

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
May 20, 2025, REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Lois Bhatt called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM. The following Commissioners answered as present:

Lois Bhatt, Mark Chiarolanza, Diane Driscoll, Mark McBride, Mary Sue Salko and Shelby Scott

Commissioner Smith was absent.

Also present were Tanya Van Order, Executive Director, Karen O’Keeffe, Deputy Director, Rachel Ehrlich, Council Liaison and Terrence Corriston, 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 Salko moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 15, 2025. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Report

Borough Council Liaison Rachel Ehrlich reported that the Borough continues to work on its required housing obligation. Federal funding for the Walnut Street and Community Place project was released. A grand opening event is scheduled for this development on May 28th. Both Congresswoman Sherrill and Governor Murphy plan to attend.

Councilwoman Ehrlich thanked MHA Commissioner McBride for his effort in meeting with the Mayor and Planning Board Chair in Summit to discuss affordable housing. She also reported on the status of additional housing developments in the Borough.

Report of Chairperson

None.

Report of Executive Director

Ms. Van Order reported that MHA has submitted a funding request of \$233,755 from the Borough Affordable Housing Trust Fund to support the development at 24 Belmont Avenue. The request package included the project’s financial pro forma, approved site plan, zoning board resolution, development team roster, and development schedule. A resolution in support of this request is scheduled for consideration at the regular Council meeting on May 28th. The requested amount represents approximately 10% of the total project cost and is a critical component of MHA’s broader application for \$1.85 million from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJ DCA) Municipal Settlement Fund.

Ms. Van Order also reported that MHA is utilizing the legal services of Frank Borin for guidance on prevailing wage and bidding requirements. Mr. Borin previously worked with MHA on the 2015 RAD conversion and the 2022 partial release from the RAD Use Agreements, which enabled MHA to subdivide the property for further development. His preliminary review of NJ DCA funding requirements indicates that neither prevailing wage nor formal bidding procedures are mandated. In the absence of a formal bid requirement, MHA can solicit competitive quotes and select the most qualified construction partner based on reliability and cost.

Lastly, Ms. Van Order provided an update on the results of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, which identified a suspected underground storage tank on the subdivided Belmont Avenue parcel. Lewis Consulting Group believes the object may be an unregulated heating oil tank. A pit test will be conducted to verify its identity.

Regarding the outstanding request for additional FEMA mitigation funding, Ms. Van Order noted that MHA received a check for \$53,134.88 which will be deposited to the Replacement & Reserve account.

Next, Ms. Van Order provided a brief update on the quarterly cash balance and our budget-to-actual for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, noting that FYE 3/31 budget-to-actual is provisional, pending completion of the annual audit. Capital improvements last fiscal year totaled \$354,000. Of that, \$87,715 was funded by a CDBG grant for the transformer relocation project; the remaining \$266,300 came from MHA's operating budget. Projects included a new Jeep, roof replacements at 80 Park Avenue, paving, a new trash compactor at the senior building, and unit upgrades during turnovers. Turnover upgrades alone accounted for \$114,000—about one-third of total capital spending.

Ms. Van Order reminded the Board of the Grand Opening ceremony next week for The Forum at Madison on Community Place, a development for which MHA is providing 8 project-based vouchers. MHA has executed an Agreement to Enter into a Housing Assistance Payments (AHAP) contract with Walnut Street LP. A Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) contract will be executed once the buildings receive Certificates of Occupancy and all project-based voucher (PBV) units have passed inspection. The 8 units receiving PBV assistance are designated for very-low income homeless families. These families will be referred through the county's Coordinated Entry system and household must meet standards of tenant worthiness of both Walnut Street LP and MHA. The 8 PBV assisted units are integrated throughout the development: six buildings will each include one PBV unit, while one building, located on the Walnut Street side of the development, will contain two PBV units.

Ms. Van Order noted that MHA is providing a significant financial commitment to the Forum at Madison, estimated at over \$3.5 million over the HAP contract. In consideration of this support, Ms. Van Order has asked the developer, Walnut Street LP, to absorb the cost of shared trash and recycling services at Community Place. MHA previously allowed the developer to expand the trash/recycling area onto MHA property to serve both MHA's 13 units and the 14 new LIHTC units. Ms. Van Order hopes the developer will agree to cover this shared cost, given MHA's investment. At the Recent MTW Collaborative Conference, MTW agency partners shared that typical PHA negotiations for LIHTC developments include upfront contributions, rent-sharing, property management roles, or ownership transfers. For future LIHTC projects seeking PBV support from MHA, Ms. Van Order recommends engaging a consultant to represent MHA's interests in negotiations.

Report of Deputy Director

Deputy Director O’Keeffe reported on her attendance at three major conferences: NJNAHRO, the MTW Collaborative, and PHADA. At the MTW Collaborative Conference, HUD leadership outlined six areas of focus, including promoting self-sufficiency, improving technology, and increasing local control. While no specific policy changes were announced, the emphasis was on repositioning subsidized housing as a temporary support system.

At the PHADA conference, concerns were raised about the financial sustainability of the Section 8 program, as rising rents continue to outpace federal appropriations. Smaller PHAs may face challenges due to limited capacity for development or revenue diversification.

Implementation of key provisions of HOTMA remains on indefinite hold due to significant technological issues at HUD. Despite a \$40 million budget, most of the funding has been spent with no functional system in place.

Ralph Ortiz has joined the Housing Authority as the new Social Services Coordinator under the FSS program. He is currently in training and beginning to meet with clients.

MHA’s recent CDBG application for window replacements at the Park Avenue sites has been submitted and presented to the committee for consideration.

Ms. O’Keeffe reminded commissioners of the upcoming Grand Opening for The Forum at Madison on May 28th, noting that over 4,600 applications were received for the 44 affordable units.

Lastly, board members interested in attending the NAHRO Summer Symposium in NYC from July 16–18 were encouraged to reach out for registration information.

Committee Reports

None.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Correspondence

Letter to Mayor Conley Requesting Municipal AHTA Funds for Belmont Ave Project

HUD Letter Re: Executive Order 14218, “Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders”

Photo: Rexford Tucker Resident Held an Easter Basket Making Workshop for Residents

Certificate of Completion for Ralph Ortiz: NAHRO Ethics for Housers

Resolutions

RESOLUTIONS:

25-20-5-1 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Invoices.

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

25-20-5-2 Resolution Approving Writing Off Outstanding Tenant Accounts Receivables

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

25-20-5-3 Resolution Approving Revision of the Section 8 Administrative Plan

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Driscoll moved for adjournment at 5:13 P.M.

Next meeting: June 17, 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