

**FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 24, 2021 (Approved September 23, 2021)

Current Commissioners Present

Bruce Gibson SLO County Board of Supervisors
Penny Borenstein, M.D. SLO County Public Health Department

James Brescia, Ed.D (late arrival) SLO County Office of Education
Devin Drake Department of Social Services
Melinda Sokolowski Child Care Planning Council
Alison Ventura, Ph.D. (late arrival) Community at Large
Bob Watt Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused --

James Tedford, M.D. Medical Representative (AAP Chapter 2)
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, Ed.D Community at Large

Staff Present

Commission staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Kris Roudebush
Commission Counsel: Natalie Frye-Laacke

Call to Order

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order 11:34 AM.

ITEM 12 (carryover from May 25, 2021 meeting) – Closed Session Executive Director Evaluation

Commissioners returned from Closed Session. Commission Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke announced that there is nothing to report.

Public Comment: none.

ITEM 1 –Chair Comments

Chair Gibson reminded that this is the last Commission meeting of the fiscal year; the next scheduled regular meeting will be on September 23, 2021.

He encouraged Commissioners to stay connected with staff and programs over the summer.

Chair Gibson reorganized agenda order to ensure action items addressed and due to anticipated need for early end to the meeting because of overlapping obligations for several Commissioners.

ITEM 2 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

None

ITEM 3 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements (Postponed until later in the meeting; see below).

ITEM 4 - Consent Agenda

- a) Approve May 27, 2021 minutes
- b) Approve Recommendation to Board of Supervisors for new 4-year terms for Designated Commissioners: 1) Public Health Agency, Dr. Penny Borenstein; 2) County Office of Education, Dr. James Brescia and 3) County Department of Social Services, Ms. Linda Belch as designated representatives on the Commission for the period of July 21, 2021 to July 20, 2025

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drake and passed unanimously (note: Commissioners Ventura and Brescia did not vote due to late arrival).

ITEM 5-6 (postponed until later in the meeting; see below)

ITEM 7 – Contract Approval: SLO Chamber of Commerce Family Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced this action item. First 5 is excited to partners with the SLO Chamber and the County of San Luis Obispo on this new initiative. This is anticipated as a three-year contract, \$75,000/year (total \$225,000) to be matched by the County. A full-time position will be added to the SLO Chamber team.

SLO Chamber CEO Jim Dantona thanked the Commissioner for this investment and opportunity to build a healthy child care sector; he also thanked Commissioner Gibson for working with the County to help solidify their commitment to the partnership.

Commissioner Borenstein expressed support for the work, commenting that we are moving toward real tangible efforts on this issue, and out of the “discussion phase.”

Commissioner Gibson commented that this new program will offer a proof of concept. It also matches up well with County planning related to American Rescue Plan investments to support child care.

Commissioner Borenstein made a motion to approve a three-year contract in the amount of \$225,000 with the SLO Chamber of Commerce for a Family Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program. Contract term July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sokolowski and passed unanimously (note: Commissioners Ventura and Brescia did not vote due to late arrival).

ITEM 8 (postponed until later in the meeting; see below)

ITEM 9 - Approve Long-Range Financial Plan Update

Executive Director Wendy Wendt introduced this item. First reading of the long-range financial plan took place at the May Commission meeting. The draft presented for approval today is nearly identical, with several minor modifications, including updated Prop 10 revenue projections provided in late May by First 5 CA. Ms. Wendt also explained that the Long-Range Financial Plan uses the more conservative of two projection scenarios included in the First 5 CA update: anticipating a possible Flavor Ban on tobacco products that would go into effect if approved by the California voters in November 2022.

Commissioner Gibson underscored the importance of this long-range view on First 5 SLO County's fiscal future.

Public Comment: none

Commissioner Watt moved to approve the Long-Range Financial Plan Update. Motion seconded by Commissioner Borenstein. Motion passed unanimously. (note: Commissioner Ventura did not vote due to late arrival).

ITEM 10 – Approve FY 2021-22 Administrative Budget

Ms. Wendt introduced the final draft of the FY 2020-21 Administrative Budget. A first reading was conducted at the May 2021 Commission meeting. No changes since the May reading.

Public comment: None.

Commissioner Drake moved to approve the FY 2021-22 Administrative Budget; Commissioner Brescia seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (note: Commissioner Ventura did not vote due to late arrival).

ITEM 5 – Staff Report

Misty Livengood updated the Commission on various projects and information regarding First 5 SLO County:

- Various social media campaigns – mental health, “raise the rates” for ECE reimbursement
- We are the Care – New email, ads, excitement about the SLO Chamber partnership (see above Agenda Item 7)
- Awaiting new child care supply distributions via First 5 CA
- Summer reading programs mobilizing; Marilu Gomez continues Talk Read Sing Wednesdays
- Help Me Grow Hands on Heroses – June is Alison Borgsmiller, Nurse Practitioner with Bravo Pediatrics; July is Susanne Murphy, Early Interventionist with SLO County Office of Education.
- Reminder of event sponsorship opportunities in the upcoming fiscal year: up to \$500 toward support for one-time events that align with the First 5 Strategic Plan.
- First 5 Focus – intern project that profiles various First 5 funded programs.

