

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

**Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, January 8, 2013, 5:30PM
601 Texas Street, Conference Room B, Fairfield, CA**

Attendance

Commissioners: Linda Seifert (Chair), Dana Dean, Dan Ayala, Jay Speck, Aaron Crutison, Stephan Betz.

Staff/Public: Commission staff and 9 members of the public were present

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30PM by Chair Seifert.

I. Public Comment

There was a staff presentation honoring Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director, for 10 years of service to First 5 Solano Family and Children's Commission.

II. Consent Calendar

A. Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for January 8, 2013

B. Approve the minutes of the December 4, 2012 Commission Meeting

Moved: Commissioner Dean

Vote: 6-0-0

III. Introduction of 2013 Officers; Chair Appoints Committee Chairs

There was a presentation, and a plaque given to the outgoing Commission Chair, Commissioner Dean. Chair Seifert appointed standing Committee Chairs as follows:

A. Systems and Policy Committee Chair: Commissioner Dean

B. Program and Community Engagement Committee Chair: Commissioner Betz

IV. FY2013/14 Budget Planning

A. Identify a funding source (Discretionary Fund or Long Term Financial Plan) for the FY2013/14 Child Signature Program commitment of \$99,000.

(Listed as 1. in the staff report) Michele Harris, Deputy Director, reported that in 2012/13, the Commission approved funding for the Child Signature Program for three fiscal years (FY2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15). The Commission funded year 1 of the Program from Discretionary Funds, but chose not to identify a funding source for years 2 & 3 of the program at that time. Ms. Harris brought this item forward as a component of FY2013/14 Budget preparation.

Staff recommended that the Discretionary Fund be used to fund the Child Signature Program in FY2013/14.

Commissioner Speck commented that the Commission would be discussing the Discretionary Fund later in the Agenda, and he would like to discuss item V.B.4 before

acting on this motion. The Commissioners agreed with Commissioner Speck and tabled this motion, to be taken up again after item V.B.4.

B. Items to consider in preparing the FY2013/14 First 5 Commission Budget

FY2013/14 Budget Planning: Ms. Harris brought forward several topics to receive guidance from the Commission in preparing the FY2013/14 Budget, which will be presented in March 2013.

2. Parent Education: The issue is whether to include funding in the FY2013/14 budget to continue the Parent Education grant that was awarded to Fairfield Suisun Unified School District Adult School. (The Commission funded this grant for FY2012/13, agreeing to consider funding for years 2 & 3 of the funding cycle after reviewing an outcomes report for the program in April 2013. However, the Commission must identify a funding source in the FY2013/14 budget (Discretionary Funds or Long Term Financial Plan) by March to align with the County budget process. Staff noted that putting these funds in the budget did not obligate the Commission to fund the program; rather it would make it possible to fund the program should the Commission subsequently choose to do so.

Commissioner Dean suggested that the staff included an additional \$100,000 in the FY2013/14 budget, pending the Commission's decision on the program later this year. This was the consensus of the full Commission.

3. Special Funds: At the time of the AB99 threat, the Commission reduced or defunded several items in its budget, including the Co-Sponsorship of Conferences and Training Fund and the Organizational Support Fund. Staff asked for direction on whether these special funds should be re-funded for FY2013/14. Staff recommended that the Co-Sponsorship of Conferences and Training Fund be re-funded at the former level of \$50,000, as they still receive many requests for these funds from the community. However, the Organizational Support Fund has been used for items such as computer purchases, infrastructure by our grantees and there have not been requests to reinstate these funds. Staff recommended the Organizational Support Fund not be re-funded at this time.

Commissioner Betz asked if the Co-Sponsorship events are measurable or non-measurable events. Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director, noted that while these events were not funded with specific scopes of work, the application includes the requirement of a report of the benefits of the grant. Each year, the Commission has received a report on the benefits accruing from the events funded.

