

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

June 24, 2020 (Approved September 23, 2020)

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson	SLO County Board of Supervisors
James Brescia, Ed.D	SLO County Office of Education
Devin Drake	Department of Social Services
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, Ed.D	Community at Large
Melinda Sokolowski	Child Care Planning Council
James Tedford, M.D.	Medical Representative (AAP Chapter 2)
Alison Ventura, Ph.D.	Community at Large

**Commissioners Absent/Excused --**

Penny Borenstein, M.D.	SLO County Public Health Department
Bob Watt	Community at Large

**Staff Present**

Commission staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Sarah Reinhart  
Commission Counsel: Natalie Frye-Laacke  
Commission Evaluation Consultant: Thomas Keifer

**Call to Order**

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order 3:03 PM.

**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, 2020. A special meeting scheduled for July 13, 2020 is on the Consent Agenda and will include one item – approval of a consulting contract for Phase 1 of the Collaborative Child Care Study.

He recommended shifting action items on today's agenda to the front, given Commissioner Ventura's need to leave the meeting by 4:00 p.m.

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

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

Shana Paulson, CAPSLO Child Care Resource Connection, announced a second supply distribution for Child Care Providers Thursday June 25 (Arroyo Grande) and Saturday June 27 (San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles), made possible with funds from First 5 California. A third delivery is expected in July or early August.

**ITEM 3 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements**

Commissioner Sokolowski announced that Head Start centers are starting to reopen, offering a summer program. She expects that there will be closings and reopenings over time to adjust to changing circumstances with the pandemic.

Commissioner Tedford expressed appreciation for Commissioner Borenstein’s continuing leadership throughout the pandemic. He also announced that today is his 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary.

Commissioner Gibson announced that the County passed a “COVID Budget” for the coming year. A healthy reserve has helped to weather the economic challenges. Most of the key social services programs have not been cut.

**ITEM 4 - Consent Agenda**

- a) Approve May 14, 2020 minutes
- b) Approve Office Lease Extension
- c) Approval to accept proposal with Moss Levy Hartzheim for FY 2019-20 External Audit
- d) Approval Mobile Device and Allowance Policy
- e) Authorize Special Commission Meeting in July 2020 (purpose: Contract Approval for Child Care Study Consultant)

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Gibson clarified that the date for Item 4e. has been set at July 13, 2020, 4:00 p.m.

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

**ITEM 5 (postponed until after Action Items 6-9)**

**~PUBLIC HEARING~  
Strategic Plan Approval**

**ITEM 6 - 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 and Commissioner Gibson pointed out that with anticipated continuing decline in revenues over time, the administrative percentage eventually climbs up slightly above the maximum 15% in outlying years, even with a freeze on the administrative budget. Commissioners recommended keeping a watch on this potential scenario and devising options to stave it off either through diversified revenue and/or reductions in administrative expenditures.

*Public Comment: none*

Commissioner Drake moved to approve the Long-Range Financial Plan Update. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia. Motion passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 7 – Approve 2020-24 Strategic Plan Narrative**

Ms. Wendt presented the narrative draft of the Strategic Plan, entitled *Begin With the Children* (inspired by a Mahatma Gandhi quote). She thanked Commissioners, staff, and Evaluation Consultant Thomas Keifer, for their collective contributions to the process leading up to creation of the Plan. She reminded them that it is meant to be a living document, and that there are several additional pieces to be added over the coming months (e.g. Financial Plan, Advocacy Agenda, Evaluation Implementation Plan, Summary of Community Input). Minor copy edits are also being completed, none of which are content-related.

The Plan narrative format is modeled somewhat after the First 5 SLO County website framework.

Ms. Wendt highlighted two areas for Commission input:

- Proposed change to First 5 Mission Statement: *Our mission is to allocate funds and advocate for quality programs and services, supporting children, prenatal to age 5, to ensure that every child is healthy, **developing to optimal potential**, and ready to learn in school.* The bolded phrase is a new addition. Ms. Wendt pointed out that our Mission extends beyond physical health and school readiness, and proposed that the additional phrase encompasses a broader sphere of focus that more accurately reflects First 5's work. Commissioners expressed strong and unanimous support for this change.
- Question re: whether a second advocacy goal might be included under the Health and Development focus area. Commissioner Sokolowski suggested a focus on social/emotional health, and wondered if Help Me Grow already addresses this sufficiently. Ms. Wendt offered that an advocacy goal could call out trauma/ACES/early childhood mental health. Commissioner Ventura commented that a goal related to health access might be included. Ms. Wendt said she and staff will develop options for a second Health and Development advocacy goal based on this discussion, bring back to the Commission for consideration at a future meeting.

