

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

September 27, 2023 (APPROVED October 25, 2023)

**Current Commissioners Present**

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

**Commissioners Absent/Excused**

None

**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 3:01 PM.

**ITEM 1 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements**

Dawn Ortiz-Legg gave an update on the SLO County Women’s Commission Period Drive. She also pointed out that Raechelle Bowlay (Early Care and Education Planning Council Coordinator) is currently serving as Chair of the Commission.

Commissioner Watt thanked Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia for her service to the community as Center for Family Strengthening’s Promotores Collaborative Director. She has recently left this position to pursue other professional opportunities.

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia provided further details on her next plans. She will be working as an independent consultant, and has also founded a new Nonprofit called Corazon Latino. In both roles, the focus will be on education, emotional wellness, resource-sharing, and civic engagement for the Latino community.

Commissioner Tedford provided an update on summer travels with family, including to Indiana.

Commissioner Clarkson introduced herself as the new Commissioner representing the Early Care and Education Council. She announced that the County ARPA Child Care Business

Expansion grant application is due to open in the coming week/s. This is the County's second round of ARPA child care business grants.

Commissioner Brescia welcomed Commissioner Clarkson to the Commission. He announced that Ticket to Teach currently has 25 apprentices in the pipeline. SLOCOE is conducting interviews for an admin assistant on the ECE team. He also expressed gratitude to the County Board of Supervisors for approving a zoning change to allow for workforce housing on SLOCOE property, to be developed school district employees.

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

None.

## **ITEM 3 - Consent Agenda**

- a) Approve June 28, 2023 minutes
- b) Approve Q4 FY22-23 Financial Report
- c) MAA Contract 2023-26

Commissioner Borenstein asked how the MAA contract has been working. Executive Director Wendy Wendt responded that MediCal Administrative Activities reimbursement generates up to \$50,000 per year which goes back into the First 5 General Fund for future service to the community.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borenstein and passed unanimously.

## **ITEM 4 – 2024 Commission Meeting Calendar**

Ms. Wendt introduced this item. She commented on the challenge ensuring a quorum when Commissioners announce close to a meeting date that they are unable to attend. She urged Commissioners to confirm their ability to attend the meetings identified in the draft 2024 Calendar before voting to approve the Calendar. She also pointed out that the May 2024 Commission date is proposed for the *last* Wednesday in May (as opposed to the traditional 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday) to accommodate vacation schedules for her and for Commissioner Brescia.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Ventura made a motion to approve the 2024 Commission Meeting calendar. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watt and passed unanimously.

## ITEM 5 – Staff Updates

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

- Update on child care advocacy
- Reminder of City of SLO Child Care Start-up Grant program
- CAPSLO opening up a new Family Resource Center site in Paso Robles which will house a Child Care Resource Connection office, a North County Help Me Grow space, and a space for family advocacy/parent education
- First 5 has placed a First 5 in Focus piece spotlighting Help Me Grow in October issues of Paso Robles and Atascadero magazines
- Reminder of First 5 Event Sponsorships. Recent/upcoming sponsored events include:
  - 10/10/23 Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition/San Jose Milk Bank Donor Drive
  - 10/20-21 Central Coast Childbirth Network Expo and Consignment Sale
  - 9/18 School Nurses Appreciation Dinner (hosted by Optometric Care Assoc.)
- Other events (recent and upcoming) involving First 5:
  - 8/31 Diversity Coalition Maternal Health and Birth Equity Event
  - 10/5 HAT/UndocuSupport Forum “Promoting Resiliency for Immigrant Families”
  - 10/7 American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter 2 Mixer
  - 10/9 Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition Meeting – First 5 Commissioner Alison Ventura presenting on Infant Feeding
- Updates on Fall Events through Partner Programs – Parent Pods, SELPA, Parent Participation, Parent Connection
- Community Happenings – Hispanic Heritage Month, Fall Festivals
- Talk Read Sing Time resumes with Marilu Gomez, on Wednesdays (on Facebook Live)

Commissioner Tedford asked how many school nurses are there. Commissioner Brescia confirmed approximately 30-35.

Wendy Wendt, Executive Director, provided updates on the following:

- The SLO Chamber board has voted to support House Bill 4571 – Child Care Investment Act – coauthored by Congressman Salud Carbajal. First 5 SLO County may consider future support pending further information.
- Ms. Wendt made public comment at a recent County Planning Commissioner study session on the Dana Reserve Housing Project. In her comment, she emphasized the importance of including child care in housing developments.
- REACH has developed a draft Comprehensive Economic Resilience Strategy (CEDS) that highlights the need for improved child care systems as foundational to a thriving economy. First 5 is working with partners to submit a comment in response to the draft.
- The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CA Dept. of Health Care Services) Round 3 application is being completed by CAPSLO, with collaborative input by First 5 and other local partners.
- First 5 submitted a letter of support to the City of Paso Robles to accompany a state grant they are applying for that would pay for improved/safer pedestrian railroad crossing options for residents living in the north part of the city.

