



**MADERA COUNTY  
WORKFORCE  
INVESTMENT CORPORATION**

**MINUTES**

**February 26, 2026**

Convened at:

**Workforce Assistance Center  
2037 W. Cleveland Ave., Madera Ca, 93637**

**PRESENT:** Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche  
**ABSENT:** Ramona Davie, Gabriel Mejia  
**GUEST:** Russ Ryan  
**STAFF:** Bertha Vega, Jessica Roche, Maiknue Vang, Nicki Martin

**1.0 Call to Order**

*Meeting called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chair Debi Bray.*

**1.1 Pledge of Allegiance**

**2.0 Additions to the Agenda**

*None.*

**3.0 Public Comment**

*None.*

**4.0 Introductions and Recognitions**

*Roundtable introductions were made by everyone in attendance. Russ Ryan, Ryan Legal, PC, introduced himself.*

**5.0 Adoption of Board Agenda**

*Roger Leach moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Tim Riche.*

*Vote: Approved – unanimous*

*Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche*

**6.0 Closed Session**

*Mattie Mendez moved to close open session and open closed session at 3:07 p.m., seconded by Aaron Chambers.*

*Vote: Approved – unanimous*

*Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche*

**6.1 Request for Closed Session: Potential Employee Appointment/Evaluation/Release/Compensation Pursuant to Government Code § 54957(b).**

*Roger Leach moved to adjourn closed session at 3:46 p.m., seconded by Mattie Mendez.*

*Vote: Approved – unanimous*

Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche

**a. Closed Session Report Out**

Roger Leach moved to approve the remote employment contract for Jessica Roche, Controller, seconded by Tim Riche.

Vote: Approved – unanimous

Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche

**7.0 Consent Calendar**

**7.1 Consideration of approval of December 11, 2025, Madera County Workforce Investment Corporation (MCWIC) meeting minutes.**

Tim Riche moved to approve, seconded by Mattie Mendez.

Vote: Approved – unanimous

Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche

**8.0 Action Items**

**8.1 Consideration of approval of the MCWIC year-to-date financial reports for period ending December 31, 2025.**

Client trainings have increased during the 2nd quarter. There are additional training cohorts going through the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters so those expenditures will be reflected on the upcoming reports. Staff and operating costs are on-point. Staffing costs are underspent as there are some staff on leave. Some staff salaries were budgeted but a few staff were ultimately hired through a staffing agency for a temporary time period. This moved the staffing cost to operational costs. The paid work experience (PWEX) budget is slightly under budget for youth, however, there was an increase to youth individual training accounts (ITA). Youth are still coming in for services but instead of going into PWEX they are going directly into training and will subsequently get on the job training (OJT). Staff will most likely bring a line item adjustment for youth expenses in the future. Some office equipment such as new audio/visual set up in the Conference and Workshop room were updated. Staff are researching replacing the existing furniture in the rooms as well. The current furniture is over 25 years old and is starting to break.

Mattie Mendez moved to approve, seconded by Roger Leach.

Vote: Approved – unanimous

Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche

**8.2 Consideration of approval of a budget increase in the amount of \$59,375.93 for the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board's (FRWDB) ValleyBuild project in Eastern Madera County.**

ValleyBuild is a 4-county regional project that uses a MC3 pre-apprenticeship training and union referrals with 355 participants with 20 participants for Madera County. This funding is for providing referrals, case management and supportive services for Madera's 20 individuals.

Aaron Chambers moved to approve, seconded by Mattie Mendez.

Vote: Approved – unanimous

Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Mattie Mendez, Roger Leach, Tim Riche

**8.3 Consideration of approval of the MCWIC Exempt Salary Schedule to include revisions to the Executive Director salary.**

As requested after the Executive Director evaluation, staff are bringing an updated exempt salary schedule reflecting an increase to the Executive Director salary range from \$130,000 to \$140,000. The salary range in the schedule is used for new employee recruiting and salary placement. Some MCWIC employees, such as the current Controller, earn a salary above the range on the schedule due to performance and COLA increases throughout the years.