*Public Comment: none*

Commissioner Brescia moved to approve the Strategic Plan narrative (with copy edits completed); motion seconded by Commissioner Drake; passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 8 – Approve 2020-22 Program Contracts**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced the item, which includes seven new two-year contracts with continuing program partners. A second two-year contract round can be considered in the future, pending solid performance and continuing community need. Legal Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke reminded Commissioners of protocol related to conflict of interest among individual Commissioners and the requirement to recuse from voting in such cases.

*Public Comment: none*

Motions to approve 2-year contracts were issued in the following order:

SLO County Office of Education - First 5/CSPP Preschool (\$358,740)  
Commissioner Ventura moved, Drake seconded, Brescia recused. Motion passed 6-0/1 recusal.

SLO County Public Health Dept. -- Oral Health Program Manager (\$80,000)  
Commissioner Sokolowski moved, Brescia seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Gary Englund and Assoc. - Vision Screening (\$40,000)  
SLO County Public Health – BABES (\$358,740)  
Parents Helping Parents (\$83,132)  
Carsel Consulting – Health Access Trainers (\$40,000)  
Commissioner Brescia moved, Sokolowski seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tolosa Children’s Dental Center – Oral Health Prevention for Children (\$40,000)  
Commissioner Brescia moved, Sokolowski seconded, Tedford recused. Motion passed 6-0/1 recusal

### **ITEM 9 – Approve FY 2020-21 Administrative Budget**

Ms. Wendt introduced the final draft of the FY 2020-21 Administrative Budget. A first reading was conducted at the May 2020 Commission meeting. Only minor changes were made in the interim: office rent is being held at the current level for the coming year. A staff cell phone stipend has been added to personnel benefits.

*Public comment: None.*

Commissioner Brescia moved to approve the FY2020-21 Administrative Budget; Commissioner Tedford seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## ITEM 5 – Staff Report

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

- Racial justice statements by First 5 Association and First 5 CA. Equity at the core of our work.
- First 5 SLO County submitted a letter to Assemblymember Cunningham; invited SLO Chamber and Economic Vitality Corporation to submit letters to the Governor in support of budget elements that support child care.
- First 5 SLO County has been working on multiple levels to address COVID as it affects young children, families and service providers. A key continuing example is Emergency Response funding from First 5 that is contributing to the Community Foundation Disaster Support Fund. Associate Director Jason Wells continues to partner with Foundation staff on this effort.
- Commissioners Gibson, Ruvalcaba-Heredia and Sokolowski have been working with Wendy Wendt and a group of community stakeholders to secure financial relief for undocumented and mixed status families in the county. The initiative is called SLO County UnDocuSupport.
- Hands on Heroes continues, minus the video production – the focus in May was on families, and in June on the entire community.
- Daily Talk.Read.Sing. livestreams are taking a hiatus for the summer. Several Commissioners have taken part, as well as all the staff; the finale week was all-kids. Mr. Wells commented on the honor and fun it has been to produce the daily ramp-up of this series over the past few months.

Special Projects Administrator Sarah Montes Reinhart provided an update on progress with the 3 by 3 project and Help Me Grow:

- Pediatric partners CHC and Bravo Pediatrics are both continuing to partner on the project.
- Bravo Pediatrics in particular has received positive feedback from families throughout the COVID crisis.
- She thanked Commissioner Tedford for his ongoing interest in/support for the project, and for sending her valuable links to resources.
- The Help Me Grow Steering Committee will next meet over the summer.
- Ms. Reinhart is developing a productive working relationship with Jamie McGillis, SLO Help Me Grow Coordinator with the Centralized Access Point at CAPSLO.

Mr. Wells added a brief update on the Disaster Support Fund – nearly \$150,000 has been distributed, \$42,550 of which is covered with First 5 Emergency Response Fund contributions.

Ms. Wendt touched on the following subjects:

- Reminder that emergency response funding is now an annual budgeted allocation in the long-range financial plan. Commissioner Gibson expressed praise for the partnership with the Community Foundation.

- First 5 offices are opened in a modified way: by appointment only to the public. At least one staffer in every day.
- July 13<sup>th</sup> Special Commission meeting will involve one agenda item – to review and approve a contract with the Low Income Investment Fund to conduct the Collaborative Child Care Study ‘feasibility phase.’”
- We Are the Care is establishing a City Council Liaison team to create a two-way communication between early childhood advocates and municipal decision-makers.
- Ms. Wendt is part of an advisory team to the new Paso Robles public schools grant: Inclusive Early Education Expansion Initiative, which will build child care capacity in that city that is designed for an integrated mix of typically developing children and children with special needs.
- The First 5 Association has a new Executive Director, who will start in her position in early July. Her name is Melissa Stafford Jones and she comes to First 5 with a background in philanthropy and early childhood development.
- In the coming months, First 5 SLO County will be pursuing lasting ways to build toward an equitable society by focusing on its own role in the work around racial justice. Commissioner Gibson commented that he has been in touch with NAACP and Race Matters, including discussing the work of First 5.

*Public Comment: NONE*

**ITEM 10 – Adjournment**

4:43 p.m.