The Commission indicated a consensus to proceed with re-funding the Co-Sponsorship of Conferences and Trainings in the FY2013/14 Budget at \$50,000, and not to include the Organizational Support Fund for FY2013/14.

4. Community Engagement: There are several Community Engagement activities that were curtailed during the AB99 threat. Staff recommended that the following items be re-funded: annual parent education calendar and Kit for New Parent customization. Staff had no specific recommendation for Quarterly Event Partnerships, Mall Partnership and KUIC Public Service messages. The Commission's consensus was to fund the parent education calendar and the Kit for New Parents customization at previous levels, and include an amount in the FY2013/14 budget equivalent to the amount previously funded for the other community engagement items, with specific activities to be decided on later.

5. Commissioner Stipends: Commissioner Stipends were eliminated for the past two fiscal years due to the AB99 threat. The Commissioners' consensus was to re-fund stipends in the FY2013/14 budget.

6. Paperless Commission Packets: Ms. Harris reported that First 5 Solano is looking at converting to "paperless" Commission and Committee meeting packets in FY2013/14. Staff conducted a cost-benefit analysis showing a payback timeline of about 15 months (mostly savings of staff time in copying and compiling packets). The cost includes purchase of tablets for each Commissioner who needs one. Staff had discussions with County Counsel and the Department of Information Technology on the use of the tablets by non-county employees. This is not unprecedented and is covered within the existing County "Acceptable Use Policy." Staff will research what happens if the equipment is lost or broken. The Commission's consensus was in favor of paperless packets.

V. Committee Reports

A. Systems and Policy Committee

(Did not meet)

B. Program and Community Engagement Committee

B.2. Consider approval to expend \$22,178 in unspent FY2012/13 Pre-Kindergarten Academy Services funds as follows: redeploy \$11,000 for FY2012/13 and reallocate \$11,178 for FY2013/14 to ensure expanded and strengthened outreach, enrollment and retention activities for Pre-Kindergarten Academies

Before the motion was considered, Cherelyn Ellington, School Readiness & Community Programs Manager, reported (V.B.1) on the 10 Pre-K Academy sessions funded in FY2012/13. 9 sessions were actually held throughout Solano County. The children attending had little to no pre-school experience. The KSEP was administered to the children in the first 3 days and the KSEP was again administered in the last few days of the academy. Children showed overall improvement across the board. The pre-kindergarten academies have a huge impact for the children as well as for the teachers, showing improvement in many areas, allowing children to be ready for kindergarten. One session was not held due to lack of enrollment, and some other session funds were not fully spent, leaving a balance of \$22,178 in the FY2012/13 budget.

Staff asked that FY2012/13 unspent funds be redeployed and reallocated as per the motion mainly to satisfy cash flow and capacity needs. This would enable First 5 Solano to enter into agreements prior to the beginning of the next fiscal year (which is when the Academies will actually be held). This earlier timeline allows contractors to conduct higher-quality outreach to and engagement of parents, and to hire and prepare staff. These improvements are expected to result in higher-quality Pre-K Academies in FY2013/14.

Moved: Commissioner Speck

Vote: 6-0-0

B.3. Consider approval of the Request for Applications for Pre-Kindergarten Academies for 2013

Moved: Commissioner Speck

Vote: 6-0-0

B.4. [Motion continued from December 4, 2012] Consider approval of an update to the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission Committee Structure Policy for the Program and Community Engagement Committee

Commissioner Speck, the PCE Committee Chair, requested that this motion be withdrawn in favor of a discussion about the Discretionary Fund Policy. He explained that the Discretionary Fund Policy drives the language in the Committee Structure item, and the Commission needs to first review its DF Policy before considering changes to the duties of the PCE Committee, which are embedded in the Committee Structure Policy.

