

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

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2022 (Approved September 28, 2022)

Current Commissioners Present

James Brescia, Ed.D (Chair)	SLO County Office of Education
Linda Belch	Department of Social Services
Bruce Gibson	SLO County Board of Supervisors
Melinda Sokolowski	Child Care Planning Council
James Tedford, M.D.	Medical Representative (AAP Chapter 2)
Alison Ventura, Ph.D.	Community at Large
Bob Watt	Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused --

Penny Borenstein, M.D. (Vice-Chair)	SLO County Public Health Department
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, Ed.D	Community at Large

Staff Present

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

Call to Order

Chair Brescia called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

ITEM 1 –Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

Cozy Faber, Development Director at SLO Classical Academy, is attending a Commission meeting for the first time, is happy to be here and learn more and consider partnership opportunities.

ITEM 2 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements

Commissioner Gibson summarized a recent CSAC meeting held in San Luis Obispo at the Monday Club. First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt and colleagues from the SLO Chamber (CEO James Dantona and Workforce Development Manager Christina Latner) presented on family-friendly workplace strategies and the partnership between First 5 and the Chamber.

ITEM 3 - Consent Agenda

- a) Approve May 25, 2022 minutes
- b) Approve Contract Amendment with Carsel Consulting Group for FY22-23 Evaluation Services

Public Comment: None

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

ITEM 4 (PUBLIC HEARING) – Strategic Plan Update: Approve Long-Range Financial Plan

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 to the May draft; there is a minor increase in anticipated spending on evaluation, in keeping with the established 2% established maximum and to allow for an expanded workplan. Updated First 5 CA Prop 10 revenue projections anticipated by today's date have not yet been made available to local Commissions. Ms. Wendt commented on the challenge in outlying years of the Plan to stay below the established 15% maximum administrative cap. Commissioners recommended a review of this policy and also an updated analysis of staff time allocations between administrative and program-related activities.

Public Comment: none

Commissioner Gibson moved to approve the Long-Range Financial Plan Update. Motion seconded by Commissioner Sokolowski. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 5 – Approve FY 2022-23 Administrative Budget

Ms. Wendt introduced the final draft of the FY 2022-23 Administrative Budget. A first reading was conducted at the May 2022 Commission meeting. No changes since the May reading.

Public comment: None.

Commissioner Sokolowski moved to approve the FY 2022-23 Administrative Budget; Commissioner Watt seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 6 – Evaluation Interim Report – Theory of Change

First 5 Evaluation Consultant Team member Amanda Welsh presented this item via zoom. She introduced a “Theory of Change” graphic that illustrates the interconnected, fluid environment within which First 5 performs its work along with its partners. It is meant to be a living document with testable hypotheses. The details within the TOC document (see attached) were built via interviews with staff, Commissioners and several key stakeholders. It helps tell a story on how First 5 is meeting needs over time, along a continuum of short/mid/long term goals that are pursued/realized in part as influenced by the capacities/strategies executed through First 5. These fall into three categories: 1) place-based networking; 2) direct funding and investment; and 3) policy/advocacy and systems change. The TOC framework will be used as a planning tool on gauging sustainable impact and as a guide for evaluation.

Example: Family-Friendly Workplaces (Direct Funding at SLO Chamber, Place-based networking and advocacy through We Are the Care)

- Short Term: Local businesses get involved in Cross Sector Collaboration Task Force, learn more about FFW through SLO Chamber program
- Mid Term: Political will shifts – businesses and municipal governments enact policy change/commit funding to increase FFW
- Long Term: Families’ basic needs are met to help balance work/parenting; overall community norm change

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Watt asked for clarification on “political will.” Ms. Welsh suggested defining political will as public opinion that influences policy makers to enact change. Commissioner Watt commented that Commissioners themselves can be more active in helping shape political will.

Commissioner Gibson emphasized the value of the policy-related tasks; we are seeing the impact of this kind of work. He also pointed out the importance of evaluation the programs First 5 invests in as we allocate scarce resources so that we are better informed.

Commissioner Ventura pointed to the value of thinking in terms of systems change as we launch into strategic planning. We can learn from the trajectories identified in the TOC framework what works over time and what leads to sustainability.

Commissioner Gibson suggested we use the TOC framework to look at other First 5-funded initiatives.

Ms. Welsh offered a cautionary note – to gauge for this or other cases where there is enough public investment to sustain a given initiative or program. Theory of Change is not designed to say “our work is done,” but instead is meant to assess system-improvement.

Commissioner Belch asked how we know we’ve reached a goal. How do we know where we want to move the needle? Ms. Welsh responded that goals are embedded in outcomes/impacts. Theory of Change is designed to identify First 5 contributions to these

impacts over time. Ms. Belch requested that data be more specifically called out/built into the TOC framework.

Ms. Wendt commented that the staff has found the TOC framework design process helpful, helps us understand First 5's role in the "ecosystem" and allows the evaluation team to measure the value/impact of First 5 itself. It has opened up our toolkit of strategic planning possibilities, and widens our lens of influence. There are critical points in the process where data are important – i.e. needs assessment/research; and monitoring direct program investments.

