

Housing Authority of the City of Madera



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MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 11, 2023 REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MADERA

CALL TO ORDER:

The October 11, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Housing Authority for the City of Madera was called to order by Chairperson Elsa Mejia at 6:01 p.m.

The meeting was held in person at the City of Madera Council Chambers, located at 205 West 4th Street, Madera, CA 93637, pursuant to California AB 361, AB 2449, and CA Govt. Codes §§ 54953 and 54954.2. The meeting was made simultaneously accessible via Zoom.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairperson Elsa Mejia	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Artemio Villegas	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Steve Montes	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Cece Gallegos	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Santos Garcia	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

GUESTS/STAFF PRESENT:

HACM Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro (In Person)
HACM Executive Secretary Marisela Lopez (In Person)
HACM Legal Counsel Emilio J. Huerta (In Person)

INVOCATION:

Fred Thurman from the New Life Assembly of Madera gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Executive Administrative Assistant Marisela Lopez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were comments from the public via Zoom. A person identified as a current employee of the Housing Authority of the City of Madera inquired about the cost-of-living salary adjustment for employees.

The Board tabled any discussion for the next meeting.

MOTION TO APPROVE MEETING AGENDA:

Commissioner S. Montes moved to approve the October 11, 2023, proposed meeting agenda, as amended, and posted on October 06, 2023. Commissioner S. Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

YAYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no comments from the public in attendance or via Zoom.

A. WORKSHOPS:

NONE.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and were enacted by a single motion and single vote. There was no separate discussion of any of the listed items.

B-1 Approval of Register of Audited Demands September 2023.

B-2 Approval of September 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting Minutes.

There were no comments from the public in attendance nor via Zoom.

Motion to Approve Consent Calendar

Commissioner S. Montes moved to approve the above-listed consent calendar items. Commissioner A. Villegas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

AYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

There were no comments from the public in attendance nor via Zoom.

C. RESOLUTIONS, AGREEMENTS, BIDS, HEARINGS, AND/OR PETITIONS:

C-1: Motion to Approve Proposed Resolution # 1266 authorizing the disposal of non-working appliances from the Public Housing and Farm Labor programs.

Maintenance Manager, Jared Garza presented proposed Resolution # 1266. Maintenance Manager, Jared Garza, reported that HACM needs to have five refrigerators, three stoves and four water heaters disposed of. They are currently being stored at the maintenance shop at 600 S. Lake St.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez asked what happens to these items? Are they left out for the public, or are they disposed of in a proper place?

The Maintenance Manager, Jared Garza replied they are disposed of in a proper place, where they get recycled at no cost to us.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner C. Gallegos moved to approve Item C-1, proposed Resolution #1266. Commissioner S. Garcia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

AYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

C-2: Motion to Approve Proposed Resolution # 1267 authorizing the Interim Director to execute and submit electronically the annual operating budget forms for FY 2024 public operating subsidy funding.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented proposed Resolution # 1267.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that this is an annual request. HUD provides operating subsidy grants to the public housing agencies, and it is based on an annual allocation or anticipated allocation by Congress. It is based on our housing stock inventory, and we currently have 244 units of public housing, which are broken down by two different amps 128 in the CAL. 0690001 and then the other amp CAL. 69002. HACM anticipates receiving \$738,166 for the calendar year 2024.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez moved to approve Item C-2, proposed Resolution #1267.
Commissioner C. Gallegos seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

YAYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

C-3: Motion to Approve Proposed Resolution # 1268 authorizing adding Finance Service Manager, Alex Estrada as designated person as signer for Citizen Business Bank and Wells Fargo Bank accounts.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented proposed Resolution # 1268.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported this resolution is for adding our new Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada, as signer for Citizen Business Bank and Wells Fargo Bank accounts.

Commissioner C. Gallegos reported and welcomed Alex aboard. He worked in the city in the Grants program department.

Chairperson E. Mejia had the pleasure of meeting Alex at the Housing Authority today. She is happy to have somebody come back.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner S. Montes moved to approve Item C-3, proposed Resolution #1268. Commissioner C. Gallegos seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

YAYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

C-4: Motion to Approve Proposed Resolution # 1269 authorizing the Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, Chairperson Elsa Mejia and Financial Service Manager Alex Estrada as designated persons with check signing authority for Local Agency Investment Account. (LAIF)

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented proposed Resolution # 1269.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that this is in combination with adding Alex Estrada as an authorized signer. It will also approve Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro and Chairperson Mejia as signer to be able to sign on the LAIF accounts.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez moved to approve Item C-4, proposed Resolution #1269. Commissioner S. Montes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

YAYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Santos Garcia,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

C-5: Motion to Approve Proposed Resolution # 1270 authorizing the Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, to increase employer contributions for health benefits commencing in January 2024

Financial Manager, Alex Estrada presented proposed Resolution # 1270 via Zoom/presentation.

