

Housing Authority of the City of Madera



205 North G Street • Madera, CA 93637 • (559) 674-5695 • Fax: (559) 674-5701 • TTY: 711 • www.maderaha.org

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 14, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MADERA

CALL TO ORDER:

The August 14, 2024, Regular Meeting for the Housing Authority of the City of Madera was called to order by Vice Chair Anita Evans at 6:06 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 available simultaneously to the public via Zoom.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chair Elsa Mejia	(Via Zoom)
Vice Chair Anita Evans	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Steve Montes	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Santos Garcia	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Artemio Villegas	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioner Cece Gallegos	(Absent for Personal Reasons)
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GUESTS/STAFF PRESENT:

HACM Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro (In Person)
HACM Executive Administrative Assistant Giselle Flores (In Person)
HACM Legal Counsel Emilio J. Huerta (In Person)
HACM Finance Manager Alex Estrada (In Person)
HACM Programs Manager Lucia Lopez (In Person)
HACM Maintenance Manager Jared Garza (In Person)
HACM Maintenance Employee Thomas Gonzales (In Person)

INVOCATION:

Fred Thurman from Madera Ministries led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Jose Rodriguez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner J. Rodriguez moved to approve the Agenda; Commissioner A. Villegas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

YAYES: (6) Chair Elsa Mejia,
Vice Chair Anita Evans,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez,
Commissioner Santos Garcia, and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (1) Commissioner Cece Gallegos

ABSTAIN: (0)

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public speaker, Ralph Teran, expressed his concerns about his current living situation and sought clarification on law enforcement regulations that might impact his homelessness. He specifically inquired whether the rumors about homeless individuals being prohibited from sleeping in front of buildings were true. Mr. Teran asked the Board if anyone had knowledge or additional information regarding these rumors.

A. WORKSHOPS:

Finance Manager Alex Estrada presented the budget for the fiscal year (2023-2024) with an emphasis of where we receive the revenue and what is projected for FY 2024-2025. The total revenue is expected to be \$10.9 million, which is \$192,000 more than the current year. This increase is mainly due to higher rents for Farm Labor properties and more interest income.

The Revolving Fund, which gets money from various sources, i.e., interagency revenues and rental income, is expected to see a 12% decrease in revenue because of lower interest income. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Fund will have a 5% revenue reduction due to higher HAP payments and lower admin fees.

The Public Housing Fund’s tenant rents are projected to increase to about \$1.5 million, however they are coming in at about \$1.7 million. The operating subsidy from HUD is slightly lower than expected but

should rise next year. Interest income is budgeted at \$100,000 but is expected to be closer to \$120,000 this year, with a conservative projection of \$88,000 for next year. Overall, Public Housing's revenue remained relatively stable, with only a slight decrease of about 1%.

For ROSS and FSS funds, the budgets are based on expected grants and awards.

The Farm Labor revenue is expected to increase by 10% due to higher rents and more interest income.

Notable expense changes include a 40% increase in property insurance, a 10% rise in medical insurance premiums, a 50% increase in police services, and a \$40,000 reduction in software costs by deactivating the old software.

Overall, most funds are expected to be positive, except for the HCV fund, which is facing a deficit. To address this, the plan includes leasing available vouchers, opening the waitlist to get more applicants, and increasing admin fees to avoid a large deficit.

B. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Approval of consent items.

B-1 July 10th, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes.

B-2 Register Audited Demands for July 2024.

B-3 Out-of-State Travel Training:

NAHRO Conference – Orlando Florida – 09/24/2024-09/28/2024

- **Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, Executive Director**
- **Elsa Mejia, Board Chair**

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

Commissioner Garcia pulled Item B-3 for discussion, expressing concerns about Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro's frequent out-of-state training sessions. Commissioner Garcia questioned the necessity and appropriateness of these trainings.

Ms. Mendoza-Navarro explained that the upcoming NAHRO conference will have a training specifically geared for Executive Directors. She emphasized that while she has participated in various online training courses, this in-person training offers a unique opportunity for full engagement and learning to improve the Agency by focusing on partnerships and learning about repositioning to create more housing.

Chair Mejia supported Ms. Mendoza-Navarro's attendance at these training courses, highlighting the valuable knowledge and enthusiasm she brings back. Chair Mejia noted that Ms. Mendoza-Navarro plans ahead to ensure she remains responsive and prepared for any Agency needs during her absence.

Commissioner Steve Montes agreed on the importance of staff, including the Executive Director, attending these meetings for continuous learning and positive changes within the Agency. However, he

suggested that such discussions should be reserved for performance evaluations or private sessions, rather than during Board meetings.