ITEM 6 – Advocacy Updates

Commissioner Gibson opened the agenda item with a comment on the tremendous opportunity that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding affords us to invest in early childhood. He encouraged “big proposals” in this area.

Kris Roudebush, First 5 Special Projects Administrator, provided an update on We Are the Care activities in the four Task Force areas:

- Public Awareness – a Public Profile is being developed; will appear in print and social media over the summer.
- Power to the Profession is mobilized around compensation and workforce issues as related to early care and education professionals
- Cross Sector Collaboration is anticipating the possibility of fall workshops for employers in conjunction with the Family Friendly Workplace Toolkit and new SLO Chamber partnership
- Local Government Engagement is working on ARPA advocacy.

Wendy Wendt, Executive Director, updated on the Collaborative Public Sector Child Care Study, which is moving toward an “implementation” phase building on the results of the Feasibility Report produced by the Low Income Investment Fund team.

Ms. Wendt updated on the ARPA funding proposal submitted by a coalition of local early childhood groups. The County and all seven Cities received a version of this proposal, which articulated “5% for children 0-5 and their families,” with specific one-time supports related to COVID resilience/recovery. Proposed investment areas are in 1) child care, 2) family resource centers, 3) mental health, and 4) housing stabilization.

Commissioner Sokolowski acknowledged that First 5 staff used a very inclusive process to develop this proposal. Commissioner Gibson agreed, praised the power of a coalition approach.

Ms. Wendt gave a brief update on state level advocacy. She has recently joined an interim subcommittee of the First 5 Association that is focused on policy/advocacy in the wake of Margot Grant Gould's departure from her Policy Director role at the Foundation.

Public Comment: NONE

ITEM 8 – Carsel Consulting Group for First 5 Evaluation Services

Jason Wells introduced this item. Three proposals were received in response to an RFP for Evaluation Services. A review committee that included Mr. Wells, Ms. Wendt and Commissioners Watt and Ventura assessed the merits of the three submittals. The Committee was unanimous in its recommendation to contract with Carsel Consulting. This is a three-person team, coordinated by Becca Carsel (note: current contractor for the Health Access Training Project), and including Amanda Welsh and Laura Keene. Together they bring a wealth of experience in both traditional outcome evaluation as well as evaluation of networks and social change initiatives. They also hold significant knowledge of both First 5 and the local community.

Staff recommends a one-year contract, with an option to renew for up to two additional years.

Commissioner Gibson commended long-standing evaluation consultant Tom Keifer for his years of expert guidance in First 5's evaluation program.

Commissioner Watt moved to approve a one-year evaluation contract in the amount of \$30,000 to Carsel Consulting Group, with an option to renew for up to two additional years. Commissioner Sokolowski seconded. The motion passed unanimously (note: Commissioner Brescia did not vote on this item, as he had temporarily stepped away from the meeting).

ITEM 9 (part 2) Road Map for 2021-22 Program Allocation (Update/Board Direction)

Mr. Wells proposed the following two staff recommendations for FY 21-22 program funding (total available ~\$1,000,000)

- Identify and allocate modest “budget bumps” for current multi-year contracts, based on need and prior year outcomes. Maximum total allocation in this area not to exceed \$100,000.
- Issue an RFP for one or more “big idea” investment. Look to the community for proposals that align with First 5 Strategic Plan. RFP to be released in summer 2021; review and contract approval fall 2021. Contracts would be for three fiscal years.

Commissioners offered support and consensus in directing staff to pursue both of these approaches.

ITEM 3 – Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gibson: Thank you to staff for adapting during the pandemic.

Commissioner Watt: Evaluation Services RFP and proposal review process was well executed and easy for Commissioners to participate in.

Commissioner Borenstein announced state Public Health funding to support local equity projects. Four organizations awarded funding, all align with First 5 interests: 1) SLO Food Bank/Cal Fresh Alliance, 2) UndocuSupport, 3) CAPSLO CCRC Family Friend and Neighbor supports, and 4) Herencia Indigena.

Commissioner Sokolowski reflected on how we mobilized as a community; child care never stopped in SLO County – continued to support families throughout the pandemic.

Commissioner Drake thanked the Commission and staff for the opportunity to serve. It has been an honor. He commented that Linda Belch will be a phenomenal addition to the Commission, and anticipates a smooth transition to her participation.

Commissioner Gibson wished everyone a good summer. Next meeting September 23, 2021. TBA regarding zoom, in-person, or hybrid.

ITEM 11 – Adjournment

1:00 p.m.