Financial Manager, Alex Estrada reported that HACM makes employee contributions towards the employee's medical premiums to help as part of employee's medical benefits, to help alleviate the cost of their monthly medical expenses. Currently, HACM contributes \$600 for employee only coverage. \$1,200 for an employee, plus one dependent, and for a family coverage is \$1,600. The remainder of the premium can vary, depending on the medical coverage that employee selects. To be eligible, the employee must elect medical coverage. Dental and Vision benefits alone would not be eligible for this monthly medical contribution. Medical premiums have increased for 2024. The three most selected medical plans are Kaiser, PERS Gold and United Healthcare Alliance. For Kaiser medical insurance there is a 20% increase for 2024. What HACM staff is proposing is that the contributions be increased to \$750, \$1,500, and \$1,900. This will allow the agency to remain competitive and attract new staff and most important retain our current staff. The fiscal impact would be estimated to be \$32,400, an annual increase to the agencies, expense. HACM currently has thirteen staff members on medical benefits. This will be an approximate \$32,000 annual increase.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez asked questions regarding the numbers on the graph via PowerPoint. What is the difference between what we had last year? He asked.

Financial Manager, Alex Estrada reported the fiscal impact will be on the agency based on what we were spending last year.

Commissioner S. Montes reported that 150 x's eight is \$1,200, but that is a month. Then you have to times that by twelve. That is where you get that increased contribution.

Commissioner S. Garcia asked if this has been proposed to the employees.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro said not yet. We did tell them we would be looking at this, but not how much. So, employees can make better decisions. Open enrollment ends this Friday, so we are trying to get this in front of the Board, so that we can see how we can help them out.

Commissioner S. Garcia said at the end of the day the employees will appreciate this. We are looking in the right direction for our employees because he knows employers are losing staff. He thinks this is great moving forward.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that there is one position that they will not be filling and that is going to be the Finance Supervisor. That is because Alex is on board. So, with the staff that we have, we both have made the decision that not having a Finance supervisor in the position would alleviate this impact.

Commissioner C. Gallegos asked what the window for open enrollment is, and if the employees had enough time to look at the medical plans. Is it possible to get an extension to give them a little more time to research to see if they want to go from Kaiser to Blue Shield, because there are a lot of things that go into those hospitals, ambulances cost etc.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez said that he is not a Kaiser, but he knows Kaiser seems to be the favorite. He would like someone to answer what services they provide that make them so attractive? He is asking because during the strikes he is assuming that there is something going on

there. Why do our residents of Madera that are employed here do not use our community hospitals? Kaiser is the preferred health care provider as it encompasses all the services.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that with other cities they are looking at the same increases across the board. HACM is with Cal PERS, so it puts HACM in a situation where we really cannot go shop anywhere else, because no other broker will speak to HACM because we are part of Cal PERS. Also, because we are a small agency, it is hard to step away from Cal PERS. We did not have the staff to be able to research that information. We are a small agency, and it might not benefit us. We are stuck with increasing rates.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez reported that he understands that Kaiser would be the medical plan he would elect, because it encompasses all medical services. He said if the hospital would open back up that he would encourage the employees to continue to utilize our services locally, and we can provide competitive services to be able to make it affordable. So, we can prevent another closure in the future because there is not enough private insurance coming into the hospitals.

There was no public comment.

Commissioner S. Montes moved to approve Item C-5, proposed Resolution #1270. Commissioner J. Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously:

YAYES: (6) Chairperson Elsa Mejia
 Commissioner Cece Gallegos,
 Commissioner Steve Montes,
 Commissioner Santos Garcia,
 Commissioner Jose Rodriguez and
 Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NAYS: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Vice-Chairperson Anita Evans

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

No written communications were received.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, Interim Executive Director provided the following administrative reports.

E-1: Monthly Housing Activity Report:

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that the numbers for the households helping in Section 8 have decreased a little. She reported that a lot of this is, that they are at the stage where they no longer need our assistance or there are other circumstances where that the numbers have dropped. We are currently leased up at 92% on the waiting list. We are at 842 applications. This was a previous question. The numbers are not moving for the HCV

department because we have not opened our waiting lists in a while. The numbers are stagnant. We are working through the ones that we already pulled once those are reconciled and if they continue to be canceled, then that number will drop significantly, then we will be doing a poll.