- The First 5 CA summit is scheduled for March 25-27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. First 5 SLO County is teaming up with the SLO Chamber, First 5 Sonoma County, and the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber to lead a breakout session on First 5-Chamber partnerships and family-friendly workplaces.

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg asked for more information on ARPA Child Care Business Expansion Grant application timeline/materials. Early Care and Education Planning Council Coordinator Raechelle Bowlay referred Commissioners to a weblink.

Ms. Wendt suggested calendaring a future presentation to the Board of Supervisors, both on ARPA child care grants and on First 5.

*Public Comment: none*

### **ITEM 6 – IMPACT Legacy Update**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced the item. At the June 2023 Commission meeting, The Commission took action to authorize the Chair and Executive Director to sign two pending contracts: 1) a Grant Award Notice (GAN) Agreement with First 5 CA for First 5 San Luis Obispo County to act as Fiscal Lead Agency for a 2-year Regional IMPACT Legacy funding cycle (Region 7: SLO, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties); and 2) a contract with the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE), whereby VCOE will carry out most of the operational FLA functions on the project, with First 5 SLO County acting essentially as a pass-through agency. This scenario was necessitated by a requirement by First 5 CA that only a local First 5 agency is eligible to enter into a GAN agreement with First 5 CA as part of the IMPACT Legacy initiative. Furthermore, as of the June 2023 Commission meeting, the GAN had not yet been finalized. In the interest of expediting the process and given the lack of summer meetings on the 2023 Commission calendar, the Commission took action to authorize signing of both aforementioned contracts during the intervening months.

The total 2-year amount allocated to Region 7 is \$2,889,799. First 5 SLO County will retain a total of \$12,000 for administrative expenses, with the balance designated for VCOE to distribute among the other partnering counties (via County Offices of Education).

*Public comment: None.*

### **ITEM 7 – Budget Modification and Financial Plan Update**

Wendy Wendt presented on this action item. Per the contract signing activity described in Item 6, a budget modification and financial plan update is triggered. Staff recommended 1) an increase to the current year Program Expenditures budget of \$1,405,701 in alignment with budgeted FY2023-24 amounts assigned to VCOE and partners, 2) an increase to the FY2023-24 Personnel budget of \$6,000 for Year 1 administrative expense, and 3) an update to the Long-Range Financial Plan to include the addition revenue and expenses associated with the IMPACT Legacy initiative (inclusive of FY23-24 and FY234-25).

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Borenstein made a motion to approve the Budget Modification Request to increased program and personnel expense amounts and the related Financial Plan Update amending revenue and expenditures in FY23-24 and FY24-25 to include IMPACT Legacy allocations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ortiz-Legg and passed unanimously.

## **ITEM 8 – Strategic Planning Discussion**

Mr. Wells introduced the discussion. He reminded Commissioners that we are mid-way through the Strategic Planning process, having completed a stakeholder needs assessment and engaged in identifying potential priorities. Today’s discussion will focus on 1) confirming high/medium/light touch priority levels with outcome objectives built within Theory of Change framework; 2) confirming modified wording for an updated mission statement, and confirmation of Guiding Values language. Mr. Wells thanked the ad hoc Strategic Planning Work Group (Commissioners Watt, Belch, Ventura) for their leadership in helping to shape the recommendations being presented at the meeting.

**Updated Mission Statement:** First 5 San Luis Obispo County funds and advocates for quality programs and services, to support children prenatal to five years old and their families, so that every child is healthy, learning and developing to their optimal potential, and ready to succeed in school and life.

No discussion; Commissioners affirmed updated Mission Statement language.

### **Priority Levels:**

High: Early Learning/Child Care; Early Health Foundations, Parent Engagement/Connection/Ed.

Medium: Basic Needs; Early Literacy

Light Touch: Nutrition/Physical Activity; Safety/Healing; Substance Abuse Prevention/Treatment

Within all Priority Levels, First 5’s work will tap one or more of its three strategy types: 1) funding for direct services; 2) advocacy; and 3) place-based networking.

Discussion ensued:

Commissioner Watt pointed out that this plan is meant to be flexible, that there is room as times and community circumstances change.