*Tim Riche moved to approve, seconded by Aaron Chambers.*

*Vote: Approved – majority*

*Yes: Aaron Chambers, Debi Bray, Roger Leach, Tim Riche*

*Abstain: Mattie Mendez*

## **9.0 Information Items**

### **9.1 Success Stories**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

### **9.2 Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Madera County Update**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

### **9.3 MCWIC Executive Director Mid-Year Goals Update**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

- *Goal 1 – Succession Planning: a Program Supervisor position was terminated in 2026 for staff restructuring purposes. Recruitment for a Deputy Director was done in February 2026. The Interview panel will consist of 1 Board member each from the WDB and the MCWIC along with the Controller. Interviews will take place on March 5, 2026. There will be upskilling or recruitment for a higher-level accounting technician. This will help support the fiscal department once the Controller goes remote. Work on the succession planning is continuous and involves the recruitment of a Deputy Director.*
- *Goal 2 – Staff Development: staff have participated in and completed the DISC and Next Gen Sector Partnership trainings and will be scheduling the ToP Facilitation training. Staff are looking into additional training opportunities with IMAGO for the Building Better Leaders and Facilitator trainings. The ToPs trainings have been written into a number of regional grant proposals in hopes that the region will be awarded funds for the trainings. A staff member has been identified and registered for the Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor Training in March 2026 although there is a possibility that this staff member may need additional training which will push the Counselor training to May. The California Workforce Association (CWA) is not currently offering their Executive Bootcamp or the Workforce Development Apprenticeship Program (WDAP). Staff (Maiknue and Bertha) presented at the Meeting of the Minds conference in September 2025. Staff have submitted a workshop proposal for CWA's WORKCON 2026 conference. The proposal will highlight the school bus driver training and the collaboration with the Madera Unified School District and the Advanced Career Institute.*
- *Goal 3 – WDB Action Planning Implementation: the membership on the WDB was re-evaluated by the Leadership Committee. Gurminder Sangha, Madera Community College, Erick Niino, EVAPCO, Aaron Chambers, MCWIC, and Michelle Jones were added to the WDB. Michelle is excited to add her input on the Training Committee and provide information on the skills and training needed for the transportation and logistics sector. There are a number of Board member engagement opportunities. The Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation for Workforce Professional's Month for September 2025. Board members attended the MCWIC Workforce Professional's Day on September 12, 2025 and the EDC's State of the County Luncheon on November 13, 2025. Gurminder Sangha, Erick Niino, and Kristina Gallagher attended the Meeting of the Minds conference alongside Maiknue and Bertha in September 2025. Rob Poythress attended the MUSD Parent Resource Center ribbon cutting ceremony on January 22, 2026. Nichole Mosqueda is scheduled to attend the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) with Maiknue in March 2026. Staff are continuously looking for opportunities for Board members to participate in and are working on developing a presentation or speaking points for Board members to use for marketing purposes. The CTE and Training committee was a bit delayed due to the restructuring of the Board and losing some members. New members have been added and have been assigned to the CTE Training Committee. They are now making progress on the Action Plan. It was determined that the work being done on the Leadership and the Policy committee was completed for the most part. The Work Ethics and the Training committees still have some work to do and so the Leadership and Policy members were reassigned to other committees to help their committee's work move along. Work on growing sector partnerships in healthcare, transportation, and manufacturing is in progress. Staff are meeting regularly with transportation and manufacturing partners and re-engaging with healthcare partners. A new green energy sector partnership was created. New training opportunities were created with the school bus driver training, ValleyBuild Pre-Apprenticeship and childcare. Staff are exploring new training opportunities for CNA and Medical Assistants. The Work Ethics committee is working on developing metrics for the MUSD Madera Promise. Staff are working with IMAGO on developing AI assessments to measure soft skills. Staff are working on*

