

RESOLUTION NO. _____ (N.C.S.)

**A RESOLUTION OF THE SALINAS CITY COUNCIL DISAPPROVING OF AND
CENSURING CERTAIN ACTIONS OF COUNCIL MEMBER ANDREW
SANDOVAL**

WHEREAS, it is essential for the effective governing of the City of Salinas for the public to have confidence in the integrity of its local government, and its fair, effective, respectful, and courteous operation; and

WHEREAS, Rule 3(c) of the City Council Rules, set out in Section 2-1 of the Salinas Municipal Code, authorizes the City Council to “from time-to-time, by resolution, adopt such other rules as are not inconsistent with the charter or the rules [set out in Section 2-1]; provided, however, that no such rules shall unreasonably limit citizen’s participation at Council meetings”; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2012, the Salinas City Council first adopted Rules of Procedure and Order of Business for Council members and Guidelines for Public Decorum and Order at City Council Meetings, which were updated and revised on April 28, 2015 (collectively the “Rules of Decorum”) for the express purpose of having the City Council conduct its business in an orderly and fair manner, to proceed with the business of government in an efficient and orderly manner, so as to encourage high standards of behavior by Council members and by the public; and

WHEREAS, the Rules of Decorum require that the Council members conform to set norms of general conduct, during City Council meetings and otherwise, including the following:

1. Make the public feel welcome and not be partial, prejudiced or disrespectful toward the public;
2. Treat each other, staff, and members of the public with dignity, courtesy, and respect valuing all opinions and being tolerant of new and different idea[s] while encouraging creativity and innovation. Inappropriate behavior is derogatory and damages the perception of the City;
3. Avoid negative comments that could offend other Council members during public meetings, in the media, or any other time;
4. Continuously strive to improve how [Council] members work as a team;

5. Place clear and realistic demands on staff resources and time when requesting action; and
6. Respect the limitations placed on the use of the City Seal and the City Logo (Salinas Municipal Code Chapter 1, Article 2); and

WHEREAS, the Rules of Decorum also require that Council members conform to set standards of conduct during meetings, including the following:

1. Treat each other and everyone with courtesy and refrain from inappropriate behavior and derogatory comments; and
2. Work together to preserve order and decorum during meetings; and
3. Not delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the City Council, nor disturb any Council member while speaking, by conversation or otherwise; and
4. Attempt to build consensus on an item through an opportunity for dialogue, but when this is not possible, the majority vote shall prevail and the majority shall show respect for the opinion of the minority, and vice versa; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has the primary responsibility to assure that the Rules of Decorum are followed, so that Council members will be held accountable for failing to comply with the self-imposed expectations established in the Rules of Decorum so the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of government; and

WHEREAS, in addition to adherence to the Rules of Decorum, Council members are otherwise expected to adhere to general norms and expectations and to otherwise conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their elected position, including adherence with the law and not behaving in a manner that is detrimental to the City or adverse to the City's interests; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has the power to censure one of its members. Section 1(F)(1) of the Rules of Decorum states that the City Council may censure any member "found to be in violation of any provision of [the Rules of Decorum]" (Resolution No. 20742); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Rule 5 of the City Council's Rules (Salinas Municipal Code Section 2-01.01), the City Council follows Robert's Rules of Order, as interpreted by the presiding officer (Mayor). Censure is an inherent power of a legislative body that follows Robert's Rules of Order; and

WHEREAS, through a censure action, the City Council may express its own opinion regarding the actions or the conduct of one of its members regarding their failure to comply with the City Council's policies and procedures; and

WHEREAS, individual Council members and members of the public have raised concerns about Council member Sandoval's failure to comply with the Rules of Decorum; and

WHEREAS, a censure is a formal action of the City Council reprimanding one of its own members for specified actions or conduct; and

WHEREAS, a legislative body's censure opinion is itself protected by the First Amendment; and

WHEREAS, a legislative body's censure of one of its members does not violate the censured member's free speech rights under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2025, Council member D'Arrigo and Council member Barajas requested the City Council consider disapproving of and censuring certain actions of Council member Sandoval; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has only one other time in the past twenty (20) years considered a censure action against one of its own members for specified actions or conduct, thereby demonstrating the gravity of this action and the City Council's commitment to maintaining a safe, collaborative, and respectful environment; and