Commissioner Brescia reminded that our budget is smaller than most entities; he advised against using First 5 funds to invest in research.

Mr. Wells commented that when First 5 develops the next RFP, the TOC lens can inform what the funding is meant to produce in the way of "results."

Public Comment: None

ITEM 7 -- Commissioner-Requested Discussion/Action Items: Children & Gun Violence/Safety

Associate Director Jason Wells and Executive Director Wendy Wendt introduced the discussion, framing the issue through a public health lens and in the context of recent shootings across the nation. They also highlighted the sobering statistic that as of 2020 firearms are the #1 cause of deaths in young people 0-19. The American Academy of Pediatrics has come out with a formal statement urging Congress to take bipartisan action on gun safety.

Communications and Outreach Coordinator Misty Livengood underscored the importance of considering public perception, and seeking responses/messaging/thoughts forming around this issue by First 5 partners/counterpart agencies in other counties – before moving forward with an approach on our own.

Ms. Wendt reminded of the bipartisan Safe Communities Act. Perhaps there is an opportunity to put out a promising public statement that is "in support of bipartisan progress..."

Commissioner Gibson suggested First 5 could play a convening role, build a coalition to put out a shared strong statement. Emphasis would be on gun safety as a public health issue.

Commissioner Watt suggested combining efforts/messaging with pediatricians as one of our community's most trusted messengers. He also asked about the idea of approaching the Sheriff. He asked also about school boards.

Ms. Livengood inquired what our ultimate objective is in this area.

Commissioner Belch concurred; pointed out that if we can answer this question we will then be able to determine our approach.

Commissioner Sokolowski asked if early childhood education professionals are being included in training/prevention strategies related to gun violence the way the schools are. How are we providing resources?

Commissioner Ventura urged advocacy to ensure that 0-5 year olds, their families, and the professionals who serve them are included in the legislation and programming decisions.

Commissioner Belch pointed out that this is where data are important. For example, in SLO County, domestic violence is more prevalent than gun deaths as a source of trauma for young children. Commissioner Sokolowski added the preponderance of intimate partner violence and its effect on young children.

Commissioner Brescia asked what direction Commissioners propose to give to staff.

Commissioner Gibson proposed 1) forging a coalition around this issue, 2) issuing a public statement focusing attention on gun violence as a public health crisis that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Wells asked if Commissioners would propose formation of an ad hoc committee. Answer: Yes. Committee members self-identified: Commissioners Sokolowski, Tedford, Watt.

Questions:

Commissioner Belch: Who would the statement go to?

Commissioner Watt: What are other First 5 agencies doing about this?

Commissioner Gibson: Can we link this to our Children's Bill of Rights? Might we create a statement penned by First 5 that others sign on to?

Public Comment: Raechelle Bowlay, Child Care Planning Council Coordinator, would like to be part of this work/process.

ITEM 8 – Staff Reports

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

- We Are the Care Community Voices Tour
- Family-Friendly Workplace Awards and Chamber Insight Studio (June 28)
- June Hands-on Hero – Trust Automation/Children's Center. July is Lumina Alliance (Infants at Work Policy). August will be linked to Breastfeeding Awareness Month
- We Are the Care – New email, ads, excitement about the SLO Chamber partnership (see above Agenda Item 7)
- Funded Program Promotion: Getting the word out re: MP Health services, CSPP/First 5 Preschool Enrollment.
- Social Media promotion for Vision Month (June), Fruits/Veggies Month, Hunger Awareness, etc.

- Marilu Gomez continues with Talk.Read.Sing. time on Wednesdays. Millie Tolani at SLO Botanical Garden will be offering some TRS sessions in the Children's Garden.

Wendy Wendt provided updates on:

- First 5 Fresno County application to First 5 CA for refugee funding. SLO4 Home will be part of the proposal as a subcontractor serving refugee families settling in SLO County.
- Summer intern Kennedy Roberts (Public Health major at CSU Northridge) will be working with First 5 SLO County through August.

Public Comment: Cozy Faber SLO Classical Academy, praised First 5 staff for the breadth of activity the agency is involved in.

ITEM 9 – Update on Early Care and Education Landscape

Raechelle Bowlay, Coordinator of the SLO County Child Care Planning Council, launched the presentation. She provided background on the CCPC, including that it is a state mandated entity, under the CA Department of Social Services. Locally, the CCPC is in the process of moving from its current home at CAPSLO (the latter has been playing a fiscal agency role) to SLO County Office of Education. This will allow closer proximity to major systemic work based out of the education system, including ARPA child care funds, universal preschool, early education teacher development, state Quality Counts grant funding, etc.

Commissioner Brescia reinforced Ms. Bowlay's comments, adding the importance of leveraging funds and aligning program focus.

Commissioner Sokolowski spoke to the challenge of sustainability for licensed providers, with staffing being the biggest problem.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 10 – Adjournment

5:29 p.m.