

## McMillan, Acquanette (Netta)

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**From:** Deborah Lutz  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 11:58 AM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Cc:** Gordo, Victor; Rivas, Jessica; Lyon, Jason; Madison, Steve; Hampton, Tyron; Jones, Justin; Cole, Rick  
**Subject:** Agenda item #4a

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Mayor and Council Members,

I ask the Council to pay attention to several critical issues highlighted by the recent resignation of Lourdes Gonzalez from the Pasadena Rental Housing Board. While the PRHB operates with a level of autonomy, the circumstances surrounding this resignation suggest systemic failures within the Rent Stabilization Department and the Board's compensation structure that undermine the City's goals of diversity, equity, and effective governance.

### 1. Financial Disenfranchisement and Compensation Structure

The PRHB was designed to be a diverse body, representing a broad spectrum of Pasadena residents. A key component of maintaining this diversity is ensuring that board members are fairly compensated for their labor.

- **The Burden of Preparation:** As the Board moves into regular appeals hearings, members are required to review hundreds of pages of complex legal and evidentiary documents.
- **The Impact of Policy Shifts:** Changing the compensation structure to exclude preparation time creates a financial barrier that effectively disenfranchise individuals who do not have significant discretionary income or flexible professional schedules.
- **Unfair Business Practices:** Altering the compensation model after members have been appointed—and after they have committed to the role based on a specific understanding of the workload and reimbursement—is both poor business practice and fundamentally unfair.

### 2. Operational Efficacy and Board Preparedness

The resignation of a member known for being exceptionally prepared and thoughtful should be a "canary in the coal mine" for the Council.

- **Inequity of Participation:** When preparation time is uncompensated, the quality of the Board's decisions suffers. We risk a two-tier system where only those who can afford to work for free are fully prepared, while others may be forced to attend hearings without having mastered the material.
- **Legal Risk:** Inadequate preparation by board members during quasi-judicial appeals hearings creates significant legal vulnerabilities for the City and the Department.

### 3. Departmental Dynamics and Structural Challenges

Ms. Gonzalez's resignation highlights the inherent difficulties of navigating a department structure where the lines of authority and communication remain blurred.

- **Professionalism and Neutrality:** There is a pressing need to reinforce a culture of mutual professionalism. Success for this Board requires an environment that fosters respect for different perspectives and a shared, unwavering commitment to neutrality.
- **City Oversight:** While the Board is independent, the Rent Stabilization Department falls under the purview of the City's administrative and human resources expectations. It is imperative that the City of Pasadena Human Resources Department reviews the internal culture to ensure it supports a productive and healthy workplace.

### 4. Obligations to Future Appointees

As the City Council continues to appoint residents to this Board, there is a moral and practical obligation to ensure they are being placed into a functional, supportive, and professional environment. Appointing citizens to a body plagued by internal dysfunction or unfair compensation practices is a disservice to those who wish to serve their community.

The departure of a diligent board member under these circumstances suggests that the current trajectory of the Rent Stabilization Department and the PRHB's leadership may be counterproductive to the charter's mission.

I urge the City Council to:

1. **Direct an Inquiry:** Request a formal review by the Human Resources Department into the working dynamics and departmental culture to address concerns regarding professional standards.
2. **Review Compensation Policy:** Advocate for a compensation structure that realistically accounts for the massive volume of work required for appeals, ensuring that the Board remains accessible to all residents regardless of socioeconomic status.
3. **Ensure Transparency:** Require a report on the Department's internal structure to clarify roles and ensure it supports, rather than hinders, the success of the appointed Board members.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Deborah Lutz

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**From:** hermina  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2026 12:02 PM  
**To:** PublicComment-AutoResponse  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 4a

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Dear Pasadena City Council,

I am writing this letter in regards to item 4a on the Agenda, the resignation letter of at-large Rent Board member Lourdes Gonzalez. I am concerned that one of only two landlords on the Board no longer wants to be a part of that Board, and that one of the reasons for resigning is, to quote the letter:

“the overall working dynamics within the board and department structure have at times made participation challenging. I believe effective boards rely on mutual professionalism, respect for differing perspectives, and a shared commitment to neutrality. At this point, I do not feel that the environment allows me to contribute in the way I believe board service requires in the name of the city of Pasadena residents.”

The sentiment that a differing perspective is not regarded professionally or neutrally by a disproportionate block of the Rent Board should be troubling to the City Council. This should also raise fears of broad exclusion of the only remaining landlord’s opinions and perspectives.

Furthermore, I am really concerned at the possibility of an at-large seat such as that of Lourdes Gonzalez being taken over by tenant activists, who would only increase the imbalance of the Board and the exclusion of dissenting views. At least one of those seeking appointment to the Rent Board used vast quantities of time and money appealing the decision of the Rent Board’s own appointed hearing officer.

Please consider what the structure of the Rent Board means for Pasadena housing providers and our ability to continue providing good, safe housing to the residents of Pasadena.

Thank you,

Hermina Astalis  
Operations Officer  
BT Shepherd LLC