

MINUTES
MADISON HOUSING AUTHORITY
October 21, REGULAR MEETING

Vice-Chairperson Mark McBride called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. The following Commissioners answered as present: Lois Bhatt, Mark McBridel, Mark Chiaralanza, and Shelby Scott.

Commissioners Diane Driscoll, Mary Sue Salko and Jeffrey Smith were absent.

Also present were Tanya Van Order, Executive Director, Karen O’Keeffe, Deputy Director, Jennifer Grillo, Deputy Director/Housing Manager, Rachel Ehrlich, Borough 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 Chiarolanza and Bhatt moved and seconded approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 16, 2025. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Liaison Report

Borough Council Liaison Rachel Ehrlich provided an update on the Borough’s affordable housing developments.

Report of Chairperson

No Report.

Report of Executive Director

Executive Director Transition

The Executive Director transition is proceeding as outlined in the one-year plan approved by the Personnel Committee at the start of 2025. Karen O’Keeffe and Jennifer Grillo have begun transferring roles and responsibilities. Ms. Grillo has adapted quickly and no longer requires intensive training, allowing Ms. O’Keeffe to focus on Executive Director-level functions.

Federal Government Shutdown

The federal government shutdown has not yet affected agency programs. Industry partners report that HUD has obligated Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) funding through December 2025, minimizing immediate risk. Access to the ROSS account, which supports the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, also remains available.

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Grant

A renewal application for \$240,000 will be submitted for the FSS program, potentially covering a two-year term totaling \$480,000. Due to furloughs at HUD, clarification on the grant term has not been received, as the NOFA lists one year while Grantsolutions.gov lists two.

FY 3/31/2025 Audit

The audit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, has been completed, and the draft report is expected shortly. The Finance Committee will review the draft with the accountant and auditor, after which the final version will be circulated to the Board. A resolution for approval will be included in the November Board package.

Summit Housing Authority

Ms. Van Order reported that she and Ms. O’Keeffe met with fee accountant Bill Katchen and Summit Housing Authority (SHA) Executive Director Jackie Gray to discuss amendments to the Administrative Plan RAD chapter to incorporate SHA properties and policies. A related resolution is included in the current Board package. In compliance with HUD requirements, a resolution confirming the Board’s review of SHA’s 2026 annual budget will appear in next month’s materials.

24 Belmont Development Application

An application for a four-unit development at 24 Belmont Avenue was submitted to the NJ Department of Community Affairs’ Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The application meets all criteria and appears competitive. Funding announcements are expected by November 7, 2025.

Capital Projects and FY 2026–2027 Budget

Preliminary discussions have begun regarding upcoming capital projects and the FY 2026–2027 budget cycle, which begins April 1, 2026. Ms. O’Keeffe and Ms. Van Order will meet with Bill Katchen to develop a draft budget for Finance Committee review before Board introduction.

The Forum at Madison – NJ Smart Growth Award

Ms. Van Order along with Commissioner Bhatt, and Deputy Directors O’Keeffe and Grillo attended the NJ Future Smart Growth Awards ceremony in South Orange, where The Forum at Madison received an award. A video featuring Rachel Erlich will be shared once available.

Report of Deputy Director

Deputy Director O’Keeffe reported that the Authority completed two lease-ups in September and anticipates four additional lease-ups in November. Parking at the senior building has reached full capacity. To help manage demand, the Authority will pilot an incentive program offering a \$100 grocery store gift card to residents who voluntarily relinquish their parking permits. Staff will continue to emphasize alternative transportation resources available to residents, including the senior van, Morris Area Paratransit, and GoGo Grandparent services.

Ms. O’Keeffe noted that a new Social Services Coordinator, Jessenia Florez, will begin on October 27th. Ms. Florez will oversee the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program.

MHA has developed a partnership process with the Madison Area YMCA, implemented with residents' consent, allowing MHA to verify income directly for the YMCA. This streamlined process simplifies eligibility and creates a more dignified experience for residents seeking subsidized memberships.

Ms. O'Keeffe shared that NJ NAHRO awarded 14 scholarships statewide this year, three of which were received by Madison Housing Authority residents. The recipients are pursuing degrees in Business at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Visual Arts at County College of Morris, and Education at the graduate level. Two scholarships that were awarded last year to MHA residents were also renewed this academic year.

Committee Reports

Commissioner Chiarolanza provided the Buildings & Grounds Committee report. He and Deputy Directors O'Keeffe and Grillo met with Greg Nozza of Technikon at the senior building to review and discuss the plans for the roof and HVAC system replacements.

In addition to reporting on these projects, Commissioner Chiarolanza noted that he observed the completed flood mitigation work, which included relocating the transformer. He reported that while the newer boilers are providing improved energy efficiency, they are not expected to have the same lifespan as the older cast-iron models. For budget planning purposes, MHA should anticipate this shorter replacement cycle.

Commissioner Chiarolanza also visited two vacant units undergoing turnover and commended the maintenance staff for the exceptional quality of their work in preparing and upgrading the units.

Public Comment

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Correspondence

Certificate of Completion: INSPIRE Specialist Seminar for Jessica Kirchenbauer

Certificate of Completion: INSPIRE A.C.E. Exam - 2025 for Jessica Kirchenbauer

Resolutions

25-21-10-1 Resolution Authorizing the Payment of Invoices

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

25-21-10-2 Resolution Approving an Amendment to the Housing Choice Voucher Program and RAD Program Administrative Plan

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

25-21-10-3 Resolution to Retire into Closed Session

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

25-21-10-4 Resolution to Return to Open Session

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

25-21-10-5 Resolution Approving the Appointment of Karen M. O’Keeffe to the Position of Executive Director

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

25-21-10-6 Resolution Authorizing the Opening of a Bank Account to Allow Contributions for the Recognition of Service Event for Tanya Van Order’s 30 Years of Service Designating the Chairperson of the Board and the Executive Director as Authorized Signatories

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

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Commissioner Driscoll moved for adjournment at 5:40 P.M.

Next meeting: November 25, 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