Commissioner Garcia inquired about the Agency’s budget for travel expenses, specifically for the Executive Director. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro and Mr. Estrada confirmed the existence of a travel budget but did not have the details available at the moment.

Commissioner Jose Rodriguez reminded the Board that the budget was approved by the Board of Commissioners and there should be no need for further scrutiny unless expenses exceed the budget.

Commissioner J. Rodriguez moved to approve the Consent Calendar Items. Commissioner S. Montes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with five (5) yes votes and one (1) no vote.

- YAYES: (5) Chair Elsa Mejia,
Vice Chair Anita Evans,
Commissioner Steve Montes,
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and
Commissioner Artemio Villegas
- NOES (1) Commissioner Santos Garcia
- ABSENT: (1) Commissioner Cece Gallegos
- ABSTAIN: (0)

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

C-1 RESOLUTION NO. 1293 of The Housing Authority of the City of Madera discussion and approval of the HACM By-Laws.

Attorney Emilio J. Huerta presented Resolution No. 1293 by presenting the draft of the By-Laws dated August 8th, 2024, highlighting sections needing further discussion, particularly the election of officers in Article 3, Section 4.

During the meeting, several Commissioners, including Commissioner Garcia, expressed concerns about the lack of clarity on changes in the By-Laws. Attorney Huerta admitted that the previous red line changes were missing in this version. Commissioner Rodriguez questioned the need for further delays, noting there had been plenty of opportunities for input. Chair Mejia, Vice Chair Evans, and Commissioner Garcia were uncomfortable with some language in the By-Laws.

Commissioner Garcia asked about Section 4 regarding non-elected council members and the number of commissioners required. Attorney Huerta explained that in the past, HUD has previously allowed the agency not to require Resident Commissioners, but now the Board can appoint a resident if there’s a vacancy.

The Executive Director, Blanca Mendoza-Navarro, clarified that the California Health and Safety Code states the Board should have seven (7) commissioners, two (2) who can be Resident Commissioners if decided by the Board. She explained that because the Agency is small, the entire Board can be made up of City Council members. Attorney Huerta added that HUD had approved

the change to eliminate Resident Commissioners in the past, and this has been the practice since then. In the end, the Board decided to postpone the approval for a month.

Chair Mejia left the meeting via Zoom at 7:38 p.m. due to her phone dying.

There was a motion made by Commissioner Garcia to eliminate the word “professional” from Article 3 Section 4. Commissioner Villegas seconded the motion. The motion passed with three (3) yes votes and two (2) no votes.

YAYES:	(3)	Vice Chair Anita Evans, Commissioner Santos Garcia, and Commissioner Artemio Villegas
ABSENT:	(2)	Chair Elsa Mejia, and Commissioner Cece Gallegos
NOES	(2)	Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and Commissioner Steve Montes
ABSTAIN:	(0)	

Vice Chair Evans moved to approve the decision to table the discussion of the By-Laws and incorporate what has already been approved. Commissioner J. Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion passed with three (3) yes votes and two (2) no votes.

YAYES:	(3)	Vice Chair Anita Evans, Commissioner Santos Garcia, and Commissioner Jose Rodriguez
ABSENT:	(2)	Chair Elsa Mejia, and Commissioner Cece Gallegos
NOES	(2)	Commissioner Santos Garcia, and Commissioner Artemio Villegas
ABSTAIN:	(0)	

C-3 INFORMATIONAL MEMO – HUD PHARS Recover Agreement.

Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented Informational Memo – HUD PHARS Recover Agreement. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro presented an update from HUD regarding the Housing Authority of the City of Madera’s (HACM) current status and the steps needed for improvement. The Agency must follow a recovery plan, which includes submitting progress reports every 30 days, improving performance scores, and ensuring timely submission of financial statements. Specifically, HACM needs to improve the financial performance by 50% for the PHARS assessment for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and score at least 60% for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

The Board and Staff are required to complete HUD training on governance and financial management within a year. HUD recommended that the Agency join the Valley Authorities Consortium and evaluate

repositioning the public housing portfolio. If the Agency fails to meet the agreement's terms, HUD may take over management or find other management agencies to do so.

Ms. Mendoza-Navarro also mentioned that the Agency is working hard to meet these requirements, with the goal of exiting the recovery plan within two years. Staff has submitted the unaudited and audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, and received full points for this submission. Staff is confident in their progress and is using resources like a fee accountant and training platforms to ensure compliance.

C-4 DISCUSSION MEMO – Special Meetings, scheduled dates.

Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented Discussion Memo C-4 regarding scheduling Special Meetings. She requested availability for a Special Board Meeting in September. Finance Manager Alex Estrada will be on medical leave starting September 5th and may not attend the Regular Board Meeting on September 11th. Due to his leave, the finance team might not have the budget ready for approval by September 11th. Mr. Estrada expects to be off for a week but suggested a tentative Special Meeting for the week of September 23rd-27th. He is working with his team to prepare the budget, which needs approval before the September 30th deadline.

