

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
March 25, 2021 (Approved May 27, 2021)

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson (Chair)  
Penny Borenstein (Vice Chair)

SLO County Board of Supervisors  
SLO County Public Health Department

James Brescia  
Devin Drake  
Melinda Sokolowski  
James Tedford  
Bob Watt

SLO County Office of Education  
Department of Social Services  
Child Care Planning Council  
Medical Representative (AAP, Ch 2)  
Community at Large

**Current Commissioners Absent**

Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia  
Alison Ventura

Community at Large  
Community at Large

**Staff Present**

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

**Call to Order**

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM.

**ITEM 1 –Chair Comments**

Chair Gibson let attendees know that the meeting duration would end by 1:00 p.m. due to several Commissioner conflicts.

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

Shana Paulson, CAPSLO Child Care Resource Connection, thanked Commissioners Borenstein and Brescia for their roles in extending vaccine access to child care providers along with other education professionals. 650+ early childhood professionals have been vaccinated to date.

Jim Dantona, President and CEO of the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, described a developing partnership proposal that would create a new staff position focused on Family Friendly Workplace supports for local employers, and would build on the We Are the Care Family Friendly Workplace Toolkit. This issue is particularly important in the context of the pandemic. The concept is based in part on an example of a partnership between First 5 Sonoma County and the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber.

Katherine Bliss, CAPSLO Child Care Health and Nutrition Specialist, thanked the First 5 funded Vision Screening project and Dr. Hile in particular for his screening-evaluation-diagnosis and treatment for young children. These services are invaluable to the community.

### **ITEM 3 – Commissioner Announcements**

Commissioner Watt thanked Department of Social Services for its partnership with local community-based organizations, including the Center for Family Strengthening.

Commissioner Sokolowski announced that CAPSLO has hired Adriana Barron as the new Head Start Director.

Commissioner Brescia expressed gratitude to Raechelle Bowlay of the Child Care Planning Council and Commissioner Borenstein for their work in facilitating vaccination of child care providers and in general for supports for the child care industry throughout COVID.

Commissioner Gibson commented that the County continues to work on the annual budget during this challenging time. He appreciates CSAC and First 5 commitment and collaboration to advancing early childhood issues in the context of state and local budget planning.

### **ITEM 4 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the January 28, 2021 Minutes
- b. Approval of Engagement Letter with Moss, Levy, and Hartzheim for 2020-21 External Audit Services
- c. Approval of 2021-22 Option to Renew and Amendment #2 with County Behavioral Health for MHSA 3 by 3 Innovation Project
- d. Receipt and Approval of First 5 CA Annual Report FY 2019-20 as required by the Children and Families Act

Ms. Wendt requested pulling Item 4c; full Amendment document is still being prepared at the County level. Commissioner Gibson proposed directing staff to sign the amendment unless significant revisions are required.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Brescia made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda absent Item 4c. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borenstein and passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 5 – Endorsement of First 5 Association Policy Agenda**

Executive Director Wendy Wendt overviewed the 2021 First 5 Association Policy Agenda and proposed that a local endorsement by the First 5 SLO County Commission would help provide additional direction to staff related to advocacy activities. It will also help align local-state efforts and messaging.

*Public Comment: None.*

Commissioner Sokolowski made a motion to endorse the 2021 First 5 Association Policy Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drake and passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 6: Program Partner Spotlights**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced this item, which included three presentations:

- MP Health – Silvia Wasjutin heads this agency which is a new First 5-funded partner providing mental health supports for local families impacted by trauma related to the pandemic. They are in the process of conducting widespread outreach, and are set up to serve families in both English, Spanish, and Mixtec.
- Child Care Resource Connection (CAPSLO) – Children’s Services Manager Shana Paulson provided an update on First 5 funds dedicated to COVID stipends for child care providers. Out of 300 currently-licensed providers, 163 applied for funding, representing communities throughout the county. Most are operating at 75% of licensed capacity due to a variety of reasons (e.g. spacing requirements, parent anxiety). Funds have been used to replenish PPE supplies, expand useable outdoor spaces, and shifting business models.
- First 5 Intern Andrea Uribe presented her project (conducted with fellow-intern Angela Spinelli), “First 5 Focus” which has produced a series of short videos of First 5 funded partners. The videos will roll out next quarter on a variety of platforms. The idea is to elevate program profiles and reach families with information.

*Public Comment: None*

### **ITEM 7: First 5 Program Investments – Current Year Update and FY21-22 Estimates**

Wendy Wendt presented this item, which laid out current and next year budgeted program investments. The goal is to identify unallocated funds within the First 5 financial plan, and to determine potential uses of these funds. Approximately \$400,000 is open for consideration in next year’s program budget, using criteria within the strategic plan, COVID-related needs, and relationship to First 5 advocacy.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- Commissioner Borenstein reminded of a COVID that Commissioners have discussed in the past to focus most or all funding on “one big idea,” rather than investing smaller amounts across many programs.
- Commissioner Brescia cautioned about how First 5 acts within the realm of “advocacy,” to be aware of the legal limitations for public agencies.
- Commissioner Watt lauded the creation of the Family Friendly Workplace toolkit. Sees adding funding to advance this work. Commissioner Gibson concurred, commented that this is an optimal time during the ongoing pandemic to lean in on family friendly workplace supports.

*Public Comment: None*

## **ITEM 8: Staff Reports**

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Officer, provided updates on First activities:

- April is Month of the Child. A hybrid of virtual offerings and drive through activities is being planned by local partners. Flag raising ceremony for Child Abuse Prevention Month is April 23. Rolling list of activities on First 5 website and social platforms.
- First 5 Association meeting April 21, Advocacy Day legislative visits April 27, Dia de los Niños/Libros.
- COVID distribution programs: 120 child care operators received supplies in February drive-thru
- Hands on Heros: April Hero is Elena Chavez, Family Advocate for the Link in North County.

Wendy Wendt, Executive Director, updated on the following:

- A Request for Qualifications is being released for evaluation services contract. A subcommittee of two Commissioners plus staff will review applications, scheduled to be due in late May.
- We Are the Care Task Forces are actively engaged in a variety of activities. Collaborative Public Sector Child Care Study Feasibility Report has been submitted and is being reviewed by the four partner agencies.
- Help Me Grow – A tri-county convening (SLO, Santa Barbara, Ventura) is being organized through ACES Aware for June 9 – Bridges to Resilience, and is designed particularly for pediatric providers.
- First 5 statewide and locally is building focus on race/diversity/equity/inclusion (REDI) awareness and action. An Association REDI task force has been launched.

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

Commission Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke updated the status of performance review for the Executive Director. Last year's timeframe was January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019. She recommended a 360 evaluation this year, which would include staff and partner input, as well as a self-evaluation and goal-setting exercise completed by Ms. Wendt. Materials will be distributed to all participants following this meeting. Closed session will be held during the May 2021 Commission meeting to review Ms. Wendt's evaluation findings.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Commissioner Watt supported keeping the evaluation feedback to only Commissioners this year.

Commissioner Borenstein countered, pointing out that input from peers, staff and outside partners is helpful. Commissioners Brescia and Gibson agreed.

Commissioner Watt concurred. Commission directed Ms. Frye-Laacke to move forward with a 360 evaluation, to be reviewed in closed session at the May 27 meeting.

*Public Comment: None*

**ITEM 10: Adjournment**

**1:04 p.m.**