

# Watsonville police get 8 percent pay hike

## Other city workers get 5 percent

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Watsonville's 271 city employees have agreed to a tentative two-year contract that calls for an 8 percent raise for police and 5 percent for other employees.

The salary and benefit package goes before the City Council Tuesday for final approval.

If approved, city garbage collectors, secretaries, planners, engineers, firefighters, the dog catcher and other municipal employees will get a 5 percent raise as of July and a 4 percent increase after June 30, 1988.

The average city employee would earn about \$1,070 more during the first year of the contract.

Watsonville's 36 patrol officers would get an 8 percent raise and 4 percent in July 1988, bringing them closer to the going rate for law enforcement personnel in the county, Police Chief Ray Belgard said.

Watsonville's is one of the lowest-paying police departments in the Monterey Bay area, Belgard said. Several officers have left in recent years because of the pay, he said.

The proposed contract would raise the salary of a new officer from \$23,940 a year to \$25,848, Belgard said.

"I doubt that it brings us to the top," he said of the raise. "But that brings us a lot closer to comparison with other agencies."

The highest-paying depart-

ment is in Scotts Valley, the county's smallest city, Belgard said.

City Manager John Radin, who negotiated all the employee contracts, said yesterday police officers had to get a bigger raise than other employees to make it easier for the Police Department to keep its officers.

"We were losing a lot of

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**'We were losing a lot of people because of the salaries.'**

*— John Radin*

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people because of the salaries," he said.

The new pact with all city employees will cost the city about \$290,000, just shy of the \$300,000 the City Council set aside in its budget three months ago, Radin said.

"We're well within what we told the City Council we thought the cost would be" for the raises, Radin said. The city manager negotiated the contracts with all six employee groups from July 20 to about a week ago. The groups are firefighters, police, clerical-technical, mid-management, and two other worker classifications.

Each employee group negotiated a "memorandum of understanding," a document that outlines working conditions,

vacations, benefits, retirement plans and overtime pay.

According to the memorandums — or MOUs, as they're called — police officers assigned to the soon-to-be implemented motorcycle patrol would get an extra \$50 per month and all Spanish-speaking city employees would get 5 percent more per month than their monolingual co-workers.

City employees had been without a contract since July, when the previous three-year agreement expired.

Negotiations took a little longer than normal because the memorandums were completely re-written to incorporate years of change and new laws, Radin said. Talks went smoothly, he said. A spokesman for the employees was not available to comment yesterday.

"They were all reasonable negotiations," Radin said. "No basic problems. It just took some time to work out all the wording from the MOUs from 20 years ago."

Chief Belgard said, "I'm extremely happy that we got it settled without going into a big impasse or something" that might have threatened city services.

The police contract, like that of other city employees, was negotiated by representatives of the rank and file.

Contract talks for about 20 upper-level managers, the police and fire chiefs and city department heads, are scheduled to begin Friday, Radin said.