For our public housing we currently have four vacancies, we have two deposits, and we are continuing to get applications for our families. We are also working through those waiting lists. We are sending out letters to "save my spot." There are online applications now, if they are still interested in the program or if their application is still active. There is a feature on our website that they can go in and do a save my spot.

For Farm Labor, we are currently at 100% still occupied. We have a few applications these are the ones that are harder to house because we have criteria they have to meet.

For work orders we have ten outstanding work orders. Average closed date of 5.5 days. These are for our Farm Labor. We have three open work orders with an average closure of 4.6 average days.

There was no public comment.

E-2 Discussion Items:

- A. The attorney contract board members requested to see what our current attorney's contract end date is. There is no end date to the attorney contract. The contract was executed on October of 2021 and there is no set term. It is basically the client may discharge the firm at any time by written notice effective when the firm receives it. For the next steps, the Interim Executive Director will need directions on what the Board would like to see on this item.

Commissioner S. Garcia reported that this would be something that would need to be agenized.

Legal Counsel Emilio J. Huerta reiterated that Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro would like some clarity and direction as to RFP the attorney contract. When Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro is ready they will set it out for RFP. Legal counsel Emilio J. Huerta encourages it.

Legal Counsel Emilio J. Huerta and Commissioner S. Montes had a brief discussion on the purpose of RFP and performance review for elected Legal Counsel.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez reiterated that Board members at any time have the right to continue with the agreement or end it.

Chairperson E. Mejia reported that it was before her time when Legal Counsel was appointed and is curious as to why the process was hurried or what kind of crisis HACM was facing.

Legal Counsel Emilio J. Huerta said he could not comment on that because he did not know what was going on. He was made to believe that there was some sense of urgency.

Chairperson E. Mejia asked about the RFP for the Executive Director position. How will it work?

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that she does not know if it is common or not but that the Board would like the new Executive Director to make that decision as far as the attorney, and because that is the person that will be working with the attorney. She feels it would be better to have an Executive Director first, and then go out to RFP for Legal Counsel.

No public comment.

B: Cost-of-living adjustment

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported Alex had worked on this to see what the numbers would look like. They did research and went far back to 2017 and it has been pretty much across the board at 2.5 percent. They located as far as where did those numbers come from based on two varied factors which is know the CPI and look at other agencies. They ran some numbers. This is only for discussion and will be brought back at the November Board meeting and with a retro back tot October 1st. Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro recommends three proposals which are 3%, 4% and 5%. Alex will present those percents.

Commissioner C. Gallegos asked if we have given it for the past two years.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported Yes.

Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada reported that it was done for two years and then not for two years. He ran a few numbers, a few of the figures on what the fiscal impact might look like based on the different percentage increases. Example with a 3% we are looking at a fiscal impact of \$46,500, 4% it would be \$62,000 and at 5% it would be \$77,500. These figures do include not just the stats, not just the salary increases, but also the additional benefit percentage increases that come along with the increase in wages. We need some input from the board and some guidance on a decision around a COLA increase for staff.

Commissioner S. Montes asked if we will be comparing to other agencies. The impact to the Organization helps make better decisions.

Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada reported that there was an overall classification study. The Madera Housing Authority was approximately 35% below the labor market median. Total inflation has gone approximately 26% compared to our 10 COLA increases over the last 4 years.

Commissioner C. Gallegos reported that she would like the Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada, to bring back to the Commissioners some type of spreadsheet of the Housing Authority employees. The minimum wage is going up and its looks like fast food restaurants are going up to \$20 per hour we want to retain our employees. She wants to make sure they stay with us we need to look at the numbers that they are getting paid for the work that they are doing for us. Where is the funding coming from for this cost of living? Before the funding came from investments that we had made in the interest of that we were able to use o pay for the increases of the cost of living.

Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada reported in discussions with Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro the Finance Supervisor position will not be filled. Some of the funding will come from that salary for additional expenses.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez reported that he would like to see some numbers on a spreadsheet for the next Board meeting. Keeping our employees in a good environment and where they feel comfortable would be great. He wants to see through the next five years without having budget issues.

Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada reported that he would like some direction around certain percentages, so he can provide those numbers.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez asked Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro How essential is the Finance Supervisor position for us, especially if this agency plans on growing.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that it is not based on the decision that you are making today. It is something that in order to retain or attract staff, that is, going to be able to perform well. We must bring in someone at a little higher rate than hire two people. The finance supervisor position will be eliminated.

