non-elected officials, employees, attorneys, and agents. Accordingly, the parties hereto intend by this AGREEMENT to mutually conclude any and all employment relationships between CITY and EMPLOYEE by means of EMPLOYEE's voluntary separation as of ____, _____. This AGREEMENT sets forth the full and complete terms and conditions concluding EMPLOYEE's employment relationship with the CITY and any obligations related thereto, including any provided under the EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT.

2.3. In accordance with this AGREEMENT and with applicable state and federal laws, EMPLOYEE acknowledges that EMPLOYEE has been advised of EMPLOYEE's postemployment rights, including but not limited to, EMPLOYEE's rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 ("COBRA"), the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 ("ERISA"), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA").

3. CONSIDERATION

3.1. EMPLOYEE shall receive payment at the time of his voluntary separation all earned salary, accrued fringe benefits as detailed in the EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT, and/or all other wage compensation/benefits owed to EMPLOYEE upon separation of employment, as required by law or the EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT or any other agreement with CITY.

3.2. In exchange for the waivers and releases set forth herein, CITY shall also cause to be paid to EMPLOYEE an additional compensatory payment by means of

severance, settlement and release in the form of a lump sum amount of _____ and __ cents (\$_____.00), as set forth in the EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT in the form of a check made payable to EMPLOYEE to be mailed to EMPLOYEE at EMPLOYEE's home address via certified mail return receipt requested within thirty (30) business days after the EFFECTIVE DATE (as defined below) of this AGREEMENT.

3.3. In exchange for the severance payment provided for herein, EMPLOYEE, and on behalf of EMPLOYEE's spouse, heirs, representatives, successors, and assigns, hereby releases, acquits, and forever discharges CITY, and each of its predecessors, successors, assigns, officials, employees, representatives, agents, insurers, attorneys, and all persons and entities acting by, through, under, or in concert with any of them, and each of them (hereinafter referred to as "CITY PARTIES"), from any and all claims, charges, complaints, contracts, understandings, liabilities, obligations, promises, benefits, agreements, controversies, costs, losses, debts, expenses, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, rights, and demands of any nature whatsoever, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, which EMPLOYEE now has or may acquire in the future, or which EMPLOYEE ever had, relating to or arising out of any act, omission, occurrence, condition, event, transaction, or thing which was done, omitted to be done, occurred or was in effect at any time from the beginning of time up to and including _____, _____ (hereinafter referred to collectively as "CLAIMS"), without regard to whether such CLAIMS arise under the federal, state, or local constitutions, statutes, rules or regulations, or the common law. EMPLOYEE expressly acknowledges that the CLAIMS forever barred by this AGREEMENT specifically include, but are not limited to, claims based upon any alleged breach of THE CONTRACT or any other agreement of employment, any demand for wages, overtime or benefits, any claims of violation of the provisions of ERISA, COBRA or HIPAA, any alleged breach of any duty arising out of contract or tort, any alleged wrongful termination in violation of public policy, any alleged breach of any express or implied contract for continued employment, any alleged employment discrimination or unlawful discriminatory act, or any claim or cause of action including, but not limited to, any and all claims whether arising under any federal, state or local law prohibiting breach of employment contract, wrongful termination, or employment discrimination based upon age, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or disability, national origin or any other protected category or characteristic, and any and all rights or claims arising under the California Labor Code or Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, California Government Code sections 12900 *et seq.*, the Americans With Disabilities Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Right Act, and any other federal, state, or local human rights, civil rights, or employment discrimination or employee rights statute, rule, or regulation.

4. SPECIFIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF WAIVER OF CLAIMS UNDER ADEA AND OWBPA

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (hereinafter referred to as the "ADEA") makes it illegal for an employer to discharge any individual or otherwise discriminate with

respect to the nature and privileges of an individual's employment on the basis that the individual is age forty (40) or older. The Older Workers Benefit Protection Act (hereinafter referred to as the "OWBPA," 29 U.S.C. § 626, *et seq.*, Pub L 101-433, 104 Stat. 978 (1990)) further augments the ADEA and prohibits the waiver of any right or claim under the ADEA, **unless the waiver is knowing and voluntary**. By entering into this AGREEMENT, EMPLOYEE acknowledges that he knowingly and voluntarily, for just compensation in addition to anything of value to which EMPLOYEE was already entitled, waives and releases any rights he may have under the ADEA and/or OWBPA. EMPLOYEE further acknowledges that he has been advised and understands, pursuant to the provisions of the ADEA and OWBPA, that:

- (a) This waiver/release is written in a manner understood by EMPLOYEE;
- (b) EMPLOYEE is aware of, and/or has been advised of, his rights under the ADEA and OWBPA, and of the legal significance of his waiver of any possible claims he currently may have under the ADEA, OWBPA and/or similar age discrimination laws;
- (c) EMPLOYEE is entitled to a reasonable time of at least twenty-one (21) days within which to review and consider this AGREEMENT and the waiver and release of any rights he may have under the ADEA, the OWBPA and similar age discrimination laws; but may, in the exercise of his own discretion, sign or reject this AGREEMENT at any time before the expiration of the twenty-one (21) days;
- (d) The waivers and releases set forth in this AGREEMENT shall not apply to any rights or claims that may arise under the ADEA and/or OWBPA after the EFFECTIVE DATE of this AGREEMENT;
- (e) EMPLOYEE has been advised by this writing that he should consult with an attorney prior to executing this AGREEMENT;
- (f) EMPLOYEE has discussed this waiver and release with, and been advised with respect thereto, by his counsel of choice, and that he does not need any additional time within which to review and consider this AGREEMENT;
- (g) EMPLOYEE has seven (7) days following his execution of this AGREEMENT to revoke the AGREEMENT;
- (h) Notice of revocation within the seven (7) day revocation period must be provided, in writing, to THE CITY pursuant to Paragraph 8.7 herein, and must state, "I hereby revoke my acceptance of our Agreement of Severance and General Release;" and

- (i) This AGREEMENT shall not be effective until all parties have signed the AGREEMENT and ten (10) days have passed since EMPLOYEE's execution ("EFFECTIVE DATE").

5. UNKNOWN CLAIMS

In relation to the release provisions of Paragraphs 3 and 4 above, EMPLOYEE understands that California Civil Code section 1542 reads as follows: "General Release-Claims Extinguished":

"A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release and that, if known by him or her, would have materially affected his or her settlement with the debtor or released party."

EMPLOYEE hereby waives the protection of California Civil Code section 1542.

6. WAIVER OF ADDITIONAL CLAIMS

EMPLOYEE hereby waives any provisions of state or federal law that might require a more detailed specification of the claims being released pursuant to the provisions of Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 above.

7. REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES

Each of the parties to this AGREEMENT represents and warrants to, and agrees with, each other party as follows:

7.1. Advice of Counsel: The parties hereto have received independent legal advice from their respective attorneys concerning the advisability of entering into and executing this AGREEMENT or have been given the opportunity to obtain such advice. The parties acknowledge that they have been represented by counsel of their own choice in the negotiation of this AGREEMENT, that they have read this AGREEMENT; that they have had this AGREEMENT fully explained to them by such counsel, or have had such opportunity to do so and that they are fully aware of the contents of this AGREEMENT and of its legal effect.

7.2. No Fraud in Inducement: No party (nor any officer, agent, employee, representative, or attorney of or for any party) has made any statement or representation or failed to make any statement or representation to any other party regarding any fact relied upon in entering into this AGREEMENT, and neither party relies upon any statement, representation, omission or promise of any other party in executing this AGREEMENT, or in making the settlement provided for herein, except as expressly stated in this AGREEMENT.

7.3. Independent Investigation: Each party to this AGREEMENT has made such investigation of the facts pertaining to this settlement and this AGREEMENT and all the matters pertaining thereto, as it deems necessary.

7.4. Mistake Waived: In entering into this AGREEMENT, each party assumes the risk of any misrepresentation, concealment or mistake. If any party should subsequently discover that any fact relied upon by it in entering into this AGREEMENT was untrue, or that any fact was concealed from it, or that its understanding of the facts or of the law was incorrect, such party shall not be entitled to any relief in connection therewith, including without limitation on the generality of the foregoing any alleged right or claim to set aside or rescind this AGREEMENT. This AGREEMENT is intended to be, and is, final and binding between the parties, regardless of any claims of misrepresentation, promise made without the intent to perform, concealment of fact, mistake of fact or law, or any other circumstance whatsoever.

7.5. Later Discovery: The parties are aware that they may hereafter discover claims or facts in addition to or different from those they now know or believe to be true with respect to the matters related herein. Nevertheless, it is the intention of the parties that EMPLOYEE fully, finally and forever settle and release all such matters, and all claims relative thereto, which do now exist, may exist or have previously existed against CITY or CITY PARTIES. In furtherance of such intention, the releases given here shall be, and remain, in effect as full and complete releases of all such matters, notwithstanding the discovery or existence of any additional or different claims or facts relative thereto.

7.6. Indemnification: EMPLOYEE agrees to indemnify and hold harmless CITY or CITY PARTIES from, and against, any and all claims, damages, or liabilities sustained by them as a direct result of the violation or breach of the covenants, warranties, and representations undertaken pursuant to the provisions of this AGREEMENT. EMPLOYEE understands and agrees that he shall be exclusively liable for the payment of all taxes for which he is responsible, if any, as a result of his receipt of the consideration referred to in Paragraph 3 of this AGREEMENT. In addition, EMPLOYEE agrees fully to indemnify and hold the CITY PARTIES harmless for payment of tax obligations as may be required by any federal, state or local taxing authority, at any time, as a result of the payment of the consideration set forth in Paragraph 3 of this AGREEMENT.