WHEREAS, Council member Sandoval has been provided notice and an opportunity to refute the allegations in compliance with all requirements for due process; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Dennis Donohue sent a Notice of Proposed Censure Action to Council member Sandoval via personal delivery, electronic mail (andrew.sandoval@salinas.gov), and U.S. Mail on December 2, 2025, informing him of the specific allegations which are violations of the Rules of Decorum and also informing him that on December 9, 2025, the City Council would consider these violations in the context of a public hearing at which the City Council will consider a Resolution disapproving of

and censuring certain of his behavior (specifically identified in the December 2, 2025, letter); and

WHEREAS, originally scheduled for December 9, 2025, the public hearing for the proposed censure action was rescheduled to January 13, 2026, consistent with Council member Sandoval's request for additional time to respond to the allegations outlined in the December 2, 2025, Notice of Proposed Censure Action. Through his legal counsel, the City provided notice to Council member Sandoval of the January 13, 2026, public hearing; and

WHEREAS, the following are the specific allegations identified in the December 2, 2025, letter, along with the relevant section of the Rules of Decorum:

1. On April 22, 2025, Council member Sandoval referred to Council member Salazar as a "mentiroso" (Spanish for liar) when he disagreed with Council member Salazar's comments. (Section 1(B)(2), (3); Section 1(C)(1), (3), (5))
2. Council member Sandoval regularly disturbs his Council colleagues during City Council meetings by speaking and laughing during other Council members' questions and/or comments. (Section 1(C)(3), (4))
3. Council member Sandoval regularly leaves the dais during City Council meetings to, among other things, make telephone calls and speak to members of the public outside of the Council Chambers, often resulting in cheers and chanting from the public. On occasion, Council member Sandoval's absence from the dais has resulted in him missing votes of the City Council. These actions have the effect of disturbing City Council meetings, City staff and others presenting during City Council meetings, and his Council colleagues. (Section 1(C)(3), (4))
 - a. On November 29, 2025, in response to Council member Barajas acknowledging that Council member Sandoval was not present during a City Council meeting, Council member Sandoval posted to his Facebook account mocking Council member Barajas with a video by saying: "Oh, no. You know what? Jose Barajas is probably going to report me for talking to you." (<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1217242413610784>)

4. During the October 28, 2025, City Council meeting, Council member De La Rosa publicly asked that Council member Sandoval stop bullying her on social media. In a Facebook post on November 28, 2025, Council member Sandoval posted a video of Council member De La Rosa's October 28, 2025, statement, after which he proceeded to mock her request by showing unrelated past clips of Council member De La Rosa at an increased speed and including various icons and cartoon caricatures. (Section 1(B)(2), (3))
(<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1217242413610784>)

5. Council member Sandoval regularly wears clothing with the City logo during his social media posts and non-City business. (Section 1(B)(9), referencing Salinas Municipal Code section 1-10, et seq.)
(https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGZyDs_uFLY/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D;
https://www.instagram.com/reel/DIaksvnOTN-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3Dhttps://www.instagram.com/reel/DIaksvnOTN-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D)

6. On June 18, 2025, Council member Sandoval posted a video on directed at Council member Barajas in which he referred to his Council colleague as "Barajas the Betrayer" and made inaccurate statements about Council member Barajas' position on rent stabilization. (Section 1(B)(2))
(https://www.instagram.com/reel/DLDn-5Hh3rQ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D)

7. On June 14, 2025, Council member Sandoval mocked Council member De La Rosa when he posted an Instagram video showing Council member De La Rosa speak about rent stabilization. The caption on the video reads: "Nice pearls! Gotta look good while I raise your rent!" (Section 1(B)(2), (3))
(<https://www.instagram.com/p/DK6QAdvuTpc/>)

8. On September 24, 2024, Council member Sandoval posted an Instagram video of Council member D'Arrigo speaking about her vote on rent stabilization with the

caption “Do you have trust?” suggesting she is not trustworthy and was being dishonest (Section 1(B)(2), (3)) (https://www.instagram.com/p/DO_TMaEkSEX/)

