

City generous to child-care agencies

By NANCY BARR
STAFF WRITER

More than half the money the city of Watsonville had set aside for social-service agencies will go to two child-care programs.

The rest of the money is going to the Volunteer Bureau, Youth Services, Family Services of the Pajaro Valley and the Cabrillo College Stroke Center, the council decided during its budget-setting session last night.

The council had agreed to spend half the money it raises in hotel-motel room taxes on social service agencies. City Manager John Radin estimated last night that would give the council \$50,000 to distribute.

It was clear child-care programs were the high priority of most council members, but Mayor Betty Murphy and Councilman Vido Deretich argued over how much should go to each of the two programs seeking funds. The YWCA Night and Day Child Care Center asked for \$25,000 this year and the Pajaro Valley Children's Center asked for \$22,000. The city gave each center \$10,000 last year.

Murphy argued that the city should give more money to the YWCA center since that program was started at the city's urging several years ago. Deretich countered that the YWCA is already getting help from the city in the form of a building and its maintenance, and said that since both centers serve about the same number of chil-

dren, they should get equal support from the city.

But after learning that the YWCA serves more poor families, Deretich went along with Murphy.

Deretich also asked that the city support the Volunteer Bureau. Councilman Joe Marsano supported giving money to the Stroke Center and Council-

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Valley. Councilman Dennis Osmer said he thought it was a good idea, but said he was irked by a letter from the Watsonville Area Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture, asking the city to approve the \$4,000.

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Osmer questioned how the chamber — which has the job of promoting Watsonville, he said — could ask the city to give \$4,000 to a promotional project when the chamber itself gave only \$200.

man Dennis Osmer supported Youth Services' drug counseling program.

Family Services was included in the funding because the city had given it \$5,000 last year and the council felt it should continue to support it.

The final allocation was: the YWCA child-care program, \$17,000; Pajaro Valley Children's Center, \$10,000; Youth Services, \$9,000; Volunteer Bureau, \$6,000; Family Services, \$5,000; and the Stroke Center, \$3,000.

Turned down was a request from the Pajaro Valley school district for \$4,000 to help pay for a promotional video tape of Watsonville and the Pajaro

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"I would feel much kinder if the chamber would set an example," Osmer said. "I'm afraid they have."

Councilman Tony Campos, a member of the chamber board of directors, defended the organization. He said chamber representatives had planned to make a presentation to the council last night, offering to match whatever contribution the city made to the project.

While no one showed up to make that presentation, the letter to the council from chamber president Scott John-

son indicated the chamber would raise money among members to match city funding.

Johnson said this morning the chamber's bylaws prohibit direct donations, but the chamber will try to find support among its members.

During the budget review, the council decided to hire an additional civil engineer for the Public Works Department after Director John Cooper said he has only one such engineer to process all development applications. It's expected to cost about \$30,000 to fill the post, plus benefits, and is an item not included in the city manager's proposed budget.

The council also discussed the possibility of conducting an election next June to ask city voters to approve a raise for council members. Council members are now paid \$50 a month. The mayor is paid \$150 a month. Several council members have indicated they would support placing an amendment to the city charter on the ballot asking for a raise. The mayor said the council can discuss this after budget sessions are over.

The council plodded through its review of the budget until almost 11 p.m., then decided to take up other agenda items. Adjournment didn't come until almost 1 a.m. today.

The council will complete the budget review next Tuesday, which is the deadline specified in the city charter.