

# Housing Authority of the City of Madera



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## MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2024 REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF MADERA

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

The September 11, 2024, Regular Meeting for the Housing Authority of the City of Madera was called to order by Chairperson Elsa Mejia at 6:04 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	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Cece Gallegos	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Steve Montes	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)
Commissioner Artemio Villegas	(In Person at the City of Madera Council Chambers)

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:**

Vice Chair Anita Evans	(Absent)
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez	(Absent)
Commissioner Santos Garcia	(Absent)

### **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 (Via Zoom)  
HACM Finance Manager Alex Estrada (Via Zoom)  
HACM Programs Manager Lucia Lopez (In Person)  
HACM Maintenance Manager Jared Garza (In Person)  
HACM Maintenance Employee Thomas Gonzales (In Person)  
HACM Occupancy Specialist II Maria Canseco (Via Zoom)

**INVOCATION:**

Sammy Neely from Madera Ministries led the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Steve Montes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Commissioner C. Gallegos moved to approve the Agenda; Commissioner S. Montes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

YAYES: (4) Chair Elsa Mejia,  
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,  
Commissioner Steve Montes, and  
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (3) Vice Chair Anita Evans,  
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and  
Commissioner Santos Garcia

ABSTAIN: (0)

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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

**A. WORKSHOPS:**

No workshops.

**B. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

Approval of consent items.

**B-1 Approval of August 14, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes.**

**B-2 Approval of Register Audited Demands for August 2024.**

- B-3 RESOLUTION NO. 1299 of The Housing Authority of the City of Madera consideration of approval of schedule of accounts chargeable to collection losses for Public Housing (write offs).**
- B-4 RESOLUTION NO. 1300 of The Housing Authority of The City of Madera consideration of approval of schedule of accounts chargeable to collection losses for Farm Labor (write offs).**
- B-5 RESOLUTION NO. 13.01 of The Housing Authority of The City of Madera consideration of approval to renew lease/first amendment with Community Action Partnership of Madera County (CAPMC) for Pomona Ranch Daycare.**
- B-6 RESOLUTION NO. 1302 of The Housing Authority of The City of Madera, consideration of approval to first amendment to the Law Enforcement Services Agreement between Madera Police Department and Housing Authority of The City of Madera.**

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

Commissioner S. Montes moved to approve the Consent Calendar Items. Commissioner C. Gallegos seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

YAYES: (4) Chair Elsa Mejia,  
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,  
Commissioner Steve Montes, and  
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (3) Vice Chair Anita Evans,  
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and  
Commissioner Santos Garcia

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.**

Executive Director Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented the redlined draft of the By-Laws dated September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Board of Commissioners had asked for a version that showed all the changes. This draft included the final version for the Board to discuss and approve. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro mentioned that in the last meeting, the Board decided to keep Article 4 Section 3 *Term of Office* the same,

which says the Chair and Vice-Chair have a two (2) year term. She also explained that this was the original wording. The suggested change was to say, “The election would be at the annual meeting, every two (2) years”.

Ms. Mendoza-Navarro asked to add language that says, “Commissioners shall avoid inquiries, recommendations, or voice concerns regarding job performance, evaluation, discipline, or personal issues during open session”. Attorney Emilio J. Huerta suggested to add this language under Article 6 Section 9 *Board Deliberation and Action*.

Commissioner S. Montes asked for clarification on Article 3 Section 12 *Inquiries and Recommendations*. He was concerned about not being able to share any public or commissioner concerns. He also didn’t want the Commissioners to risk breaking any rules by expressing these concerns. Commissioner C. Gallegos suggested changing the language from “day-to-day operations” to something like “dictate day-to-day operations.

Commissioner S. Montes said the Board knows they are not experts in the Staff’s tasks and greatly value their expertise. They understand that, like the public in the programs, it can be challenging to understand all the details. When the team investigates or clarifies issues, it is not an implication of any wrongdoing. However, if there are concerns, it is their responsibility to address them, which can affect day-to-day operations. To improve clarity, the team suggested to include a clear definition of ‘day-to-day operations.’ They are open to making this definition less strict, as the current language is based on older guidelines and might be unclear. The team proposes either defining ‘day-to-day operations’ explicitly or providing extreme examples of what not to do.

Commissioner S. Montes suggested adding “The Board of Commissioners may make respectful inquiries and recommendations to the Executive Director, but day-to-day operations shall not change unless direction from the majority of the Board is given at a publicly noticed meeting”.

Commissioner C. Gallegos moved to approve the By-Laws with the changes requested for Article 4 Section 2, Article 6 Section 9, and Article 3 Section 12. Commissioner S. Montes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

YAYES: (3) Chair Elsa Mejia,  
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,  
Commissioner Steve Montes, and

NOES: (1) Commissioner Artemio Villegas

ABSENT: (3) Vice Chair Anita Evans,  
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and  
Commissioner Santos Garcia

ABSTAIN: (0)

**C-2 RESOLUTION NO. 1303 of The Housing Authority of The City of Madera to authorize the continuing resolution in lieu of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Adoption and Authorization of 60-day extension to prepare and present the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget.**

Finance Manager Alex Estrada presented Resolution No. 1303 to request an extension for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year Budget. He informed the Board that Staff is still preparing the proposed operating budget and will not be ready by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the start of the Fiscal Year. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Board is advised to adopt a continuing resolution to ensure the Housing Authority can meet payroll and contractual obligations and continue to provide services. Furthermore, the Salary Compensation details will not be ready in time to schedule a Special Meeting at the end of September. Therefore, Staff recommended that the Board grant a 60-day extension to complete the budget preparation.

