

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

October 29, 2020 (APPROVED December 3, 2020)

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson (Chair)	SLO County Board of Supervisors
James Brescia, EdD	SLO County Office of Education
Devin Drake	Department of Social Services
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, EdD	Community at Large
Melinda Sokolowski	Child Care Planning Council
James Tedford, MD	Medical Representative (FAAP)
Alison Ventura, PhD	Community at Large
Bob Watt	Community at Large
Penny Borenstein, MD (Vice Chair)	SLO County Public Health Department

**Commissioners Absent/Excused**

None

**Staff Present**

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

**Call to Order**

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

**ITEM 1 – Chair Comments**

Chair Gibson thanked Commissioners for making the shift to a new date and time, which allows Commissioner Borenstein to attend. He welcomed her back and thanked her for her dedicated leadership as County of SLO's Chief Health Officer to address COVID-19.

**ITEM 2 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates**

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia summarized the work of the Promotores Collaborative during the pandemic, partnering with agencies to get resources to the Latino community.

Commissioner Watt passed along greetings from former Commissioner Tracy Schiro, whom he had recently seen in passing and shared news with.

Commissioner Borenstein updated colleagues on her work at the Emergency Operations Center during the pandemic. Thousands of masks have been recently donated by community members. COVID positivity rates had been holding steady, but are now headed in a troubling direction. There are very few cases in schools and child care settings. The Public Health Department is recruiting a new limited-term “Healthy Equity” coordinator to focus on pandemic hot spots. In other news, Public Health was recently awarded a First 5 California Home Visiting Coordination grant.

Chair Gibson is focused on several conversations regarding the importance of child care in the context of economic development.

### **ITEM 3 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda**

None.

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

- a. Approve September 23, 2020 minutes
- b. Approve Q1 20-21 Financial Report
- c. Approve 2 Conflict of Interest Code Biennial Review/Update
- d. Approve 2021 Commission Meeting Calendar

*Public Comment: None*

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

### **ITEM 5: Staff Reports**

Outreach and Communications Officer Misty Livengood updated Commissioners on First 5 Association activities, including endorsement of CA State Proposition 16, and \$110 million in child care relief funding. First 5 CA is anticipating another supply distribution. She reported on November’s Hands on Hero profile focused on the business community, which afforded a chance to promote the soon-to-be launched Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit. Talk Read Sing Facebook Livestream will continue its rotation through mid December and then resume in January 2021.

Special Projects Administrator Kris Roudebush gave an update on We Are the Care, including development of the City Council Child Care Liaison program, Housing Element advocacy, and the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit. This month the We Are the Care team has also mobilized a Child Care is Essential campaign on social media.

Executive Director Wendy Wendt reported that the First 5 Association provided input on updated language in the CSAC Policy Platform that focuses on commitment to addressing needs in early childhood development. She summarized local work to support

undocumented immigrant families and farmworker communities. She reminded Commissioners of a front page SLO Tribune article drawing attention to child care challenges. She highlighted First 5's ongoing partnership with the Community Foundation and its Disaster Response Fund.

Discussion:

Commissioner Watt is interested in being involved in the Family-Friendly Workplace initiative.

*Public Comment: None*

**ITEM 6 (ACTION ITEM): Commission Review and Accept FY2019-20 Annual External Audit**

Ms. Wendt introduced this item. First 5 SLO County contracted this year with Moss Levy Hartzheim (MLH). Firm partner Alex Hom was in attendance at the meeting to make a brief report and answer questions. Ms. Wendt shared that the audit included no Compliance findings and flagged two financial findings – 1) an error on one invoice payment amount, and 2) absence of a formal bank reconciliation process. Staff have developed corrective action plans to address each of these findings.

She briefly summarized the agency's financial position at the end of FY 19-20, including a slight increase in revenue from the prior year largely due to the addition of the MHSA grant, and the final year of IMPACT revenues.

Mr. Hom concurred with Ms. Wendt's summary, and commented that the audit process was straightforward and clean with the two exceptions listed above. He also pointed out that because this was the firm's first year working with First 5, the file audit sample was large (40 files). He commended Ms. Wendt and her staff for their thoroughness, helpfulness and overall accuracy.

Discussion:

Commissioner Watt commented that this information and process is very useful.

Chair Gibson added that he appreciates that the first audit with MLH went smoothly and that a "fresh pair of eyes" on our system is beneficial.