Motion withdrawn

Moved: Commissioner Speck

2nd: Commissioner Betz

Discussion: Commissioner Speck reported that the PCE Committee had a substantive discussion about the Discretionary Fund Policy at its last meeting. The Commission discussed its Discretionary Fund. The current DF Policy allocates \$250,000 annually to the Discretionary Fund. The purposes of the fund are to give the commission flexibility to fund opportunities in the community. In the current approved policy, up to \$200,000 is to be funded through an annual request for proposals, with \$50,000 reserved to respond to unanticipated needs that may arise. The solicited funds may include items such as sponsorships, mini-grants, one-year mid-size grants of up to \$50,000.

However, in all the years since the Discretionary Fund was established, there has never been a solicitation for services from these funds. To date the discretionary fund has been primarily used to extend capacity with currently-funded initiatives, or to respond to opportunities that arose during the cycle.

The Committee asked for direction about bringing back proposed changes to the Discretionary Fund Policy that would more closely conform to the Commission's actual utilization of the fund. The Commission's consensus was to refer the policy back to staff to refine the policy based on the discussion and bring back proposed changes, through the PCE Committee, to the Commission in March. Commissioners suggested softening or eliminating the language about doing an annual solicitation of approximately 80% of the funds, and asked for guidelines on how requests for funds would be handled.

IV. FY2013/14 Budget Planning

A. [Tabled earlier in the meeting] Identify a funding source (Discretionary Fund or Long Term Financial Plan) for the FY2013/14 Child Signature Program commitment of \$99,000.

This item was tabled, and was now taken back up. The Commissioners discussed whether to utilize Discretionary Funds (DF) or take funds from the LTFP for the Child Signature Program (CSP). Staff reported that if Discretionary Funds were used, the FY2013/14 expected balance after a CSP allocation, there would be \$151,000 remaining in the FY2013/14 DF. They also discussed whether to make this choice for one fiscal year (FY2013/14) include FY2014/15 to close out the funding cycle. Staff reported that, in this case, there would be \$187,500 remaining in the FY2014/15 DF. An amended motion was offered:

Use Discretionary Funds as the of funding for the Child Signature Program for FY2013/14 (\$99,000) and FY2014/15 (\$62,500)

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 6-0-0

V. Committee Reports

(continued from above)

Information Item:

**B.5. Receive a report on proposed 2013 presentations by First 5 Grantees:
“Introduction to 2012-2015 First 5-funded Programs and Services”**

Chris Shipman, Health Programs Manager

Staff reported that 30 minutes will be set aside in the March, April, June and August 2013 Commission meeting schedules in order for First 5 Solano grantees to provide an overview of their funded services for the 2012-2015 funding cycle. This will help Commissioners and the public become familiar with their programs. The schedule includes BabyFirst Solano (March), Family Strengthening Partnership (April), Quality Child care (June), and Partnership for Early Access for Kids (August). Thus, the Commission will be well-prepared to address outcomes generated for the first year of the 2012-2015 Funding Cycle in October 2013.

VI. Executive Director’s Report

A. Join the Children Now-sponsored “Children’s Movement of California.”

Ms. Arrostuto reported that First 5s across California are joining the Children Now-sponsored “Children’s Movement of California.” Children Now sets forth an annual “Children’s Agenda” which its members can endorse, in whole or in part, separately from their membership in the Movement.

Moved; Commissioner Dean

Vote: 6-0-0

VII. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Speck thanked the staff for their persistence and patience in assisting with sorting through the complex issues addressed during his time as the Program and Community Engagement Committee Chair.

Commissioner Crutison wished everyone a happy new year and let the Commission, staff and the public know that Linda Orrante, Director H&SS-CARES, will be retiring and he wishes her success in her retirement.

Commissioner Dean wanted to mention the tragedy in Connecticut and hoped that we keep the children in our thoughts and we think about what we can accomplish as a community and nation to limit the circumstances of what happened there. She also congratulated Commissioner Linda Seifert at being sworn in earlier that day as a re-elected Board of Supervisors member, and also on her re-election as Chair of the Board.

Commissioner Seifert thanked everyone for their confidence in her as the Chair of the Commission.

The next meeting will be held March 5, 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35PM

Approved:

