

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

September 23, 2021 (Approved October 28, 2021)

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson (Chair)	SLO County Board of Supervisors
Linda Belch	Department of Social Services
James Brescia, EdD	SLO County Office of Education
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

**Commissioners Absent/Excused**

Penny Borenstein, MD (Vice Chair)	SLO County Public Health Dept.
Bob Watt	Community at Large

**Staff Present**

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

**Call to Order**

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

**ITEM 1 – Chair Comments**

Chair Gibson welcomed Commissioners back to the first meeting of the fiscal year. He welcomed new Commissioner Linda Belch, who will be representing Department of Social Services. He also welcomed First 5 Cal Poly interns Maribel Alteres and Lily Goldstein. He pointed out that this and possibly the next meeting will be held virtually. A special meeting will be required in early October to confirm virtual public meeting as an option for a period of thirty days given the continuing COVID-19 state of emergency (per new AB361). He also pointed out that Commission meetings are anticipated to move back to Wednesday afternoons from 3-5:30 p.m. beginning in 2022. Finally, he announced that the annual fiscal audit is nearly complete, and will be presented by Executive Director Wendy Wendt and Moss Levy Hartzheim partner Alex Hom at the October 28, 2021 Commission meeting.

**ITEM 2 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates**

Chair Gibson observed the effects of advocacy and need in the community related to child care – it is a highly visible issue of focus and innovation at the local, state and federal level; he called out CSAC in particular.

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

Maddy Chevalier from the Child Care Planning Council thanked the Commission for its ongoing partnership; she mentioned the recent Child Care Economic Impact Study funded through Cuesta College that was showcased at the SLO Chamber of Commerce Good Morning SLO event.

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

- a. Approve June 24, 2020 minutes
- b. Approve Q4 20-21 Financial Report
- c. Approve Salary Study Ad Hoc Committee
- d. Approve 2022 Commission Meeting Calendar

*Public Comment: None*

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

### **ITEM 5 (ACTION ITEM): Commission Approval to Authorize First 5 SLO County to Enter an Agreement with First 5 California to serve as Fiscal Lead for Shared Services Alliance Pilot Program Grant**

First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt introduced this item. Over the summer First 5 California released an RFP for a pilot program under the auspices of Quality Counts, called Shared Services Alliance. Funding is meant to be used to test models for sharing business services across multiple child care providers, both for the purposes of cost-savings and creation of business efficiencies. CAPSLO's Child Care Resource Connection (CCRC) and Child Care Planning Council approached First 5 with a request to serve as fiscal lead on a proposal (note: only public entities are eligible to apply). A team representing these two programs and First 5 came together and submitted a proposal for \$250,000 over two fiscal years (2021-22, 2022-23). First 5 California selected the SLO County proposal for funding, along with six other counties. First 5 SLO County is assigned as Fiscal Lead, with CAPSLO CCRC as Program Implementation Lead.

Shana Paulson, Program Manager with CCRC, provided additional detail on the proposal elements, which include funding for child care providers to automate their customer communication and billing systems; building, strengthening and connecting a child care business network with a view to sustainability; and creating strategies to address current workforce shortages within the ECE field (e.g. substitute pool). She thanked First 5 for the opportunity to “dream and create together” with the early childhood field.

Ms. Wendt commented that this program is an example of the “rubber meeting the road,” and a nimble collaborative response to a funding opportunity. First 5 staff requests that the Commission authorize the Executive Director to review and sign a contract when First 5

California finalizes it. The next step will be Commission approval of a subcontract with CAPSLO, which staff anticipates will be agendaized at the December 2, 2021 meeting.

Commissioner comments/questions:

Chair Gibson inquired about the project's scalability. Ms. Wendt pointed out the "pilot" nature of the project, which involves testing new ways for child care businesses to increase their capacity and capture more revenue. Ms. Paulson added that this project allows child care businesses to more fully experience the concept of "investing in growth that yields longer term benefits," and also shows the value of broader community investment in the child care sector.

Commissioner Sokolowski added her appreciation for the project's commitment to investing in tech-tools for child care operators.

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Belch made a motion to authorize First 5 SLO County to enter into an Agreement with First 5 California for First 5 SLO County to serve as Fiscal Lead on the Share Services Alliance Pilot Program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia. Motion passed 6:0 (Sokolowski abstained; Borenstein and Watt absent for vote).

## **ITEM 6: Staff Reports**

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Officer, presented highlights of recent First activities:

- We are the Care: Public Awareness campaign includes print ads (SLO Life, New Times, Mid-State Fair Program) and social media highlighting each task force.
- Help Me Grow: Hands on Heroes (July Suzanne Murphy from SLOCOE, August Flora Bolivar from Pregnancy and Parenting Support, September Pediatrician Grace Lim, October Sharlene Agrusa of Parents Helping Parents).
- Messaging/Advocacy opportunities: Importance of regular child immunizations; August is Breastfeeding Awareness Month; ACES, Child Tax Credit; American Rescue Plan; COVID Vaccine Clinics.
- Season event sponsorships: Kid Zone at Concerts in the Plaza; Cal Poly Mustang Athletics.
- Talk.Read.Sing. Marilu Gomez has continued Facebook Live Wednesdays; Jason Wells was recently interviewed by KSBY on the importance of early literacy.

