

Peckham & McKenney
“All about fit”



Police Chief

CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

THE COMMUNITY

The City of Watsonville, California, is located in beautiful Santa Cruz County, five miles inland from the scenic Monterey Bay. The City has a population of more than 53,000 and a land area of nearly 6.2 square miles. The community is just 26 miles from Monterey and only 18 miles south of Santa Cruz. Watsonville's location is topped only by its ideal climate and rustic, small-town charm of a close-knit community.

Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley boast pristine beaches and a Mediterranean climate. Miles of trails surround the wetlands of Watsonville. Adjacent to Watsonville, the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Reserve is one of California's last undisturbed coastal wetlands and provides numerous opportunities for spectacular year-round hiking and bird watching. Within Watsonville, the City Parks and Community Services Department operates 28 beautiful and well-maintained parks on 184 acres for active recreational and leisure activities. The community offers a wide variety of opportunities for outdoor activities, including hiking, bicycling, and water sports.

Watsonville has a long tradition as an agricultural center. In the late 1800s, the area harvested staple crops such as wheat



and sugar beets. In 1868, Martinelli's Sparkling Apple Cider was founded and led the charge for Watsonville to become a major food processing center. Agriculture has remained at the heart of the Pajaro Valley today, boasting agricultural businesses such as Driscoll's and Martinelli's, which are known worldwide.

Over the last several years, several light manufacturing firms have expanded Watsonville's economic base to include electronics, high-tech, marine supplies, and construction. Economic conditions in Watsonville are heavily influenced by agriculture and its role as an affordable housing alternative to more expensive housing in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Watsonville is a proving ground for entrepreneurs and businesses from all industries and emerging technologies. Its central location, nestled between the Monterey Bay and the Santa Cruz Mountains, offers growing companies quick and easy highway access while avoiding daily

traffic snarls. Watsonville is also served by several nearby institutions of higher learning, including the University of California, Santa Cruz; California State University, Monterey Bay; Cabrillo Community College; and Hartnell Community College.

The heart of Watsonville is its Historic Downtown. It hosts an eclectic mix of old and new, where burgeoning local shop owners and national retailers share charming sidewalks, pocket parks, and historic facades. Downtown Watsonville is also home to a number of historic houses and commercial buildings designed by the famous Victorian Era architect William Weeks. The larger buildings lining Main Street, constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, give downtown a traditional "Main Street USA" character.

To learn more about this dynamic City, visit the City of Watsonville's website at watsonville.gov.

THE ORGANIZATION

The City of Watsonville was incorporated in 1868 and operates under a locally approved City Charter. The Charter, first adopted in 1908, established a Council-Manager form of government.

The City Council appoints three positions: the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk. The City Manager serves as the Chief Executive Officer and is responsible to the Council for the proper administration of all City affairs and the implementation of all policies established by the City Council. The City Manager also appoints all department heads.

The City Council is elected on a nonpartisan basis from seven electoral districts to four-year terms. Selections are staggered, with four Council Members elected during one election and three Council Members elected in the following election two years later. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore positions are rotated annually by the Council District pursuant to a recently adopted Charter amendment. Council elections



are held in even years in conjunction with State-wide general elections.

Watsonville is an engaged community with active public participation from all segments of the City. The City Council is served by several resident advisory bodies, including the Planning Commission, Personnel Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Library Board of Trustees.



Watsonville is a full-service City that provides public safety, public works, parks and community services, a library, and planning services. The City also has several enterprise operations, including a municipal airport, solid waste, water, and wastewater. The City employs approximately 419.5 full-time equivalent positions, and the adopted **FY 2025/26 General Fund** budget is \$122.6 million.

THE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department has five divisions: Field Operations (Patrol), Field Operations (Support), Professional Standards, Special Operations, and the Administrative Division. The **FY 2025/26 adopted budget** is \$28.5 million, supporting 94 full-time staff.

The Department boasts a variety of special assignments, including a Traffic Bureau, Canine Program, Detective Bureau, Crisis Response & Engagement Team, SWAT Team, Drone Unit, School Resource Officer, Santa Cruz County Anti-Crime Team, and Santa Cruz County Auto Theft Reduction & Enforcement Task Force. In addition, the

department is actively engaged with the community. It offers a Cadet Program, Police Youth Academy, Police Activities League, Caminos Hacia el Exito, Post-Incident Team, Agua Con la Chota, and a Guest Speaker Program.

