

# Palacios chosen interim city manager

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WATSONVILLE — With the unanimous approval Thursday of the City Council and backed by other city officials, deputy city manager Carlos Palacios was named interim city manager.

Saying the City Council "thought long and hard" on the magnitude of the appointment, City Councilman Todd McFarren said, "This is prob-

ably the most important decision we make as a body."

Palacios "impressive education" and "wide experience" in various public and legal arenas, makes him an excellent choice to replace Steve Salomon as city manager, McFarren said.

"Most importantly, it's his commitment to this community," he added.

Palacios, 34, has worked for the

City of Watsonville 4-1/2 years, as assistant finance officer three years and deputy city manager the past 1-1/2 years. He has in that time worked on the city budget and on many community projects, including the El Pajaro Community Development Corp., the Aptos Secession negotiations, and the Federal Enterprise Community, a youth recreation organization.

Palacios thanked his mentors,

Steve Salomon, Gary Smith and Eric Frost for teaching him much about management.

"I want to thank my mentors..." he said, adding that he is optimistic about Watsonville's future "because the people are oriented toward success.

"We face problems with violence, unemployment, inadequate housing," Palacios said. "But this is a young, energetic community of

very hard workers and strong families, who have never given up in the face of adversity."

He said he sees the business community pressing ahead with development downtown and the



Palacios

passage of Measure B as an opportunity to expand library facilities.

"I could go on and on with symbols of hope that I see," Palacios said.

Palacios repeated his speech to the council and audience in Spanish.

"This is a historic day in Watsonville," said Councilman Oscar Rios, pointing out that Palacios appointment makes him the first Latino city manager in Watsonville.

"The city is 150 years old. We

are breaking ground here," Rios said. "Tony was the first (Latino) to win a district election. I was second."

While Rios said he does not see Palacios' appointment as strictly an accomplishment for Latinos because his "outstanding qualities" go beyond ethnicity, but he said he is proud that Watsonville will have a Latino "for the first time as city manager."

Other council members, including Tony Campos and Mayor Betty Bobeda expressed their backing of Palacios, and thanked Salomon for his endeavors in Watsonville. Salomon is leaving in December to become city manager for the City of Visalia.

Assistant City Manager Gary Smith told the council he was "very pleased" with their decision.

"We've been properly tuned for this event," Smith said, giving Salomon credit for laying a good foundation and preparing not only Palacios for his position, but the entire team.

"We've glued ourselves as a team. I think we're ready. I know we're ready. The recipe has been laid out," Smith said. "It's now a matter of completion."

This is not the first time Watsonville has appointed an interim city manager from city staff, said Councilman Dennis Osmer.

In 1977 Finance Director John Radin was appointed acting city

manager, serving several months until Jim Buell was appointed, according to City Clerk Lorraine Washington. When Buell left three years later, Radin qualified for the position under the city charter and was named city manager, resigning in May 1990.

Osmer added that he too is "very comfortable" with Palacios' appointment.

"We have an excellent staff to back him up," he said. "He's very bright. I have no doubt that we're going to see Carlos Palacios in the city manager's hall of fame."

Palacios' salary is under negotiation, said Mayor Betty Bobeda. The salary will be announced at Tuesday's City Council meeting.