

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
January 25, 2023 (Approved March 22, 2023)

**Current Commissioners Present**

James Brescia, Ed.D. (Chair)  
Penny Borenstein, M.D. (Vice Chair)

SLO County Office of Education  
SLO County Public Health Department

Linda Belch  
Dawn Ortiz-Legg (incoming)  
James Tedford, M.D.  
Alison Ventura, Ph.D.  
Bob Watt

Department of Social Services  
SLO County Board of Supervisors  
Medical Representative (AAP, Ch 2)  
Community at Large  
Community at Large

**Current Commissioners Absent**

Bruce Gibson (outgoing)  
Melinda Sokolowski  
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia

SLO County Board of Supervisors  
Child Care Planning Council  
Community at Large

**Staff Present**

First 5 staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Kris Roudebush  
Commission Counsel: Natalie Frye-Laacke

**Call to Order**

Chair Brescia called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

**ITEM 1 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates**

Dawn Ortiz-Legg expressed that she is happy to be joining the Commission and looks forward to the work ahead.

Commissioner Belch gave an update from Department of Social Services on the Families First Comprehensive Prevention Plan, which will include a focus on motivational interviewing. She also described her department's efforts to connect undocumented families with resiliency supports.

Commissioner Borenstein announced that Nancy Sutton is officially established as the Home Visiting Coordinator at Public Health. She also reminded everyone that Covid is still a serious concern; there have been recent outbreaks at the Prado Homeless Services Center and the

County Psych Unit. She announced that County Behavioral Health Director Anne Robin is retiring at the end of July 2023.

Commissioner Ventura announced an upcoming Annual Meeting of a Health Research group on January 31 that will include a talk by CA Surgeon General Dr. Diana Ramos on the topic of Health of Pregnant Individuals and Babies.

Commissioner Gibson commented on how much he has enjoyed serving on the First 5 Commission – “What a happy place to do the work of First 5.” He is confident in the transition to Dawn Ortiz-Legg as the fourth County Supervisor to serve on the First 5 Commission. Commissioner Gibson promised that he is “not going far,” and will be taking his dedication to First 5 to a new arena as part of the leadership team at the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Several other members of CSAC leadership are also strong First 5 advocates.

## **ITEM 2 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda**

None

## **ITEM 3 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the December 7, 2022 Minutes
- b. Approval of FY22-23 Q2 Financial Report
- c. Confirm BOS Commissioner Appointment – Dawn Ortiz -Legg (one-year term Jan-Dec 2023)

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Borenstein made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watt and passed unanimously.

## **ITEM 4 (ACTION ITEM) - Election of 2023 Officers: Chair and Vice Chair**

Commissioners Brescia and Borenstein have served the past year as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. They expressed willingness to continue in these roles for another year if there are no other interested parties. The other Commissioners present expressed support for this plan.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve 2023 Officers James Brescia as Chair and Penny Borenstein as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tedford and passed unanimously.

## **ITEM 5 (ACTION ITEM) - Commissioner Terms**

First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt and First 5 Legal Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke introduced this item. At its December 2022 meeting, the Commission discussed options for updating protocols related to Commissioner terms – selection, length-of-term, term limits. An

ad hoc committee was established to build recommendations for a formal update to the existing County Ordinance and Commission Bylaws. Key factors to consider included the opportunity to build evolving and new voices and leadership on the Commission, and increasing efficiencies where appropriate to the selection process for at-large and medical rep Commissioners. The following recommendations were presented for Commissioner approval:

- At-large, Medical Rep, and LCCPC-designee Commissioners shift from 4-year to 3-year terms
- Limit of up to 2 consecutive terms for the above-listed Commissioner categories
- At-large, Medical Rep, and LCCPC Commissioners seeking a second term will meet with Commission Chair and ED 6 months prior to the end of their first term to discuss performance, participation, attendance, and expectations in the second term.
- First term Commissioners in the above listed categories will continue to second term if no objections, performance, or attendance issues surface in the meeting.
- There will be no new recruitment of Commissioners in the above-listed categories when a first term is ending, and the seated Commissioner is requesting to continue a second term.
- At-large Commissioner Watt will have an additional year (June 2023-June 2024) added to his term to support a staggered exiting and new commissioner pattern.
- LCCPC representatives will be chosen by the LCCPC for up to 2 three-year terms.
- New term for LCCPC representative (current or new rep) beginning July 2023 will be a four-year term (1x only), followed by a three-year term. This helps support a staggered exiting and new commissioner pattern.
- Meeting attendance will be emphasized as a critical part of Commission duty and performance.

