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Martin Bernal's 10-year-old twins Diego and Joaquin record their dad's big day in pictures and video Tuesday on the steps of City Hall as Bernal is interviewed by a TV reporter after being named Santa Cruz's new city manager.

Bernal named new city manager

Council unanimously votes to promote city's No. 2

city manager
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SANTA CRUZ — Martín Bernal, who has served as the assistant city manager for 13 years, was named the new city manager Tuesday.

The City Council voted 5-0 on Bernal's candidacy during a special closed session Tuesday morning. Councilmen Ryan Coonerty and Tony Madrigal were absent.

The son of former farmworkers who immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico, Bernal, 44, will replace Dick Wilson, who will retire this summer after 28 years on the job. Bernal and his wife Martha live in Santa Cruz with their three children, 17-year-old daughter Daniela, and 10-year-old twin boys Diego and Joaquin.

"I feel humbled and privileged to be selected by the council, and I'm really thankful for their confidence in me," Bernal said. "I know it's going to be a difficult task moving forward, but I'm excited about the oppor-



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Santa Cruz City Councilwoman Lynn Robinson congratulates Martín Bernal on the steps of City Hall on Tuesday.

tunities."

Mayor Mike Rotkin, who announced the appointment during a press conference around noon, praised Bernal's experience.

"Martín Bernal understands Santa Cruz and the needs of its city government," Rotkin said.

"He has had direct experience in our city finances and the complex political realities of our community."

Rotkin said Bernal was selected after surveys of council members, city department

SEE BERNAL ON B4

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what we can afford given our cost structure and revenue base.
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MARTIN BERNAL, incoming Santa Cruz city manager

BERNAL

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heads and community leaders were widely positive about Bernal's candidacy. The city hired an executive search firm to find a new city manager, but the process largely focused on vetting Bernal, whose selection signals the council's desire to create stability during rough financial times.

Bernal will assume his new duties in July. Bernal's salary has not been determined, but he said the city's budget situation requires him to be conservative.

"As we move forward on dealing with the budget situation, it's my responsibility to set an example and take the lead," Bernal said. "My goal is to set a salary that does that."

Bernal said his salary would fall between what he and Wilson presently earn, taking into account citywide furloughs put in place last year. As assistant city manager, Bernal earns an annual salary of \$188,000 but the furlough brought his pay to \$169,800. Wilson earns \$219,000 annual as city manager, but the furlough reduced his pay to \$197,000.

The city, which has faced state funding raids and slumps in tax revenue, is grappling with a general fund deficit approaching \$4 million. Bernal has been central to the city's efforts to cut the red ink, including trying to win concessions from employee groups.

"Our focus needs to be defining what our new normal is

going to be, what we can afford given our cost structure and revenue base," Bernal said. "There are going to be some difficult decisions around that."

As Bernal prepares for his new responsibilities, he is also aware of the legacy Wilson leaves behind. Wilson guided the city through the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the massive rebuilding effort, and has long been the steady hand of government as the council majority has changed every few years.

Wilson, who did not attend the press conference because he is on vacation on the East Coast, said in a message that Bernal "is a very capable, extremely intelligent and thoughtful person. He works well with everyone and I think he is exactly what the city needs to deal with the issues the city faces now."

Bernal earned a bachelor's degree in urban planning and urban studies from Stanford University before returning to his native Texas to earn a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin.

Before coming to Santa Cruz in 1997, Bernal served as assistant to the city manager in Mountain View for four years and was senior executive assistant to the city manager in San Jose after a stint there as an environmental specialist.

As Santa Cruz's city manager, Bernal will oversee about 775 employees and a city budget of \$206 million, about a third of which is the general fund, which comprises the city's main operating budget.