Commissioner C. Gallegos moved to approve the Consent Calendar Items. Commissioner S. Montes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

YAYES: (4) Chair Elsa Mejia,  
Commissioner Cece Gallegos,  
Commissioner Steve Montes, and  
Commissioner Artemio Villegas

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (3) Vice Chair Anita Evans,  
Commissioner Jose Rodriguez, and  
Commissioner Santos Garcia

ABSTAIN: (0)

**D. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

No written communications were received.

**E. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**E-1: Monthly Housing Activity Report:**

Executive Blanca Mendoza-Navarro presented an update on the Agency's housing programs, vacancies and maintenance reports. The Agency is doing well on the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) lease-up applications, which have increased by 6% from the previous month. Staff anticipates that the fair market rents, effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, will increase our payment standards, consequently increasing our Housing Assistance Payments (HAP). Staff is hopeful for an increase in administrative fees. Currently, we are not ready to open the waitlist for HCV.

Regarding Public Housing as well as Farm Labor, each has three (3) vacancies that Staff are currently actively working to fill. Public Housing is addressing work orders from the NSPIRE inspections, with all reports submitted. All required work orders within the 30-day timeframe have been completed.

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, signing new Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contracts, and processing certifications. Staff is also working on the Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) reports, which have been a year-round focus due to last year's unsatisfactory results. The reporting period ends on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Our inspector is currently performing HQS quality control inspections in-house, instead of hiring a contractor as the Agency has done in the past.

The ROSS and FSS departments are continuing their neighborhood watch meetings with the Madera Police Department. They are also preparing for the National Night out event, which might be on Halloween this year.

As previously mentioned, Public Housing is actively leasing up and working on vacancies. The same applies to Farm Labor (FML). We have installed three (3) new cameras at FML properties, in addition to the two (2) cameras that were already in place.

The Finance Department is currently working on the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget. Finance Staff is also preparing to send unaudited reports on time, both for the November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, deadline and the audited reports due on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Despite this critical period, Staff is on track to submit these reports to stay in compliance with the PHARS assessment, which is our recovery plan with HUD.

Maintenance issued three (3) bid invitations using our new procurement platform. We received five (5) re-submissions for our window replacements for AMP-1 and AMP-2. The Maintenance Shop's bid for repairs will be closing in a few days. We had a good turnout for our bid walks and are currently reviewing the bids to select the lowest and most responsive bidder. Since the bids exceed \$150,000, the team plans to present the contract at the next meeting for Board approval.

Administration received a preliminary draft of the salary compensation study, which is still being worked on. Finance Manager, Alex Estrada and Ms. Mendoza-Navarro are carefully reviewing the details to minimize errors, as the last study in 2017 was not fully implemented. They aim to ensure the final plan is fully implemented and within budget.

Ms. Mendoza-Navarro mentioned that the study involved reaching out to comparable agencies, including Stanislaus, Kings, and Fresno, to gather comprehensive data. The NAHRO consultant conducted detailed interviews with each staff member to align their actual work with their job descriptions. The team hopes to complete this process by the end of the month to prepare the budget.

Training remains a priority for our team. Recently, the Housing HCV Manager, Housing Inspector, and Finance Manager attended the San Diego YASC Annual Conference. They returned with valuable insights and information, which they are now sharing with the rest of the staff to enhance our operations.

Ms. Mendoza-Navarro explained that each board member received a Handbook for Commissioners before the meeting. These handbooks contain great information on finance monitoring and other important topics, such as conducting effective Board meetings.

Commissioner C. Gallegos expressed concerns about the properties having weeds instead of green grass. She hopes to see improvements in the yards to enhance their appearance. Ms. Mendoza-Navarro assured her that the landscaping team will look into this.

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

**G. COMMISSIONER REPORTS:**

1. Commissioner C. Gallegos shared a remembrance of 9/11, marking the 23rd anniversary of the tragic loss of many citizens in New York City. She honored the law enforcement officers and firefighters who passed away from smoke inhalation and noted the ongoing impact on children who lost their parents on September 11th, 2001. Commissioner Gallegos mentioned that she and others reach out to students at schools, engaging in activities like reading stories about 9/11.
2. Commissioner S. Montes had nothing to report.
3. Commissioner A. Villegas had nothing to report.
4. Chairperson E. Mejia 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 6:56 p.m. regarding the following:

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

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

Upon resuming the closed session, Attorney Emilio J. Huerta reported that there was no action taken by the Board of Commissioners in this regard.

Nothing else to report.

**I. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Elsa Mejia announced that the next regularly monthly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners will be held on Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., in the City of Madera Council Chambers.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

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**CERTIFICATE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing September 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, where a quorum was present in accordance with the HACM Bylaws.

Executed on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024.

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