

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

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2023 (Approved June 28, 2023)

Current Commissioners Present

James Brescia	SLO County Office of Education
Penny Borenstein, M.D.	SLO County Public Health Department
Linda Belch	Department of Social Services
Dawn Ortiz-Legg	SLO County Board of Supervisors
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia	Community at Large
James Tedford	Medical Representative (AAP Chapter 2)
Alison Ventura	Community at Large
Bob Watt	Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused --

Melinda Sokolowski	Early Care and Education Child Care Planning Council
--------------------	--

Staff Present

Commission staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells
Commission Counsel: Natalie Frye-Laacke, Daniel Cheung

Call to Order

Chair Brescia called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Per AB261 Commissioner is Dawn Ortiz-Legg attending virtually. No public comments/concerns.

ITEM 1 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

None.

ITEM 2 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements

Commissioner Tedford offered praise to our society’s educators as he prepares to celebrate the high school and college graduations of five of his eight grandchildren.

Commissioner Watt announced that the Center for Family Strengthening is completing its organizational merger with the LINK. He also commented on the need for ongoing support toward the Children’s Advocacy Center, a program under CFSSLO that staffs family advocates

to work with children and families who are victims of child abuse and involved in court cases. Commissioner Ortiz-Legg suggested educating members of the Board of Supervisors regarding the CFSSLO/LINK merger and the Children's Advocacy Center.

Commissioner Brescia announced that 25 candidates are currently moving through the Ticket to Teach apprenticeship. He also commented that ARPA funding distribution for child care is moving through the process. Thirdly, he announced that on May 23, a free evening of jazz was presented at Vina Robles for local educators, including early childhood educators.

ITEM 3 - Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the March 22, 2023 Minutes
- b. Approval of the FY 2022-23 Third Quarterly Financial Report
- c. Confirmation of New Terms for Commissioners Ruvalcaba-Heredia (3 years), Tedford (3 years), Ventura (3 years), and Watt (1 year); final approval with Board of Supervisors

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ventura made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watt and passed 6-0. (Commissioner Borenstein arrived following the vote).

ITEM 4 – Staff Reports

Associate Director Jason Wells provided the following updates:

- Review of Month of the Child (April) events and posts
- Review of First 5 Association Advocacy Day – meetings with staff of Laird, Addis and Hart
- We Are the Care (Update by Special Projects Coordinator Kris Roudebush) – Advocacy work to encourage child care/child development language in Atascadero General Plan Update (including focus on connection between child care and economic development); meeting scheduled with Paso Robles City Economic Development Manager.
- First 5 Event Sponsorships – Latina Day of Action (Promotores), Bridges to Resilience Conference, Latino Health Coalition Health Screenings Event
- First 5 CA has launched the Stronger Starts campaign, focused on raising public awareness around toxic stress in early childhood
- First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt was featured on a Workplace Wellness syllabus at UCSB – specifically her 2020 online interview with SLO Chamber CEO Jim Dantona on the topic of Family Friendly Workplaces in practice
- Mr. Wells and Cal Poly Intern Kristina Fortune conducted a Site visit to Funded Partner Pregnancy and Parenting Support of San Luis Obispo County
- There is a change to First 5's print media campaign with Central Coast Journal from "Hands on Heroes" to First 5 in Focus (June is intro month)
- First 5 will be a sponsor of summer concert series throughout the county

First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt provided the following updates:

- First 5 CA is increasingly moving toward regional grant allocations for state-funded projects; examples include Impact Legacy, Home Visiting, Refugee Supports.
- There is an upcoming opportunity for First 5 Association staff to visit local First 5s and their communities. The dates are from Jun-December 2023. First 5 SLO County staff will propose a visit date that coincides with Commission meetings.
- The State Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative will soon be releasing Round 3 funding application, with a focus on wraparound services. This might be an opportune project for First 5 to spearhead, in partnership with other local organizations, and with a possible focus on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC).
- First 5 SLO County is one of three local funders (Community Foundation and MUST Charities) that have contributed funds to support a workshop series on case management strategies/collaboration among local homeless services providers.
- Ms. Wendt recently met with United Way of SLO County Interim CEO Doug Yeiser on the topic of shared areas of focus in early childhood development.

Public Comment: Lisa Fraser, Executive Director of Center for Family Strengthening/LINK, thanked the Commission for its support of the above-described communication/collaboration training for homeless service provider case management staff. She also highlighted work at the Children's Advocacy Center, a project that she has been working on in collaboration with local child abuse pediatrician Dr. Nisha AbdulCader and other partners. The vision has been to have a local trauma-informed/bilingual/bicultural approach and place to support victims of child abuse as they navigate the court process.

ITEM 5 -- Funded Partner Update: SLO Chamber Family Friendly Workplaces Program

Ms. Wendt introduced this item. She reminded Commissioners of First 5 SLO County's commitment to the work of elevating Family Friendly Workplace practices, both as an advocate and public awareness builder, a convener, and as a funder. First 5 SLO County is a current co-investor with the County of San Luis Obispo in the creation/cultivation of a Family Friendly Workplaces Program based at the SLO Chamber and staff by Christina Lefevre Latner.

SLO Chamber CEO Jim Dantona provided further context in his introductory remarks. The Chamber has been interested in helping explore how local employers can help mitigate demand for child care by building family friendly workplace policies/practices within their business. The #1 pain point for local businesses is labor, and child care is a big part of this.