In 2024, there were 47,102 calls for service, 4,531 police reports filed, and 12,011 items processed as evidence. Thanks to proactive policing and community partnerships, property crime dropped by 2% and violent crime declined by 4% compared to 2023. The police department's Flock Safety cameras also played a key role in 57 cases, leading to 29 arrests.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The Watsonville Police Department is well perceived by the community. The ideal candidate must have a strong record of community engagement and understand the need for transparency and the value of sharing information with the community. The Chief must be approachable, visible in the community, and have the ability to reach out to and connect with all members and groups in the community. They must recognize that they represent and work for the City of Watsonville as a whole, not just the Police Department.

The Chief will be a straightforward, proactive, and effective communicator. They will be politically savvy, work collaborative with others, understand the Citywide perspective, and be a supportive member of the City's executive leadership team.

The ideal candidate will be an approachable leader, who is fair, sets the example, holds people accountable, and understands how to build a positive culture. They will continue the training and leadership that has resulted in a Department that is excellent at

deescalating incidents with very limited use of force. They must be open to innovative ideas and experienced at building morale and developing relationships in a team environment. They must understand the importance of employee wellness and make that a pillar of the Department's culture.

The Chief must have shown the ability to exercise sound judgment and decision-making both in an emergency response environment and in administrative and management situations. They must be an excellent communicator and be able to express themselves clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing. The Chief must be comfortable and skilled representing the Department in making effective presentations in public situations, including City Council meetings and community events.

The Chief must understand the need for and champion the professional development of staff, making the Department a place people can thrive.

The Chief must have experience in the following areas:

- Diverse communities;
- Gang violence & Restorative Justice Programs;
- Budget, policy and procedure, and program development and management;
- Handling citizen inquiries and complaints;
- Public and media relations; and
- Fostering and maintaining positive relationships with labor, effectively resolving disputes, and appropriately managing disciplinary matters.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

Any combination of training and experience that provides the required knowledge and abilities qualifies. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and skills is a bachelor's degree from an accredited college in police science, criminology, business, public administration, or a related field, and substantial municipal police service experience to include at least four years of management-level experience equivalent to the rank of Police Lieutenant or above. Must currently hold the rank of Captain or above, plus a minimum of five years serving in a management capacity in municipal policing, is required.

Possession of a P.O.S.T. Management Certificate is required. A master's degree in a related field of study is preferred, and successful completion of Command College or the FBI Academy is highly desirable.

THE COMPENSATION

The current annual salary for this at-will position is \$178,504 - \$239,213. Final salary will be commensurate with experience, education, skills and background.



SEARCH SCHEDULE

Filing Deadline: October 12, 2025
Preliminary Interviews (telephonic): October 22 – 23, 2025
Meeting to Review all Candidates: October 29, 2025
Panel Interviews (In-Person): November 5, 2025
Finalist Interviews (In-Person): November 6, 2025

These dates have been confirmed, and it is recommended that you plan your calendar accordingly.

The City also offers an attractive **benefits package**, including:

RETIREMENT: The City participates in the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) under a 3% @ 55 formula for Classic Members (employee pays 12%). The 2.7% @ 57 formula applies to New/PEPRA Members (employee pays 13.75%).

DEFERRED COMPENSATION

CONTRIBUTION: The City will match up to \$120 per paycheck.

UNIFORM ALLOWANCE: \$1,200 per year.

BILINGUAL PAY: Up to \$250 per month depending on qualification level and department need.

LONGEVITY PAY: Up to 6.5% (2% at 5 years, 2% at 10 years, 2.5% at 15 years)

MEDICAL/DENTAL/VISION

INSURANCE: The City offers a generous medical, dental, and vision health plan.

LIFE AND AD&D INSURANCE: City provided at \$50,000 of coverage and \$2,000 per dependent.

PAID LEAVE: Up to 22 days of vacation per year dependent upon length of service; 13 regular holidays and 1 floating holiday; 15 days of sick leave; and 120 hours of administrative leave per year which is pro-rated for new hires.

The City of Watsonville is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

To apply for this key position and exciting career opportunity, please submit a current resume and compelling cover letter through our website at:

Peckham & McKenney
www.peckhamandmckenney.com

Resumes are acknowledged within two business days. Contact Roberta Greathouse at 831.998.3194, toll-free at 866.912.1919, or via email at Roberta@PeckhamandMcKenney.com if you have any questions regarding this position or the recruitment process.

PECKHAM
&
MCKENNEY
EXECUTIVE SEARCH

www.peckhamandmckenney.com