Chairperson E. Mejia asked how the work load will be redistributed if the position is eliminated.

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported that with our new software system Yardi it eliminates a lot of process time.

Commissioner S. Montes requested doing numbers for 3%, 4% and 5% so that there are options rather than saying give us back the 5%?

Interim Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro reported salary scales and our compensations do need to be looked at. This will be looked at in the future.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez reiterated what Commissioner S. Montes said about competitive rates. He would like to bring this topic back to the table and make sure that they have some comparable data to be able to justify, for example if the position is behind 4% and if there can be some adjustments verses across the board.

Financial Services Manager, Alex Estrada reported that he can look at the job classifications. He will research and look at the City of Madera for reference.

F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, Interim Executive Director provide the following reports:

1. The HUD response is due on Friday. She has been working with HUD TA they have helped her prepare a plan for the financial component of it and will be submitting that to HUD by the new deadline.
2. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported that we are focusing on leasing up. We do have ten additional vouchers that have been completed.

3. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported that with the HCV program she continues to focus on lease up. The numbers are increasing. Two families were leased up last month.
4. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported annual inspections are being conducted by ISterling. They will be submitting them to the HUD system which will bring up our numbers for the overall scores that HACM needs for HUD.
5. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported Yardi Voyager ASPIRE training is continuing to move forward. The list of courses has been sent out to the Managers. Implementation will be in November 2023.
6. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported that one of the partnerships we have is CIVIC which are doing the entrepreneurial program at the Kennedy community center. They have fifteen participants. Also, the Women's Entrepreneurs Association was there. They will hold a graduation ceremony at the Kennedy center the date will be provided in the future.
7. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro reported there are four new hires. Maria Canseco comes as an intern from Career Nexxus, and she decided to apply for the position. Jacqueline Velasquez, she is the Occupancy Specialist II. She is a rehire. Sharde' Wilson is our Accounting Tech. II she comes to us from a temp. agency, Ultimate staffing as a direct hire because of her qualifications. Alex Estrada is our Financial Manager his background is in auditing.

Commissioner S. Garcia thanked Blanca for providing the Board members with the agenda and the packet in a timely manner.

There were no public comments.

G. COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

1. Commissioner Gallegos thanked Blanca and HACM staff for all they do. The weather is shifting, be careful out there.
2. Commissioner Montes thanked everyone for everything. He is glad HACM is staffed.
3. Commissioner Garcia had nothing to report.
4. Commissioner Rodriguez wanted to congratulate the new members at the Housing Authority. He sent shout outs to all who attended the Laguette.
5. Commissioner Villegas thanked Blanca for doing an excellent job. He also thanked Alex Estrada for coming on board.
6. Chairperson Commissioner Mejia thanked everyone at the HACM and is grateful for all the work that we do. She attended the Laguette. About 30,000 people attended throughout the day.

H. CLOSED SESSION:

The Board of Commissioners temporarily adjourned from open session and met in closed session with legal counsel Emilio J. Huerta to discuss the following items:

- H-1:** Employee personnel matters pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 54957(b)(1).
- H-2:** Interim Executive Director Blanca Mendoza- Navarro's salary pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 54957(b)(1).
- H-3:** Claim of Stephany Fernandez, potential litigation pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 54956.9(d)(4)

At 8:07 p.m. the Commissioners resumed open session. Attorney Emilio Huerta reported:

1. That the HACM Board of Commissioners had a discussion regarding Miss Stephany Fernandez regarding an offer to resolve her claim.
2. There was a discussion regarding the salary of Interim Director Ms. Blanca Mendoza-Navarro. There was an agreement to extend an offer to Ms. Mendoza-Navarro. The Commissioners appointed Commissioner Garcia, Mejia and Montes as an Adhoc Committee to meet with Ms. Blanca Mendoza-Navarro regarding her salary demands.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairperson E. Mejia announced that the next regularly monthly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held on Wednesday, November 08, 2023, at 6 p.m., in the City of Madera Council Chambers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

CERTIFICATE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing October 11, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Housing Authority of the City of Madera's Board of Commissioners at a duly noticed meeting on November 08, 2023, where a quorum was present in accordance with the HACM Bylaws.

Executed on this 8th day of November 2023.

By: Marisela Lopez
Marisela Lopez
Housing Authority of the City of Madera