

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
April 15, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

Chairperson Jeff Smith called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Lois Bhatt, Mark Chiarolanza, Diane Driscoll, Mark McBride and Jeff Smith

Also present were Tanya Van Order, Executive Director, Karen O’Keeffe, Deputy Director, Rachel Ehrlich, Council Liaison and Terrence Corrison, attorney.

Ms. Van Order read the NJ Open Public Meetings Act Notice: Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided by the Secretary of the Housing Authority of the Borough of Madison by preparing an Annual Notice dated January 21, 2025, setting forth the date, time, and place of this meeting. Said notice was filed with the Clerk of the Borough of Madison, forwarded to newspapers of local circulation and to the persons requesting it, and posted on the Madison Housing Authority website.

Approval of the Minutes

Commissioners Driscoll and Chiarolanza moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 11, 2025. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Report

Borough Council Liaison Rachel Ehrlich reported that the Borough is actively addressing recent legal and planning developments related to its affordable housing obligations. A court ruling imposed an increased obligation, which the Borough has appealed. In the meantime, municipal planners are preparing revised planning documents for both current and future housing rounds to preserve litigation immunity.

The Borough-sponsored affordable housing development on Walnut Street and Community Place is proceeding well. The project has received strong public interest, and a community event is planned to mark its opening.

Report of Chairperson

Chairperson Jeff Smith reported that Commissioner Caridad Reyes has submitted her resignation from the MHA Board.

Report of Executive Director

Ms. Van Order reported that conditional letters of approval have been received from Morris County Community Development for the 2024 HOME and CDBG grant awards. The HOME grant, totaling \$350,000, is designated for the replacement of rooftop Air Handler Units (AHUs) at the Rexford Tucker Senior Apartments. Although the project is ready for bidding, the Community Development department has delayed the 2024 funding process due to internal factors. A grant agreement must be executed before bidding can proceed. This delay—beyond

MHA's control—will impact the project timeline. LAN Associates may also require additional professional fees due to the extended project duration. As the project was originally scheduled to begin in fall 2025, and bidding was to commence this month, the next viable construction window is now spring 2026.

In conjunction with the AHU replacement, MHA is assessing the optimal timing and funding strategy for the roof replacement project. Estimated to cost between \$800,000 and \$900,000, the roof replacement can be funded through MHA's reserves. MHA is also exploring the use of administrative fee reserves and HUD-held HAP reserves for this capital improvement, utilizing MTW funding flexibility.

Ms. Van Order provided an update on MHA's request to FEMA for additional reimbursement related to the 2022–2023 flood mitigation project. The request, totaling \$59,000, was submitted through the New Jersey Emergency Management Grants system and is expected to be paid shortly. FEMA is anticipated to cover 90% of the additional costs, which were above initial estimates.

Ms. Van Order also reported that the deed for the Belmont Avenue subdivision has been filed with the county. The attorney is preparing the easement agreement for filing. The Borough Tax Assessor has renumbered the existing buildings to 20A–B and 22A–B, with the rear duplex now designated as 22C–D (formerly 24A–B), thereby preserving 24A–D for the upcoming development. Restrepo & Associates are advancing to the next stages of the project, including Phase 1 environmental testing, ground-penetrating radar (GPR), and a subsurface soil investigation. Earlier this month, Ms. Van Order and Ms. O'Keeffe met with Restrepo & Associates and the project architect to review building design details. The state funding being pursued requires high-quality materials and energy-efficient features such as HardiePlank siding, ENERGY STAR-rated windows, enhanced insulation, bathroom ventilation, and upgraded kitchen appliances including built-in microwaves and dishwashers.

Ms. Van Order noted that an additional meeting regarding 24 Belmont Avenue was held with attorney Frank Borin. Mr. Borin previously assisted MHA in obtaining partial releases from RAD Use Agreements to enable development across six parcels. He is now advising MHA on the potential formation of a Special Purpose Entity (SPE)—an LLC wholly owned by the Authority. Transferring the property to the SPE would permit state funds to be directed to the SPE while MHA retains full control. This structure, successfully used by the East Orange Housing Authority, offers benefits such as applying the property's "as-is" value toward the grant and clarifying prevailing wage obligations.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order reminded the Board that members have received an email granting access to the revised Section 8 Administrative Plan. MHA-specific policy sections are marked in italicized blue text, while the remaining content reflects HUD-mandated language. A resolution to approve the revised Administrative Plan will be presented at the June regular board meeting.

Report of Deputy Director

Deputy Director O'Keeffe reported the following updates:

On April 1st, she and Jessica Kirchenbauer conducted a file review at the Summit Housing Authority (SHA) as part of MHA's role as Administrative Agent. They verified waitlist procedures, rent calculations, and file completeness. A follow-up report is being finalized. SHA's annual unit inspections were also coordinated with an independent inspector.

Annual inspections of all MHA- and RAD-owned units are underway. The senior building, Community Place, and Park Avenue have been completed. Inspections at Belmont Avenue, John Avenue, and Loantaka Way are scheduled for April 22nd. As in past years, an inspector from Morris County Housing Authority is being used.

Based on inspection findings and prior observations, MHA has prioritized window replacement at Park Avenue. A CDBG grant application was submitted to fund full-site replacement, addressing widespread issues with sealing and locking.

MHA's ROSS grant application was denied for the second year. HUD advised that no new grants were awarded this cycle. MHA will continue applying to demonstrate ongoing need.

On a brighter note, Ms. O'Keeffe reported that MHA received renewal funding for its Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, with an increased award. As a result, the FSS Coordinator role will be brought in-house. Ralph Ortiz has been hired for the position and will begin April 21st. He brings both professional and lived experience, including prior roles with DYFS and the U.S. Department of Immigration.

On April 9th, O'Keeffe and Kirchenbauer met with Ray Codey and Michael Pellessier to review MHA's work as Administrative Agent for Madison. They discussed transitioning to a continuously open waitlist, using email notifications and randomized eligibility lotteries. A discussion of upcoming affordable housing developments highlighted the potential need for additional staffing on our end if these projects move forward.

Lastly, both Ms. O'Keeffe and Executive Director Tanya plan to attend the NJNAHRO and MTW conferences later this month for updates on HUD policy changes.

Committee Reports

None.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Correspondence

Office of Community Development Letter Re: CDBG Funding

Office of Community Development Letter Re: PY2024 HOME Funding

NAHRO 2023 Funding for Select HUD Programs

Office of Public Housing Investments Letter

Certificates of Attendance: UHAC Unpacked: Navigating New Rules for Affordable Housing for Karen O'Keeffe and Jessica Kirchenbauer

Certificate: Fair Housing – Sect 504 and Reasonable Accommodations for Elaine Martino

Resolutions

25-15-4-1 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Invoices.

Motion to approve the resolution made by Commissioner Driscoll and seconded by Commissioner Bhatt. Resolution was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

25-15-4-2 Resolution Approving the Submission of an Application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

Motion to approve the resolution made by Commissioner Chiarolanza and seconded by Commissioner McBride. Resolution was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

25-15-4-3 Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with Voza Agency, Inc. for Consulting, Field & Marketing Services

Motion to approve the resolution made by Commissioner Bhatt and seconded by Commissioner Chiarolanza. Resolution was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Driscoll moved for adjournment at 5:46 P.M.

Next meeting: May 20, 2025, at 4:30 PM in the 2nd Floor Committee Room of the Hartley Dodge Memorial Building at 50 Kings Road, Madison, NJ.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen O’Keeffe
Deputy Director