Ms. Wendt added the following updates:

- RE: Virtual public meetings. Ms. Wendt and First 5 Legal Counsel Natalie Frye-Laacke updated the Commission on new state regulations regarding continuing to meet virtually. An Executive Order put in place by Governor Newsom in March 2020 allowed for virtual public meetings. This Order is due to sunset September 30, 2021. AB361 allows for public entities to determine continuing need for virtual meetings if ongoing state of emergency warrants such a determination (confirmed by formal Resolution by each public entity; for a period not to exceed thirty days). First 5 SLO County Commission has the option to adopt such a resolution that will allow for its October 28,

2021 meeting to be held virtually, but will need to vote at a special meeting within thirty days of October 28. Ms. Wendt proposes holding a brief Special Meeting for this purpose on either October 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Belch inquired if this type of resolution will be required for each meeting; Counsel Laacke confirmed yes; a Resolution is only allowed to extend 30 days. Commissioner discussion ensued; all were in agreement to schedule a brief special meeting on October 6, 2021 to approve a Resolution. Need for an additional resolution regarding the December 2, 2021 will need to be considered at the October 28, 2021 Commission meeting.

- First 5 Association is hosting a series of Race Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) workshops coming up this fall. First 5 staff will be participating in several. Interested Commissioners are also welcome to join.
- Valley Children’s Hospital is working with the Central First 5 Region on a Safe Sleep Coalition. They are also participating in a Food Security “hackathon” on October 8-10. SLO County entities are encouraged to register.
- SLO County UndocuSupport is engaged in a facilitated strategic planning exercise; Ms. Wendt is participating.
- CSAC December meeting will include a session on First 5 and shared interests.
- Ms. Wendt has several upcoming speaking engagements, including the Community Foundation-hosted Professional Advisors Luncheon (October 29) and Workforce Development Board (November 4).

*Public Comment: None*

## **ITEM 7: Funded Program Updates**

Associate Director Jason Wells presented this item.

Staff is recommending one “budget bump,” for Parents Helping Parents – an increase of \$20,000 that will allow for expanded online parent outreach, trainings, and supplemental personnel costs. Commission approval anticipated for October 28, 2021.

The “Thrive” RFP received five proposals. A selection committee is reviewing and preparing funding recommendations, due to the Commission for approval at the October 28 meeting.

Additional “coming soon” items: December/January recommendations for continuing contracts; Early Intervention funding.

Funded Partner Spotlight: Little Wings Preschool. Tony Berg updated Commissioners on the results of the First 5 \$100,000 facility expansion investment. Little Wings now has a new portable classroom, opened in the beginning of August 2021. This space along with new updated outdoor space, allows for a capacity expansion from 22 to 50 slots. Now the challenge is finding staff in the midst of the continuing economic turbulence related to COVID recovery.

*Public Comment:* Dr. Doug Major of Optometric Care Associates provided an update on the long-standing First 5 funded Vision Screening program, which has experienced a near-freeze of services given the challenges of in-person screening. He urged local Commissioners and staff to join state advocacy efforts to prioritize early childhood vision care.

## **ITEM 8: Special Project Updates**

Ms. Wendt provided updates on the following special projects:

We Are the Care:

- All four task forces are active with various projects (see Livengood staff update above)
- SLO Chamber Family Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program is on the cusp of launching. A full time Workforce Development Manager has been hired – Christina LeFevre Latner. Ms. Latner is a long-time friend and colleague of First 5, and is also deeply involved with the WATC Cross-Sector Collaboration Task Force and FFW online toolkit.
- Cuesta College recently funded a Child Care Economic Impact Report for SLO County, completed by a team from BW Research. This report provides compelling evidence regarding the return on investment for increased capacity within the child care workforce, including a need for wage increases.
- The Public Sector Collaborative Child Care Study is entered a new phase, focused on a child care needs assessment for the partnering agencies. The agency reps are recommending entering into a contract with Pendulum Dependent Care Solutions (Founder/Director Fran McIntyre). This contract will be presented to the Commission for approval at an upcoming meeting.

Help Me Grow

- The MHSA 3 by 3 Partnership is in its final funded year. 2020-21 outcome data: 1,200 screenings (627 at CHC and 580 at Bravo Pediatrics). Kudos to First 5 staffer Sarah Montes Reinhart for her leadership on this initiative.
- The First 5-funded Centralized Access Point based at CAPSLO is increasing in visibility and widely-recognized value across the county.
- Regional HMG efforts include ACES Aware events headed up by Santa Barbara County with participation by SLO County and Ventura County; Collaboration with CenCal's Population Health team; and attendance at regular Southern California Regional Help Me Grow Learning Community gatherings.
- First 5 SLO County continues to oversee quarterly HMG Steering Committee meetings and monthly Hands-on Heroes spotlights that showcase Help Me Grow.

Commission Gibson asked what the timeline is on public messaging related to the child care studies. Ms. Wendt suggested a possible community forum in the future to share results and celebrate momentum. The studies also contribute to the evidence of value related to potential child care investments using ARPA funds.

*Public Comment: None*

## **ITEM 9 -- Adjourn**

1:20 p.m.