

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

October 13, 2025

MINUTES

The Madera County Economic Development Commission meetings are open to the public. Members of the public were advised at the posting of the agenda that the meeting was available for public viewing and participation through Zoom.

PRESENT: *Rob Poythress, Ollia Ridge, Jordan Wamhoff, Maiknue Vang, Waseem Ahmed, Nathan Alonzo, Melissa Jones, Dennis Haworth*

ABSENT: *Elsa Mejia, Kara Shearer, John McCann, Adam Olivares, Laura Young*

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

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chair Poythress.

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3.0 INTRODUCTIONS & RECOGNITION

4.0 CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

5.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

5.1 Madera County Economic Development Commission Minutes

- July 9, 2025

5.2 Madera County Economic Development Financial Report

- September 2025

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

6.0 ACTION ITEMS-

None.

7.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

7.1 Presentation: Congressman Adam Gray-California's 13th

Congressman Gray gave an update on gridlock and government shutdown in Washington DC, and the lack of people not being able to work together. After being in Sacramento for 10 years, he had a reputation of being able to work across party lines. He still has that commitment but is not seeing people reaching across party lines at all in Washington. But he's hopeful that they start behaving and work diplomatically and end this government shut down. Over the past 10 months in Congress, he's been working on bi-partisan bills working with other freshmen legislators. Focusing mostly recently on health care, which is a huge issue in the San Joaquin Valley. He spent the better part of a decade trying to build a medical school at UC Merced. The central valley is lacking in health care service, access and infrastructure. The ACA tax credit loss would have a significant impact in the valley especially with 60% of the area being served by California's Medi-cal program. He's introduced legislation to reverse the cuts to the Medi-Cal program and to extend the premium ACA tax credit permanently. Introduced legislation focused on agriculture and tariffs to treat food differently than other products as it relates to tariffs to stop raising prices on our food program. Working on a bi-partisan bill to get more educational resources out to communities and police departments as it relates to the fentanyl crisis. And of course, immigration is huge for communities with agriculture. They have the dignity act and the farm worker modernization act both would seek to offer security to those that are here working in our agricultural communities, following the law and contributing to our communities. There are 10 democrats and 10 republicans signed onto the bill. Our country is stronger when we all work together. But Washington is certainly lacking that bi-partisan spirit. He thinks it's important that he's there on our behalf to continue to try and foster the same collaboration that has literally been the political identity of Northern San Joaquin Valley and much of the Central Valley for its history.

8.0 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

8.1 Sustainable Wildfire Fund

8.2 AB 339-Veto

8.3 California Public Utilities Commission

8.4 SB 415-Request for Signature

9.0 OPEN DISCUSSION/REPORT/INFORMATION

9.1 Commissioners Reports

Commissioner Vang- (Workforce Investment Board)- *launched their Dress For Success project collecting gently used or dry-cleaned clothing from folks that can donate to the program. It will allow clients that have completed their training to go in the closet and get clothes in preparation for interviews. Thanked the chambers for their help with collections. They also have a healthy training budget. They have created banners and are sharing with their partners so people are aware they offer training programs for employment*

Commissioner Ahmed- (City of Chowchilla) – *Nothing to report.*

Commissioner Alonza- (Utilities) – *reported they are working on their general rate case where the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will approve the work plan for the next 3 years. They are not expecting a rate increase for the next three years. Working on undergrounding and where they can't go underground, they will do system hardening with insulated wiring with steel poles. Also a significant amount of investments toward system capacity. The state is pushing towards a 100% electric future making gas obsolete. A few weeks ago they were able to take Congressman Gray to one of their gas facilities in Hilmar showing him the renewable gas project within the ag community. A lot of money is going into fleet electric vehicles and electric vehicles. Will see a lot more of that popping in years ahead.*

Commissioner Wamhoff- (Board of Supervisors) – *reported the Board of Supervisors appointed a new County Administrative Officer. Matt Treber has been with the county for over 20 years. They also did a swearing in for the new Chief of Probation, Rick Galindo. Who has also been with the county for over 20 years. That position is appointed by the Superior Court judges. The Board of Supervisors voted to oppose Proposition 50 with a 3-2 vote. If passed it'll still leave us with 2 separate representatives, Tom McClintock and Adam Gray unlike other areas in the state.*

Commissioner Jones - (Bass Lake Chamber) – *reported half of Bass Lake is closed for the season. The south shore is closed as well as campgrounds and resorts. They will have their Halloween Trunk or Treat at the Pines Village. Their Christmas Tree Lighting, and golf cart parade there as well. Businesses are focusing on the holidays and getting traffic up there. They have the annual lakebed clean up at the end of the month.*

Commissioner Ridge - (Golden Valley Chamber) – *reported they haven't been busy during the summer months. They will have their Tree Lighting where they collect items for the Veterans Hospital. In the process of putting up banners on Avenue 12 from the high school down to the school admin office. Hope to have it done by the first of December. And they have started work on their March crab feed.*

Commissioner Poythress - (Madera Chamber)- *reported on the upcoming Pomegranate Festival on the first Saturday of November.*

Commissioner Haworth - (Chowchilla Chamber) – *reported they are working on updating their By-Laws. If anyone has examples to share, please send them to him. He would appreciate it. He would like to be consistent with other local chambers. They are currently recruiting new board members as they are a little short on them. Annual Dinner will be held on January 24, 2026. The city is having their Trunk or treat on October 25th.*

9.2 Executive Director Gallagher- *reported the new date for the State of the County will be November 13th. If you've registered and can't attend, please contact Lois Leonard. She will issue a refund. The annual report is complete but are still working on a few kinks. We will distribute once complete. She reported on attending the Workforce Conference, in Monterey, ICSC Palm Springs, and the Oakhurst Main Streets Entrepreneurial Ecosystem program. Thought it was a great program. and she shared with the City of Madera and City of Chowchilla thinking would be a benefit for them as well. Attended the GMCIA meeting where the City of Madera Chief of Police shared about active shooting especially in a manufacturing setting. Plus, the importance of having a plan. She will be attending a class in Fresno to finish an Economic Development certificate. The program is hosted by CALED. At the end of October, she will be going on a Southern California Mission trip with CCVEDC. They will be meeting with brokers and site selectors. She encouraged the Board to go through projects of interest section in her report on their own time. The information shows how Madera County market is doing. She's been working on a new project capitalizing on any available incentives. GOBIZ is featuring Freedom Industrial Park on their new Business Ready site. One out of 19 properties to be accepted. They will be accepting a total of 50 sites. Projects overall, Yosemite Travel Center broke ground in Tesoro Viejo. They will have a convenience center, Jamba Juice, and a Car Wash. The Tesla charging stations fell through, so they are looking at other options. The Ranchos is growing with the Starbucks now open and a Camarena Health Center being built. Thanked all for their support as November 4th as her one-year anniversary. Looking forward to next year. September 13th was the end of session for the legislature. The biggest bill package was the Cap & Trade program now named Cap & Invest. They extended it for another 15 years. Bills that we have taken positions on are AB 265 which was vetoed and AB415 is a lot better than AB 98. Take your time and read through her report regarding all the bills.*

9.3 Manager of Business Development & Marketing- *reported if you have any additions to the annual report to let her know. We released a graphic piece in both Spanish and English for the Loan Program and shared on social media.*

9.4 Business Assistance/Office Manager- *reported the county loan program is on hold as we need to have Program Income Reuse plan. The county has hired Self Help to help with that. Currently we have received one application for the City of Madera program.*

10.0 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on January 12, 2026.

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Leonard, Recording Secretary