The Board agreed to tentatively schedule a Special Board Meeting on September 25th, 2024, in case Mr. Estrada needs more time to finalize the Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:

No written communications were received.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

E-1: Monthly Housing Activity Report:

Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented an update on the Agency's housing programs, vacancies, and maintenance reports. The HCV department has achieved 736 lease-ups, reaching 92%, which is a 1% increase from the previous month. The Agency received approximately \$1,000 more in HAP payments this month. The HCV waitlist stands at 270, and strategic planning is underway to manage the opening of the waitlist. Staff is anticipating a high volume of applications once it opens. In Public Housing, there are currently two (2) vacancies, however there are more applicants on this waitlist since it has remained open. The Public Housing department has approximately 218 work orders, primarily due to recent inspections in preparation for the NSPIRE inspection. The average time to close these work orders is 21 days. For Farm Labor, there are two (2) vacancies and 14 people on the waiting list. The Farm Labor department has completed 18 work orders with an average completion time of 6.23 days.

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

F. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:

Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro provided a summary of the departmental reports. The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) department is actively issuing vouchers and processing new contracts.

They have caught up with all inspections, including the initial ones. The ROSS and FSS departments are busy planning the National Night Out event scheduled for October and working with community groups.

Public Housing and HUD conducted NSPIRE inspections in July. AMP-1 received a tentative score of 90 and AMP-2 received a tentative score of 94 out of 100. These high scores mean HUD won't conduct an inspection for three years. Staff continues working on leasing and yearly inspection certifications. The migrant center is fully leased, and the finance team is preparing the budget for 2024-2025

Maintenance staff is focusing on urgent work orders and addressing findings from the NSPIRE inspections. They have successfully completed repairs on a sewer pump at one of the properties.

Administration, the salary class and compensation studies kicked off on July 11th. The consultant will be meeting staff in early August to compare duties with job descriptions. Results from this study are expected before the September budget to incorporate necessary adjustments.

Training remains a priority, with the Housing HCV Manager, Housing Inspector, and Finance Manager set to attend the YASC conference in San Diego at the end of August. Management staff participated in a disaster response, readiness and preparation training virtually from July 30th to 31st, which prompted them to review and improve emergency protocols in collaboration with local agencies.

Recruitment efforts are ongoing for the Maintenance Worker II position, with interviews conducted last week and second interviews scheduled for next week. Staff had a strong pool of over 50 applicants, now narrowed down to five candidates. Positions for Executive Administrative Assistant and Housing Programs Compliance Manager will be posted after the completion of the classification and compensation study. Discussions are also underway with the Valley Consortium about establishing an intergovernmental agency agreement instead of the current consortium, as regulated by the CFR.

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

G. COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

1. Vice Chair Evans had nothing to report.
2. Commissioner Montes had nothing to report.
3. Commissioner Garcia had nothing to report.
4. Commissioner Rodriguez had nothing to report.
5. Commissioner Villegas had nothing to report.

H. CLOSED SESSION: Attorney Emilio J. Huerta

Pursuant to CA Govt. Code 54956.9 (d)(4), the Board of Commissioners temporarily adjourned from open session and met in closed session at 7:34 p.m. regarding the following:

- H-1:** Discussion of litigation matters pursuant to CA Govt. Code Section 54956.9(d)(4):

A. Potential litigation: Public Housing Accommodation – 800 Yosemite

B. Renee Wright v. Housing Authority of the City of Madera

Upon resuming the closed session, Attorney Emilio J. Huerta reported on the claim submitted by former Housing Authority Executive Director, Ms. Renee Wright. On July 15, 2024, Ms. Wright filed a claim for damages against the Housing Authority of the City of Madera, alleging a breach of her employment contract under California Government Code Section 912.4(a). The Housing Authority has formally rejected this claim and will instruct its legal counsel to notify Ms. Wright’s attorneys of this decision.

Nothing else to report.

I. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Anita Evans announced that the next regularly monthly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held on Wednesday, September 11th, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the City of Madera Council Chambers.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

CERTIFICATE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing August 14th, 2024, Regular Board Meeting Minutes of the Housing Authority of the City of Madera (HACM) were reviewed and approved by the Housing Authority of the City of Madera’s Board of Commissioners at a duly noticed meeting on September 11th, 2024, where a quorum was present in accordance with the HACM Bylaws.

Executed on this 11th day of September 2024.

By: _____
Giselle Flores
Executive Administrative Assistant
Housing Authority of the
City of Madera