# City of Santa Barbara

## RENTAL HOUSING MEDIATION BOARD MINUTES
## FEBRUARY 12, 2026

5:30 P.M.
David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

**BOARD MEMBERS:**
Heather Smith, *Chair*
Rigoberto Gutierrez, *Vice Chair*
Cathy Murillo, *Secretary*
Scott Barash
Leesa Beck
Danielle Broder
Justin Dullum
Daniel Herlinger
Marilyn Loperfido
Allison MacPherson
Cindy McCann
Kari Weber

**MEDIATOR EMERITUS:**
Bruce Wollenberg

**CITY COUNCIL LIAISON:**
Meagan Harmon, Primary
Wendy Santamaria, Alternate

**STAFF:**
Andrea Bifano, Rental Housing Mediation Supervisor
Raymond Rengo, Rental Housing Mediation Specialist
Diana Santiago, Rental Housing Mediation Specialist

## CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.

## ROLL CALL / ATTENDANCE

Chair Smith Vice Chair Gutierrez, Secretary Murillo, Board Members; Barash, Beck, Broder, Loperfido, MacPherson, and Weber

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|---|---|
| Members absent: | Dullum, Herlinger and McCann |
| Staff present: | Bifano, Rengo and Santiago |

## GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Public Comment.

Any member of the public may address the Board for up to two minutes on any subject within its jurisdiction that is not scheduled on this agenda for a public discussion.

B. Approval of the minutes of the Rental Housing Mediation Board meeting of **January 8, 2026**.

Motion: Approve the minutes of the Rental Housing Mediation Board (RHMB) regular meeting of **January 8, 2026,** as submitted.

Action: Secretary Murillo, Gutierrez, 9/0/0. (Dullum, Herlinger, McCann absent.) Motion carried.

C. 2026 Council Liaison Appointments to the RHMB.

Chair Smith shared that Meagan Harmon, Primary and Wendy Santamaria, Alternate will continue to be the City Counsil Liaisons to the Rental Housing Mediation Board.

D. Announcements and Future Agenda Items.

Chair Smith introduced and welcomed Caroline "Carrie" Paine, City of Santa Barbara Housing and Human Services Manager who began her position on January 12, 2026. She also introduced and welcomed Allison MacPherson, City Council appointed mediator on 12/2/2025. Board member MacPherson introduced herself and shared her background and what inspired her to apply to the Board.

Ms. Bifano presented the 2025 RHMB Officer Recognition Certificates to Justin Dullum (absent), who served as Chair for three consecutive years from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025, and Cathy Murillo, who served as Vice Chair from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, and Rigoberto Gutierrez who served as Secretary for three consecutive years from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025.

## AGENDA ITEMS

### 1. STAFF AND BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Barbara Anderson, Senior Assistant to the City Administrator, provided an update on the Rent Stabilization Plan, including focus groups.

### 2. BOARD COMMUNICATION TO CITY COUNCIL AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair Smith shared that the Board Communication to City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee comprised of herself, Secretary Murillo, Board Members Beck, Barash and Dullum, completed its initial task of writing and presenting a letter to City Council about the value of the Program, and opened discussion to the Board whether the 5-member Subcommitte should remain active through December 31, 2026 and participate in the Focus Group to be held during the month of March 2026. Board members agreed, and acknowledged that each of the Board members could individually communicate their response to the Focus Group questions directly to Barbara Anderson.

### 3. CASELOAD REPORT AND MEDIATOR TRAINING

*(Per State of California Dispute Resolution Programs Act – Regulations Section 3622)*

A. Statistical Reports & Caseload Discussion:

Staff presented the Second Quarter and Year-to-Date FY 2025-2026 statistical reports.

B. Mediation Training:

- Ms. Bifano reviewed the mediations and successful outcomes with the terms of agreement devised by the parties that had been completed Year-to-Date FY 2025-2026 (July 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026), including those in which the tenancies had been preserved. There was discussion by the Board.

C. Changes to Housing Laws:

- Mr. Rengo informed the Board of the recent adoption of Santa Barbara Ord. No. 2026-6206 (Temporary Rent Increase Moratorium) and Santa Barbara Ord. No. 2026-6207 (Permanent Removal of a Rental Unit).

## 4. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

Next scheduled meeting March 12, 2026.

## 5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.