Several Commissioners asked questions related to clarification only; in general there was consensus that the recommendations have merit.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Ventura moved to approve the recommended changes to the County Ordinance and Commission Bylaws as indicated above. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ortiz-Legg and passed unanimously. Note: These changes will go into effect pending County Board of Supervisors approval at an upcoming meeting in February 2023.

Commissioner Brescia reminded Commissioners of the importance of regular attendance and urged early calendaring at the beginning of each year. He also updated Commissioners on a new California law – AB2449 – which allows for remote attendance by elected officials under special circumstances. Ms. Frye-Laacke and Ms. Wendt will send out information regarding this change, and will agendize it at the March 2023 Commission meeting for information/discussion.

## **ITEM 6 – Staff Reports**

Wendy Wendt provided updates on the following:

- 2023 First 5 Association Priorities – 1) Resilient Families; 2) Comprehensive Health and Development; 3) Quality Early Learning; and 4) Sustainability and Scale. At the state level there is ongoing discussion re: effects of Proposition 31 on tobacco tax revenues to support First 5's.
- Role of First 5 CA – “mothership” administrative arm, special grant initiatives; some public awareness campaigns. They are increasingly focused on regional grant-making,

which poses some logistical/administrative challenges at the local level (e.g. Impact Legacy, Home Visiting).

- The MHSA 3x3 Initiative is officially concluded; Evaluation Consultant Becca Carsel did a thorough job with the final report, which was included in a large summary document submitted to the state by County Behavioral Health.
- As a follow up to 3x3, First 5 is hosting its second Pediatric Town Hall on March 21<sup>st</sup>, on the theme of “Mental Health in the Context of Early Childhood.” Keynote speaker will be Dr. Moira Szilagyi, outgoing President of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Ms. Wendt introduced First 5’s new Cal Poly Intern – Kristina Fortuna – and her infant son “Rocket” who together are a welcome addition to the team.
- Ms. Wendt and Special Projects Administrator Kris Roudebush recently attended the annual retreat of the Early Care and Education Planning Council (formerly Child Care Planning Council), entitled Igniting Innovation.
- UndocuSupport is granting out \$25,000 in Emergency assistance to existing grantees in the wake of recent storms.

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Misty Livengood presented the following updates:

- First 5 has contributed from its Emergency Response fund to the recently reactivated Community Foundation Disaster Support program. Ms. Livengood has served on the review committee. The following organizations received funds: Center for Family Strengthening, Los Osos Cares, South County Youth Coalition.
- 2023 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the formation of the Children’s Bill of Rights. This evergreen document can help shape some of the work around strategic planning during the coming year.
- Atascadero and Paso Robles Chambers of Commerce are teaming up with the SLO Chamber’s Family Friendly Workplaces Program to host a workshop on March 30, modeled after the SLO Chamber’s Insight Studio event.
- Hands on Heroes is transitioning to a new type of presence in the Central Coast Journal and other media outlets. Over the coming year, every other month First 5 will feature a topical theme, starting with February – Children’s Dental Health Month, followed by April – Month of the Child & Child Abuse Prevention Month. Thereafter, every other month will showcase various of First 5’s funded partner programs throughout FY 2023-24.
- First 5 Event Sponsorships are on the rise; recent of these mini-investments of up to \$500 include Paso Robles Housing Authority “Little Ducklings” soccer league, Trauma-informed Training series through the Health Access Training Project, and the upcoming season of Blues Baseball.
- Update on the Kits Program, including what materials are typically included, what organizations receive them. First 5 CA is conducting a survey on the county-level experience with Kits.
- Spring Outlook – Month of the Child & Child Abuse Prevention Month events are already being calendared and promoted through First 5 and other partner organizations. April 1 is Nipomo Kids Day; April 8 is Children’s Day in the Plaza; April 19 is First 5 Association Advocacy Day.

*PUBLIC COMMENT. None.*

## **ITEM 7 – Annual Evaluation Report**

Becca Carsel, Carsel Consulting Group, introduced this item, focusing on a summary of the Annual Evaluation Report submitted by the First 5 Evaluation team. The team hopes that this evaluation can help guide strategic planning over the next year.