Ms. Lefevre Latner began her presentation with some history of her own involvement with this topic. She has been studying the issues related to family friendly workplace for many years, both as a Cal Poly instructor in Women and Gender Studies, in her work with First 5, and in her personal life. She began her current role with the SLO Chamber in October 2022. She provided a definition of Family Friendly Workplace, and explained that her work focuses on supporting employers' exploration of opportunities across a range of practices. The program is free and available to any SLO County employer, not limited to San Luis Obispo or to Chamber

members. The program offers an online assessment, an awards program, and individual consultations.

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Watt asked how employers get the message to their employees that these practices/policies are available? Ms. Lefevre Latner responded that HR communication is really important. She also highlighted examples of how gender plays a role. Many HR professionals are women. In construction, the majority of managers and employees are men. Are male-dominated sectors able/willing to take on FFW culture?
- Commissioner Borenstein commented that she is pleased that the County is stepping up. It IS about social norms. This work is difficult in public sector context – for example, how to work with norms and standards across employee classes and union agreements? Ms. Lefevre Latner responded that it is important for employers to recognize the “no one size fits all” reality, and to stress that there are a wide variety of ways to build family friendly culture into organizations across all employee groups in organizations small-medium-large.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 6 – Strategic Planning Process Update and Discussion: Stakeholder Engagement Results

Mr. Wells and Ms. Wendt presented findings from over 40 stakeholder interviews and focus groups conducted to determine perspectives on 1) county needs for children 0-5, families and providers; 2) disparities in access; and 3) First 5’s role. Commissioners offered feedback in all three categories (*feedback themes bulleted in italics*):

COUNTY NEEDS (Child Care, Basic Needs, Social Support and Connection, Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Medical/Dental Care, Childhood Obesity/Nutrition, Trauma/Neglect/Violence, Early Learning/Literacy)

- *Recommendation to recognize mental health support and substance use as separate categories, as these are two very important and big needs.*
- *Question re: where does parenting fit in? Is that early learning/literacy? Where are we thinking about building parent capacity?*

GROUPS EXPERIENCING DISPARITIES (Immigrant Families, Mixteco Language Variant Spoken at Home, Families in North County, Families in Outlying Regions, Families with Children with Special Developmental Needs/Abilities; Low/Middle Income Families; Families with Lack of Digital Access)

- *Important to double-down on families with children with special needs. There is a lot of opportunity to better integrate our regional center services with community-based*

services with the aim of reducing duplication and making sure families can navigate the system.

- *Another group to add – alternative caregivers like grandparents.*
- *We need to make sure we have a broad definition of “families” (e.g., including single parent families).*

ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS (Workforce Challenges; Coordination/Shared Capacity; Referral Pathways; Resource Sharing)

- *Overall, there is also a need for increased cultural competence across agencies; getting people to a place where they’re not assuming what’s needed and are co-designing services.*
- *How to collaborate to work on skill/education experience deficits across sector (i.e., applying coordination/shared capacity to workforce problems). (Dawn)*
- *Sharing resources and skills among providers is really important. (e.g. promotores)*
- *It would be ideal to find innovative ways to share data across agencies that don’t violate confidentiality and provide a broader lens on who we’re serving.*

FIRST 5 ASSETS (Community Knowledge/Expertise; Respected Partner; Holistic Approach; Neutrality; Flexibility; Effective Advocacy; Conveners; Early Literacy Promoters; Awareness Builders; Resource/Info Sharers)

- *Suggestion that there are a lot of organizations that focus on Basic Needs; First 5’s role moves beyond that tier.*
- *Is being a neutral partner always an asset? Sometimes we need to be pushing a specific agenda. I would like to have that conversation. Staff responses: When this topic was discussed, it was more about how everyone can sit down with First 5 as a convener and know the team is there for the kids.*
- *First 5 helps build a culture of support for children and families, a culture that values children and families, internally and across the organizations they connect with.*

FIRST 5 ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Staff noted that it was difficult to get answers to this question. Overall, people talked about areas where First 5 could play a bigger role and that First 5 may have some work to do getting the word out more about their work. People also noted the tension between wanting First 5 to do more and the fact that First 5 can’t do everything.

Commissioner Brescia sees this theme more as challenges and opportunities rather than 'room for improvement.' We have discussed all these topics in this room. For example, building awareness of First 5 is always a work in progress as the population fluctuates.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 7 – Strategic Plan Review: Long-Range Financial Plan (First Reading)

Ms. Wendt provided an overview of the annual Financial Plan update. Today is the first reading, with approval scheduled for June 2023. Revenue decline is projected to accelerate due to continued decrease in smoking rates and recent voter approval of the Flavor Ban. As such, the estimated annual allocation for program investments beginning in the next strategic planning period is proposed to drop by \$200,000.

Ms. Wendt reminded the Commission that the annual administrative budget and program allocations are built from the Long-Range Financial Plan.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 8 – FY 2023-24 Draft Administrative Budget

Ms. Wendt introduced the draft Administrative Budget for FY 2023-24. This is the first reading, and the final budget will be presented for Commission approval at its June 2023 meeting. She highlighted several updates:

- *Salary increases per Commission action May 2022 (3% merit based)*
- *Most other expense categories are level funded, with the exception of the following:*
 - *Memberships: Increases match increases in annual fees for Chambers and F5 Association*
 - *Registration and Training: Reflects higher rates for F5 Association Summit*
 - *Office Rent: 3% increase per lease agreement with Walter Brothers*
 - *Travel Expenses: Increase to account for anticipated uptick in in-person meetings both in-county and to other regions*

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 9 – Future Agenda Items

- United Way Presentation
- Children's Advocacy Center Presentation

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 10 – Adjourn at 5:18 p.m.
[Next Meeting June 28, 2023]