7.7. Future Cooperation and Consultation fees: EMPLOYEE shall execute all such further and additional documents as shall be reasonable, convenient, necessary or desirable to carry out the provisions of this AGREEMENT. EMPLOYEE shall provide CITY with consultation services (including deposition or trial testimony) in any litigation involving CITY which is reasonably related to acts or occurrences transpiring during his employment. Said services shall be provided as needed to CITY at a rate of \$100.00 per hour.

7.8. Return of Confidential Information and Property: Prior to the separation date, EMPLOYEE shall submit a written inventory of, and return to the City Clerk, all City keys, equipment, computer identification cards or codes, and other equipment or

materials or confidential documents provided to or obtained by EMPLOYEE during the course of his employment with CITY.

7.9. No Pending Claims and/or Actions: EMPLOYEE represents that he has not filed any complaints or charges against CITY or CITY PARTIES with any local, state or federal agency or court; that he will not do so at any time hereafter for any claim arising up to and including the EFFECTIVE DATE of this AGREEMENT; and that if any such agency or court assumes jurisdiction of any such complaint or charge against CITY or CITY PARTIES on behalf of EMPLOYEE, whenever or where ever filed, he will request such agency or court to withdraw from the matter forthwith.

7.10. Ownership of Claims: EMPLOYEE represents and warrants as a material term of this AGREEMENT that EMPLOYEE has not heretofore assigned, transferred, released or granted, or purported to assign, transfer, release or grant, any of the CLAIMS disposed of by this AGREEMENT. In executing this AGREEMENT, EMPLOYEE further warrants and represents that none of the CLAIMS released by EMPLOYEE thereunder will in the future be assigned, conveyed, or transferred in any fashion to any other person and/or entity.

7.11. Enforcement Fees and Costs: Should any legal action be required to enforce the terms of this AGREEMENT, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and costs in addition to any other relief to which that party may be entitled.

7.12. Authority: Each party represents to the other that it has the right to enter into this AGREEMENT, and that it is not violating the terms or conditions of any other AGREEMENT to which they are a party or by which they are bound by entering into this AGREEMENT. The parties represent that they will obtain all necessary approvals to execute this AGREEMENT. It is further represented and agreed that the individuals signing this AGREEMENT on behalf of the respective parties have actual authority to execute this AGREEMENT and, by doing so, bind the party on whose behalf this AGREEMENT has been signed.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

8.1. No Admission: Nothing contained herein shall be construed as an admission by CITY of any liability of any kind. THE CITY denies any liability in connection with any claim and intends hereby solely to avoid potential claims and/or litigation and buy its peace.

8.2. Governing Law: This AGREEMENT has been executed and delivered within the State of California, and the rights and obligations of the parties shall be construed and enforced in accordance with, and governed by, the laws of the State of California.

8.3. Full Integration: This AGREEMENT is the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous oral and written agreements and discussions. This AGREEMENT may be amended only by a further agreement in writing, signed by the parties hereto.

8.4. Joint Drafting: Each party agrees that it has cooperated in the drafting and preparation of this AGREEMENT. Hence, in any construction to be made of this AGREEMENT, the parties agree that same shall not be construed against any party.

8.5. Severability: In the event that any term, covenant, condition, provision or agreement contained in this AGREEMENT is held to be invalid or void by any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity of any such term, covenant, condition, provision or agreement shall in no way affect any other term, covenant, condition, provision or agreement and the remainder of this AGREEMENT shall still be in full force and effect.

8.6. Counterparts: This AGREEMENT may be executed in counterparts, and when each party has signed and delivered at least one such counterpart, each counterpart shall be deemed an original, and, when taken together with other signed counterparts, shall constitute one AGREEMENT, which shall be binding upon and effective as to all parties.

8.7. Notice: Any and all notices given to any party under this AGREEMENT shall be given as provided in this paragraph. All notices given to either party shall be made by certified or registered United States mail, or personal delivery, at the noticing party's discretion, and addressed to the parties as set forth below. Notices shall be deemed, for all purposes, to have been given on the date of personal service or three (3) consecutive calendar days following deposit of the same in the United States mail.

As to EMPLOYEE:

At EMPLOYEE's home address on file with THE CITY.

As to THE CITY:

Mayor
City of Watsonville
275 Main St., 4th Floor
Watsonville, California 95076

[Signatures on Following Page]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, THE CITY has caused this AGREEMENT to be signed and executed on its behalf by its Mayor and duly attested by its City Clerk or deputy City Clerk, EMPLOYEE has signed and executed this Agreement, and the attorneys for CITY and EMPLOYEE, if any, have approved as to form as of the dates written below.

Dated: _____ EMPLOYEE

By: _____
Rene Mendez

Dated: _____ CITY

In Process
By: _____, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
_____, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM

By: _____
_____, City Attorney