Laura Keene, member of the First 5 Evaluation Team, presented a high-level summary of the Annual Evaluation Report. The primary audience is staff and Commissioners. Major themes center around partnership development and advocacy, with the Theory of Change framework as an organizing scaffold. She also referenced the central influence of Covid over the past several years, both as a deep challenge and an opportunity to imagine and pursue new ways of engaging in the work of helping children and families thrive.

Ms. Carsel pointed out an evaluation team observation that more and more First 5 strategies are overlapping among 1) direct investments, 2) network building and 3) advocacy.

Discussion ensued:

Commissioner Belch expressed appreciation for the layout, and that the content is easy to digest.

Commissioner Ventura inquired about quantitative data that can help inform the Commission regarding outcomes. Ms. Carsel pointed out that this evaluation is showcasing the value of strategies on systems-level change and may in fact be more impactful work coming out of First 5 than only looking at numbers of children/families impacted. In addition, output and outcome data are in fact collected through two other mechanisms – 1) local submission to the First 5 CA annual report, and 2) data included in funded partner grantee reports submitted to staff for the purposes of contract monitoring.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Raechelle Bowlay, Coordinator of the Early Care and Education Planning Council, expressed gratitude for the Evaluation report, and felt that it did an excellent job of capturing the value and range of partnerships that First 5 fosters.

## **ITEM 8 – Strategic Planning Discussion**

Ms. Wendt introduced this item. An ad hoc Strategic Planning design committee met in early January – Commissioners Belch, Ruvalcaba-Heredia and Watt. They helped staff to develop timelines and core activities for the strategic planning process over the coming year. Equity, clear definitions of First 5's roles, and methods to engage community were opened up for discussion.

## EQUITY

Commissioner Belch introduced this topic. How do we contribute to eliminating systemic and historic barriers to supports and opportunity for vulnerable populations of young children and their families? How do we take concepts related to equity and convert them to action as part of our work and our strategic planning?

Commissioner Watt emphasized that equity is a political issue and we may get push back.

Commissioner Borenstein referenced equity work at the Public Health department. One big example is disparities in insurance coverage. Without parity in insurance and without sufficient numbers of providers, how can we meaningfully pursue equity in health care access?

Commissioner Tedford called out the value of public/private partnerships such as Tolosa Children's Dental Center.

Commissioner Ventura spoke to the challenges at Cal Poly recruiting a diverse student population, and diverse faculty/staff. Also the building out of culturally competent programs, which requires training/expertise.

Commissioner Brescia highlighted the importance of equitable access to education regardless of socioeconomic status. There is work being done to build direct pathways from community college to 4-year institutions.

Mr. Wells commented that contracts can include new language and expectations around equity.

Commissioner Belch posited that we could consider flexibility around "knowledge/skills/ability," not only education/credentials in hiring practices.

## FIRST 5 ROLES

Mr. Wells introduced this topic. Historically, First 5 has been most known for – and has built strategic plans around – its "direct investment role." As we embark on this next strategic planning process, we need to recognize the equal weight of our other two roles – place-based networking and policy/advocacy/systems change. We also have opportunities to interweave these roles.

Challenges to recognize – network and policy strategies take time, and the "results" do not present themselves immediately.

## COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

Ms. Wendt introduced this topic. The questions to address are: how do we ensure that we are hearing multiple and diverse voices in shaping our strategic plan?

Commissioner Belch expressed the challenge *and* the importance of engaging historically marginalized voices.

Commissioner Ventura added – how do we reach families/communities we don't currently reach?

Commissioner Borenstein reminded the group that other organizations are also reaching out for information; First 5 can build off of other community input (e.g. SLO Health Counts Community Health Assessment, CAPSLO Community Needs Assessment).

Ms. Wendt also pointed to external data, such as the Strong Start Index, which can inform the process.

#### *PUBLIC COMMENT*

*Ms. Bowlay pointed out that “equity is expensive.” She expressed gratitude that the Commission is imbedding this focus in their work.*

#### **ITEM 9: Executive Director Evaluation: Process Introduction**

First 5 Legal Counsel representative Natalie Frye-Laacke introduced this item, is seeking direction from the Commission regarding the annual evaluation for the Executive Director, specifically whether the Commission would like a 360 process, or just input from Commissioners plus self-evaluation documents submitted by the Executive Director.

Commissioner Borenstein expressed the value of external and comprehensive input every several years, but not every year. As such, she proposed a simple board+ED Self Evaluation approach this year. Overall consensus ensued.

Legal Counsel will proceed with the Executive Director evaluation process, to be concluded at the March 22, 2023 Commission meeting.

#### **ITEM 10 -- Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.