Commissioner Borenstein urged for more “narrow and deep” as opposed to “wide and shallow.” She suggested focusing all attention on the 3 high-priority levels. Ms. Wendt responded that the reason for scaffolding priority levels as presented is to lean toward a more narrow/deep approach, but with the recognition that circumstances shift and First 5 needs to remain flexible. She pointed out that First 5 is as effective as it is in part because it stays in some way connected to/aware of any conversation or initiative that relates to the lives of young children and families.

Commissioner Ventura commented that “surveillance” is built into the plan, allows for First 5 to keep a pulse on certain areas of effort, and to keep the voice of early childhood “at the table.”

Commissioner Borenstein agreed that this is First 5’s advocacy role. Ms. Wendt added that it is the three roles (aka “strategies”) – advocacy, funding direct services, and network-building – that make up the three legs of the stool that all First 5 work stands on.

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg questioned why nutrition is a light touch priority, commented that childhood obesity is a big health issue, and that early nutrition links to long-term health. Ms. Wendt recognized that many of the priority areas tie in with each other (e.g. nutrition is an element of early health foundations).

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia underscored the importance of parenting classes and support groups. Families need good information to make healthy choices for themselves and their children.

Ms. Wendt pointed out that during Covid, Basic Needs support rose to a high priority level; First 5 needs to stay involved now, but at a medium level in more of a supporting role.

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg commented on the light touch substance abuse prevention/treatment. She heard a presentation by the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Task Force.

Ms. Wendt pointed out that First 5's strategic approach needs to be to recognize where we can make a difference vs. where other partners are taking up the mantle.

Commissioner Tedford inquired about the continued emphasis on developmental screening. He was hoping that the work of the current strategic plan had addressed this issue.

Ms. Wendt pointed out that Early Health Foundations prioritizes the systemic continuum and experience of families across identification/screening/referral/early intervention. There is much within this continuum that remains in need of attention/improvement.

Becca Carsel, Evaluation Team Consultant, added that screening rates remain low and are still not routine enough in SLO County according to current data.

Ms. Wendt added that referral/treatment pathways are challenging for many families, especially those with early mild-to-moderate conditions, and also for families with language barriers.

Commissioner Borenstein underscored that pediatricians may be doing screenings, but not necessarily more comprehensive tools such as ASQ.

Commissioner Borenstein inquired about where breastfeeding support is reflected in the priority levels. Mr. Wells responded that at this point the planning outline is not calling out specific investment areas, but the breastfeeding could fall within one or more of the priorities identified (e.g. nutrition, parent education, early health foundations).

Commissioner Borenstein inquired about prenatal care. Ms. Wendt responded that this also falls into several areas, including parent education and early health foundations.

In the interest of time, staff will bring back the Guiding Values and Table of Contents outline to the October Commission meeting.

*Public Comment: None.*

## **ITEM 9 – SLO Health Counts Presentation**

Commissioner Borenstein introduced Claire Hermann, Community Improvement Health Manager at County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department. Ms. Hermann presented a summary of the SLO Health Counts Community Health Assessment, recently completed and now available on-line at [SLOHealthcounts.org](http://SLOHealthcounts.org).

The Community Health Assessment is an exercise conducted every five years – it involves collection of multiple data sets that in part inform the development of a Community Health Improvement Plan. The goal is to look at health holistically and drive action around priorities, using a collaborative process that involves community input. First 5 staff are involved in this exercise (Mr. Wells on the CHA team, and Ms. Wendt on the SLO Health Counts Steering Committee and Leadership Team). The process also employs a life-course approach to health, using a socio-ecological model as well as traditional medical models.

She touched on several subsets of the posted CHA, including a community survey as well as data on early entry to prenatal care, teen births, overall births, breastfeeding, education levels, wealth, drug use, mental health, exercise, access to nutritious food and others. The Community Health Improvement Plan is slated to be completed by January 2024.

Discussion ensued:

Commissioner Watt asked if the community survey data can be parsed by demographics. Answer: Yes. Analysis will be adding more detail to the CHA site.

Commissioner Ventura inquired if it is possible to share raw deidentified data. She would like to share with Cal Poly students for possible projects/curriculum.

*Public comment: none*

## **ITEM 10 - Future Agenda Items**

None

## **ITEM 11 – Closed Session CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL-ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**

Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Section 54956.9 (2)(d). Number of cases: one (1).

Commissioners, Executive Director and Legal Counsel adjourned to Closed Session.

Return to Open Session. No action taken.

## **ITEM 12 – Adjournment**

5:21 p.m.