developing language for messaging and marketing for the Madera promise and utilizing 5 to 10 local businesses to commit to the Madera Promise. Staff and the WDB are engaged in a campaign for Board members to participate in the MUSD Graduate Profile and to bring a friend/fellow business associate. Many members who participated in last year's event noted that there were not enough local business members/community members participating in the event. It was decided that the WDB members could play a bigger role in recruiting local members of the community to participate and also to commit to being one of the 5 to 10 local businesses in the Madera Promise. Work on aligning the WDB Essential Workforce Skills workshops with the Madera Promise was completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2025. Work on marketing and rebranding is ongoing and very busy. The mobile unit wrap was finalized this morning. Staff are working with Archer & Hound on preparations for the internal and external rebrand launches. A & H worked on the redesign for the WDB logo and website. They also created a QR code that is on the van that will take individuals who use it to a landing page that asks users if they are looking for talent (employers) or employment (job seekers). These links will take them directly to a job seeker page or to the business page. Method Media created the design and installed the wrap on the van. Staff are in the process of ordering the supplies and furniture that will be used in the van. The van will be equipped with laptops, printer/scanner combo, wifi, tables and chair and canopies. The van will be parked at the juvenile probation services location when not in use. A ribbon cutting for the van will be scheduled.

#### **9.4 Local Business Closures**

Information provided within the agenda packet. Debi Bray noted that there have been many business closures lately and thanked staff for being on top of the situation. There have been a number of large businesses that have announced that they are closing or laying off employees. Quality Container laid off 12 employees. The Workforce Rapid Response team consists of various Workforce partner staff as well as Workforce business services staff. The team provides information around unemployment insurance, re-employment opportunities, training services and other support services available to them through the workforce system. The team also looks at how employees can be rapidly re-employed. Staff received WARN notices for Mission Bell Winery and JBT Marel in January. Mission Bell will begin layoffs in April which will conclude in June 2026. JBT's closure will affect 269 workers and will begin layoffs in September and will conclude at the end of December 2026. Both JBT and Mission Bell will be permanent closures. JBT elected to work with an out of state re-employment agency rather than work with Workforce however, staff have targeted a marketing campaign towards these employees hoping to encourage them to come to the Center for services or information. Mission Bell will have rapid response orientation for their staff in March. As of the first week of February, Ardagh announced that they would be laying off 45 employees. Staff became aware of the layoffs when one of their employees came to the Center and shared the news. A WARN notice was not issued for Ardagh as the threshold for these notices includes a minimum layoff of 50 employees. The Rapid Response team's goal is to get as many of the impacted employees into the Center so they can get connected with services. These layoffs are impacting the local manufacturing industry. 6 to 10 local manufacturing employers who are ready and willing to rehire affected laid off individuals will participate in a manufacturing job fair which will help keep these employees local. Staff also received news that the Madera Community Hospital laid off staff. Initially, 50 staff were believed to have been laid off but staff confirmed that there were only 16 staff laid off. Staff will continue to monitor the situation with the hospital. The number of closures is unusual for Madera County. Ardagh reported that their layoffs are affecting a production line only. Board members shared that Harris Ranch closed their trucking line and laid off the drivers and will be outsourcing the deliveries. Harris also shut down their horse operation. JBT positions will go remote and some will be relocating to Visalia. Staff are working with a group of staff from the City and County so everyone has the same information and message to the media. The local media has been reaching out for information and staff and officials want to ensure that the same message and details are being shared.

#### **9.5 Federal and Legislative Updates**

Information provided within the agenda packet.

#### **9.6 One Stop Operator (OSO) quarterly report for the periods of July 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.**

Information provided within the agenda packet.

#### **9.7 One Stop Operator (OSO) quarterly report for the periods of October 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.**

Information provided within the agenda packet.

#### **9.8 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Budget Adjustment**

Information provided within the agenda packet.

**9.9 James Irvine Foundation Better Careers Retreat**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.10 Program Year 2024 Local Area Performance Goals**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.11 High Performing Board Application Notice**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.12 Program Impact Report July 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025**

**9.13 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Formula and Special Projects Quarterly Program Overview Through December 31, 2025**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.14 Mountain Community and Madera County Job Fairs**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.15 Weekly Unemployment Insurance (UI) Initial Claims for Madera County**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**9.16 Form 700 Due April 1, 2026**

*Information provided within the agenda packet.*

**10.0 Written Communication**

**11.0 Open Discussion/Reports/Information**

**11.1 Board Members**

**11.2 Staff**

**12.0 Next Meeting**

*The next meeting will be held at the Workforce Assistance Center on April 23, 2026.*

**13.0 Adjournment**

*The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m. due to loss of quorum during agenda item 9.3 MCWIC Executive Director Mid-Year Goals Update.*