9. On May 3, 2025, Council member Sandoval posted an Instagram post with a caricature of Council member Salazar with the caption: " THE IRONY IS HARD TO IGNORE. SO.. DO I GET A RAISE FOR ALL THE NEW CLIENTS I'LL BE PUTTING IN NEED" suggesting that Council member Salazar voted to repeal rent stabilization so that he could get a salary increase from his employer, the Catholic Charities. (Section 1(B)(2), (3)) (https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJN0GqTuRis/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA%3D%3D)

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that each of these specific actions are counter-productive to building strong relationships among the Council members and distract from the City Council’s business of focusing on important challenges and opportunities facing the City and its residents; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that as exemplified in taking the specific actions described in this Resolution, Council member Sandoval uses tactics akin to bullying and intimidation toward his fellow Council members, rather than collaborating and attempting to find compromise; and

WHEREAS, the City Council find that Council member Sandoval has used his social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) to mock, intimidate, and to discredit his Council colleagues and members of the public through, for example, insinuation of corruption and illegal activity; and

WHEREAS, in Council member Sandoval’s Instagram posting dated October 25, 2025, he suggested that he does not take this Censure action seriously and has no intention of modifying his actions so as to conform to the City Council’s Rules of Decorum; and

WHEREAS, during the month of November 2025, alone, Council member Sandoval made approximately thirty-one (31) separate posts on Instagram and Facebook (with at least one being posted at 12:08 A.M.) directed at his Council colleagues and this Censure action—often taking his Council colleagues words, phrases, or statements out of context—of the nature of those specific action described above in this Resolution, thereby

showing the volume of his activity against his Council colleagues. The volume of Council member Sandoval's posts directed against his Council colleagues have increased since the October 28, 2025, call for this Censure action, thereby further demonstrating Council member Sandoval's unwillingness or inability to conform his actions to the City Council's Rules of Decorum; and

WHEREAS, on at least one occasion, Council member Sandoval has contacted a Council colleague's employer and asked questions of the employer insinuating the Council member was engaged in illegal and/or unethical activity. The use of questions and requests for information or records is a guise for intimidation; and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2025, Council members D'Arrigo and Barajas met with Council member Sandoval to discuss their request for disapproval of and censure of certain actions of Council member Sandoval as an attempt to resolve their concerns short of the City Council's consideration of a Censure Resolution, but as a result of Council member Sandoval's apparent unwillingness to conform to the Rules of Conduct, did not reach a successful resolution; and

WHEREAS, Council member Sandoval was present and/or involved in each of the separate items listed above and as a result has independent knowledge and is independently aware of the facts and circumstances involved in each and consequently has sufficient information, including the names and identities of all other individuals involved in those incidents; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held before the Salinas City Council on January 13, 2026, at which Council member Sandoval was present and given the opportunity to respond to the allegations set forth in Mayor Donohue's December 2, 2025, letter and in this Resolution, and to provide comments and present information to the City Council for its consideration prior to taking action on this Resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of City of Salinas, as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein as though fully set forth in full.

2. The Council finds that Council member Sandoval violated the City's Rules of Decorum in that his conduct toward other City Council members and members of the public was disrespectful and discourteous; detracted from the orderly, efficient, and fair conduct of the City's business, including City Council meetings; did not serve to increase the public confidence in the City government; and was not in keeping with the heightened norms and standards of conduct required of Council members.
3. The Council further finds that Council member Sandoval's violation of the City's Rules of Decorum, as described in this Resolution, erode the public's faith and confidence in the City of Salinas and its elected officials.
4. The City Council reaffirms its commitment to prioritizing the interests of the City in its conduct and maintaining civility and compliance with the City Council's Rules of Decorum and with applicable law in carrying out the City's business.
5. This Resolution serves as a formal statement of censure disapproving Council member Sandoval's actions as described herein.
6. In the event Council member Sandoval's conduct continues in violation of the Rules of Decorum, Council may approve further censure.
7. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its approval.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 13th day of January, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

APPROVED:

Dennis Donohue, Mayor

ATTEST:

Patricia M. Soratos, City Clerk