Commissioner Watt made a motion to accept the External Audit. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brescia. Motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM 7 (ACTION ITEM): Public Hearing: Commission Review and Approval of FY2019-20 Annual Report to First 5 California**

Mr. Wells outlined programmatic and fiscal data to be submitted to First 5 CA by October 30, 2020 in compliance with state Annual Report requirements. He emphasized that the Report

exercise gives us a chance to celebrate the work of the staff, families, and children in our community. In addition, our numbers contribute to a state report, part of telling a statewide story.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Ventura made a motion to approve First 5 SLO County's FY2019-20 State Annual Report submission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drake and passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 8 (ACTION ITEM): Commission Approval of COVID Response Program Contracts**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced this item. First 5 SLO County released an RFP focused on child care and family resiliency supports related to the COVID pandemic. Despite a short time frame of under four weeks, nine robust proposals were submitted. Seven are being recommended for funding. At today's meeting, four of these seven are now in contract draft form and are being submitted for Commission review/approval.

Two draft contracts focused on child care total \$200,000 and are from November 1, 2020-June 30, 2021:

CAPSLO/Child Care Resource Connection (\$125,000): For health and safety stipends to an estimated 152 active private licensed child care businesses in the county.

Commission Watt recommended that CAPSLO actively reach out to *all* providers, especially businesses that may not be well connected to existing supports/networks.

Little Wings Preschool (\$75,000): Toward purchase of a modular classroom, which will increase capacity at this Atascadero-based bilingual inclusion preschool from 22 to 42 slots.

Commissioner Watt asked if there is a parochial component to this preschool; answer – no. Commissioner Borenstein commended Little Wings and First 5 for supporting and expanding inclusive programming in early childhood education to help address unmet needs for children with special development challenges.

Two draft contracts focused on family resiliency total \$330,000 and are from November 1, 2020-June 30, 2022.

The LINK (\$150,000): To ensure supports via family advocacy for pregnant women, caregivers, and families with children 0-5 throughout North County. Key to this program is a partnership with Paso Robles Unified School District and its school readiness coordinator (historically funded through First 5, now institutionalized within the school district).

Commissioner Watt asked if he should recuse himself from the vote, given his role on the board at Center for Family Strengthening (the LINK's sister agency). First 5 Legal Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke suggested that is a good idea.

MP Health (\$180,000): To provide emotional and mental health support and counseling in Spanish and English. Estimated numbers to be reached: 150 families in FY2020-21; 300 in FY 21-22.

Commissioner Tedford asked for more background information on MP; he hadn't heard of them before. Mr. Wells explained that they come highly recommended through Tri-Counties Regional Center. They have a contracted team of fully licensed LMFTs and LCSWs. They have clinics in Santa Barbara and Humboldt Counties, and have recently moved into San Luis Obispo County as well. They are collocated at the Little Wings facility (see above).

*Public Comment:*

Lisa Fraser, LINK Executive Director, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to build a formal partnership the Paso Robles public schools.

Marilu Gomez, Paso Robles School Readiness Coordinator, added thanks and said that this partnership marries two trusted organizations to better support families with heightened needs during this difficult time.

VOTE TALLY:

**CAPSLO (CHILD CARE STIPENDS)**

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve a contract with CAPSLO for Child Care Stipends; total amount \$125,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borenstein and passed 7:0 (Drake absent; Sokolowski recused).

**LITTLE WINGS PRESCHOOL**

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve a contract with Little Wings Preschool for Capacity Expansion; total amount \$75,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia and passed 8:0 (Drake absent).

**THE LINK**

Commissioner Ventura made a motion to approve a contract with the LINK for a Family Resiliency Partnership; total amount \$150,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tedford and passed 6:0 (Drake absent; Ruvalcaba-Heredia and Watt recused).

**MP HEALTH**

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve a contract with MP Health for COVID mental health supports for families; total amount \$180,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ventura and passed 8:0 (Drake absent).

Follow-up Discussion:

Mr. Wells announced that three additional draft contracts will be presented to Commissioners for review/approval, either at the December 3 meeting or a special meeting, date to be determined:

- CAPSLO – Basic Needs Supports for Families
- South County Youth Coalition – Parent Learning Pods
- Pregnancy and Parenting Support of SLO County --- Perinatal Mood Anxiety Disorder counseling in partnership with Community Counseling Center.

*Public Comment:*

Danijela Dornan, CAPSLO Family and Community Support Services Division Coordinator, expressed gratitude for this pending opportunity as a way to expand on existing efforts to support vulnerable families. She cited the example of the UndocuSupport initiative in partnership with the Community Foundation Disaster Support Fund.

Cami Statler, Executive Director of Pregnancy and Parenting Support of SLO County, noted that this is the first time her agency has directly applied for funding support from First 5; is excited to partner with First 5 and also the Community Counseling Center.

Commissioners Ruvalcaba-Heredia and Sokolowski had questions regarding the proposed South County Youth Coalition project – strategies to reach out to the Latino community? Will they hire learning pod staff in-house or contract out? Mr. Wells promised to bring a detailed presentation at the upcoming meeting, including answers to these questions.

Ms. Wendt will be in touch with Commissioners to confirm if there will be a special meeting or if these contract drafts will be presented for review/approval at the December 3 meeting.

**ITEM 9 -- Adjourn**

1:41 p.m.