

M A D E R A C O U N T Y
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION
B O A R D O F C O M M I S S I O N E R S

April 9, 2025

MINUTES

This meeting was conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Governor's Executive Order which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act. Social distancing per the Executive Order were used the meeting. Members of the public were advised at posting of the agenda that comments were accepted via email at info@maderacountyedc.com.

PRESENT: *Rob Poythress, Ollia Ridge, Jordan Wamhoff, Maiknue Vang,
Elsa Mejia, John McCann, Nathan Alonzo*

ABSENT: *Adam Olivares, Laura Young*

STAFF: *Kristina Gallagher, Lois Leonard, Elena Estrada*

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. by Chair Poythress.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3.0 INTRODUCTIONS & RECOGNITION

Self-Introductions were done with Nathan Alonzo serving as the alternate representing Utilities. Melissa Jones on zoom and Waseem Ahmed on the phone.

4.0 CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner Ridge, the agenda is approved as presented. Motion carried.

5.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

5.1 Madera County Economic Development Commission Minutes

- January 9, 2025

5.2 Madera County Economic Development Financial Report

- March 2025

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner Ridge, the consent calendar is approved as presented. Motion carried.

6.0 ACTION ITEMS-

6.1 Madera County Economic Development Commission Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner Vang the Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 is approved as presented. Motion carried.

6.2 Nominations & Terms of Office for the MCEDC Board of Commissioners

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner Ridge, MCEDC Board of Commissioners will approve the nominations and terms of office for the Board of Commissioners for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 with the addition of Nathan Alonzo to represent utilities in place of Robert Barnes with a term ending June 30, 2028. Motion carried.

6.3 Election of Officers

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner Ridge, Commissioner Poythress will serve as Chair. Motion carried.

On motion by Commissioner Wamhoff and seconded by Commissioner McCann, Commissioner Vang will serve as Vice-Chair. Motion carried.

7.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

7.1 Economic Summit

Executive Director Gallagher reported the MCEDC Economic Summit will be held on April 17, 2025 at the Madera Municipal Golf Course. One speaker, Mark Kempton, whom she worked with at CSAC will speak on infrastructure and procurement. The other is Ethan Smith from Newmark Pearson who will speak on industrial trends.

7.2 PG&E Community Wildfire Safety Program

Nathan Alonzo gave an update on wildfire safety and steps PG&E is taking to prevent utility caused wildfire. Unfortunately, wet weather is great for the farmers but not for the foothills where higher elevations increased vegetation can cause major issues. Therefore PG&E and those communities will need to be very cautious. He discussed underground plans which include 10,000 miles that only represents only 5% of the lines in the highest threat areas. They are only going underground in the areas with the highest risk areas. During wildfire season (June to November) they are deploying enhanced safety settings which if something hits the lines they turn off. The lines are then inspected, repaired and restored. They have installed new equipment to lower the amount of time of the outage, including high-definition cameras in their highest risk areas. Currently they have 30 cameras in Madera County that are shared with CalFIRE. They have 62 miles of covered lines and iron poles covered in mesh, and plan to add another 12 miles in the next 12-18 months. He shared they are mandated to do vegetation management to prevent utility issues. The majority of the work in the county is done on the valley floor. They spent \$1.8 million a year on this management. PG&E is trying to remove the \$19 per month off of consumers bills by going through the regulators. They continue to replace circuits, poles, wires and equipment to test voltage to be sure there are no issues. Discussed Public Safety Power shut off issues that occur more in Eastern Madera County than the valley floor. Reviewed financial resources for specific customers. They're working on a 3-5-year plan to flatten rates. And are finishing up a 3-year, \$40 million project to increase capacity in Madera County to allow new manufacturers, expansion of current commercial and industrial customers, which allows Madera to be open for business.

8.0 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- 8.1** *Letter in support for Valley Children's Hospital Grant Application- Congressionally Directed Spending.*

9.0 OPEN DISCUSSION/REPORT/INFORMATION

9.1 Commissioners Reports

Commissioner McCann-(Industry at Large) - *reported they did a major expansion for dry cooling equipment made for data centers. It is not doing as well as expected. The original high side of their business is doing well, so they are shifting employees from the dry side to the high side and anticipate hiring 10-15 people in the next 2-3 months and go to a second shift on that side.*

Commissioner Ridge - (Golden Valley Chamber) – reported they had their Crab Feed. It was very successful. Sold out crowd, everyone had a good time. Yesterday they had a groundbreaking for the new elementary school in Riverstone. They're having their Flatlanders Parade on May 17th and are currently having their honorary Mayor's race, that will be announced just before the parade. Plus she just found out today she is cancer free.

Commissioner Wamhoff- (Board of Supervisors) - reported the board passed their noise ordinance, giving it a little more teeth for enforcement. Deputies can give a citation on site instead of waiting for code enforcement to mail it out. People could receive multiple fines in one day. Starting at \$500, \$750, \$1000 for every violation and after. Ordinance states there can be no amplified music, TV or stereo that can be heard off your property between 10pm – 8am. They also implemented their firework ordinance where deputies can cite the property owner more than once on a single day.

Commissioner Vang-(Workforce Investment Board)- reported they just wrapped up their April 3rd City of Madera job fair where they had 773 job seekers and 46 employers. Next job fair will be held on April 24th at the Oakhurst Community Center. They currently have 21 employers looking to fill seasonal, part-time and full-time positions. They have a regional contract with their workforce colleagues in the region, which provides an HR Hotline plus HR related webinars. Worked with SBDC on a series for entrepreneur training for food businesses.

Commissioner Jones - (Bass Lake Chamber) – reported the South Shore of Bass Lake is open where businesses and campgrounds opened at the end of March. They will have their largest fundraiser, the fishing derby on the first weekend in May. Last year they gave almost \$25,000 in prizes. It's great for the businesses on the lake. They will have their Annual 4th of July Fireworks. May through August is their busiest time of the year. As a gateway to Yosemite they're waiting to see the plans for the park while, working with the visitor's bureau to be sure their voices are heard.

- 9.2 Executive Director-** reported most of her report is covered in the agenda packet. The first section of her report has changed with the economy changing day to day. She gave updates on tariffs and what possible predictions are out there on the economy. Madera County is still very affordable with the median home price of \$400,000 while the rest of California is around \$800,000. She believes there will be population growth in Madera with the planned communities. Reviewed the California Blueprint and permitting reform. There is clean up legislation on the AB98 warehouse bill. She attended the Coarsegold chamber event. Staff attended ribbon cuttings for Imperial Jewelry, Food Bank and the Madera County Women's event. She attended Monterey ICSC with several of the Executive Committee members. It was a good event meeting many people and have been receiving follow- up phone calls. Reviewed the list of projects in her board letter.

9.3 Manager of Business Development & Marketing- *gave an update on highlighting businesses on the website.*

9.4 Business Assistance/Office Manager- *as reported.*

10.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on July 9, 2025.

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Leonard, Recording Secretary