

**First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission
Commission Retreat**

October 24, 2015, 9:00AM-1:00PM
601 Texas Street, Conference Room A, Fairfield, CA
Teleconference Location: Wyndham Boston Andover
123 Old River Rd, Andover MA 01810

Minutes

Commissioners present: Aaron Crutison (Chair, via teleconference until 10:50am), Marisela Barbosa (Vice Chair, departed 12:00pm), Jay Speck, Erin Hannigan (departed 12:37pm), Elise Crane (arrived 9:08am), Dan Ayala, Liz Niedziela, Jerry Huber, and Dana Dean (arrived 9:12am).

First 5 Solano Staff present: Michele Harris, Megan Richards, Ciara Gonsalves, Chereilyn Ellington Hunt, Venis Boyd, Christine Shipman, and Christiana Lewis.

Members of the public present: Susan Brutchy, Kim Carpenter, Christina Branom, Lisa Niclai (Applied Survey Research), Sheila Smith, Alan Kerzin, Susan Ferdinandi (Children's Network), Isabel Montano, Gloria Diaz (City of Vacaville), Debbi Davis (Children's Nurturing Project), Erick Dudley, Diane Altman, June Regis (Benicia Unified School District), Kathy Lago (Solano Family and Children's Services), Diana Sevilla (Vallejo FRC), Adriana Bejarano (Rio Vista FRC), Carmen Rodriguez and Elizabeth Caster.

Vice Chair Barbosa called the meeting to order at 9:01am.

I. Welcome and Overview of the Agenda

Motion: Approve the Commission Retreat Meeting Agenda for October 24, 2015

Moved by Commissioner Hannigan; Seconded by Commissioner Ayala

Approved 6-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Barbosa, Speck, Hannigan, Ayala, Niedziela, and Huber

Nay: None

Abstain: None

II. Public Comment

Ms. Dudley and Ms. Caster expressed their appreciation for the CARES Plus program and stated that it has helped positively develop their career. Ms. Altman commented that she would like to see more education for providers who have students with special needs but do not qualify for special education.

Ms. Davis invited the Commission to a Special Needs Childcare Community Forum on November 5, 2015.

III. Public Hearing: First 5 Solano FY2014/15 Annual Audit

Mr. Starkey reported that the Solano County Auditor's Office conducted the FY2014/15 annual audit. The independent auditor's report contains an unmodified opinion which means that the financial statements were presented fairly and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The reports on internal control over financial reporting and State compliance did not disclose any instances of noncompliance. First 5 Solano internal controls and financial reporting practices reflect management's ongoing commitment to accountability. The Solano County Board of Supervisors will receive this report at the November 3, 2015 board meeting.

Motion: Receive the FY2014/15 First 5 Solano Annual Audit

Moved by Commissioner Hannigan; Seconded by Commissioner Huber

Approved 7-0-1

Yea: Commissioners Barbosa, Speck, Hannigan, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, and Huber

Nay: None

Abstain: Dean

IV. Strategic Planning Goal Prioritization

Ms. Niclai led the Commission in the electronic prioritization polling process. Aggregated rankings determined the order in which the Commission would discuss each goal during the Program Investment Planning. The Commissioners were asked to prioritize initiatives based on the information they have received in the last year including the Strategic Plan Framework, the Goal Criteria Report presented at the last meeting, and their own expertise.

Polling results were as follows: Goal 4 – School Readiness, Goal 3 – Child Care, Goal 1 – Prenatal, Goal 5 Family Support, Goal 2 – Health Insurance and Mental Health, Goal 6 – Parent Education.

V. Program Investment Planning

Ms. Niclai explained that the Commission will decide the investment level for each of the goal areas. Staff suggested a 5-year funding cycle but the Commission may set a different funding cycle. The target level of investment is \$2,422,000 annually or \$12,110,000 total over 5 years during which the Commission may decide to fund initiatives at a consistent level, increase, or taper down over 5 years.

Commissioner Crane asked for clarification on what dollars were included in the proposed funding amounts for each initiative. Ms. Richards pointed out that the funding options only include Proposition 10 funds and excludes leveraged funding.

The Commission began discussions with the Help Me Grow initiative since this initiative spans all Strategic Plan Goal Areas. Ms. Boyd presented the Help Me Grow Solano initiative. Ms. Harris reminded the Commission that they have already committed to

\$120,000 annually during FY16/17 and that the discussion should center on funding for subsequent years. Commissioner Huber asked if any persons seeking services were ever turned away with the current level of staffing at the Help Me Grow call center. Ms. Boyd answered that everyone who inquires about services during the hours of operation, Monday through Friday from 8-5pm, receives services. Commissioner Barbosa asked what percentage of the number served were in the 0-5 population. Ms. Richards responded that only a very small number of the 885 calls were outside of the 0-5 population. Based on the volume growth projected and Help Me Grow call center models in other counties, staff provided options for commission consideration that would increase staffing at the call center from 1 to 3 FTE to accommodate future growth estimates. The Commission determined that funding should remain stable at \$120,000 per year, but directed staff to track the demand for service over time and the Commission will consider adjusting funding in future years if necessary.

Ms. Ellington presented the Goal 4 – School Readiness initiative. Commissioners Dean and Huber inquired about why there were still a significant number of children who were not in pre-school and did not attend a Pre-K Academy, and if the Commission could reach that population if they decided to increase funding for the initiative. Ms. Ellington explained that many parents are not able to make the intensive 4-week commitment, and that school districts have historically not been able to staff or support more academies. Staff agreed that the academies may be able to serve more classrooms in the future, but these relationships need to be developed which would take time. Commissioner Crane suggested adjusting the strategy to incorporate portions of school readiness into the child care initiative to address a larger population for a longer period. The Commission agreed to fund Pre-K Academies at \$200,000 annually.

Ms. Harris corrected a misprint in the packet under *Goal 3 – Child Care*; the funding level option A should read \$476,000 and option B should read \$332,000. The Commission has already committed the level of funding in option B for 5 years which includes the IMPACT program and the Head Start facility at Beck Avenue. Ms. Ellington presented the Goal 3 – Child Care initiative. Commissioner Crane suggested another option was to increase funding to reach more children in need with a strategy to be determined. Option A and the newly added option C received four votes each. Ms. Harris suggested beginning with the level of funding in option A at \$476,000, then adjusting depending on how the other goals fared.

The Commission recessed and resumed at 10:45am.

Ms. Shipman presented the Goal 1 – Prenatal initiative. Solano County Health and Social Services has agreed to take on the BabyFirst Solano and Healthy Families America Programs for FY2016/17 and beyond. Commissioner Huber abstained from the poll and the rest of the Commission agreed to fund at \$35,000 annually which would provide services to connect newborns to health insurance programs.

Ms. Boyd presented the Goal 5 – Family Strengthening Partnership initiative. Commissioner Dean pointed out that First 5 Solano should work with the Family Resource Centers (FRC) to help create a sustainability plan, as well as increase focus on ways clients can reach self-sufficiency. Commissioner Huber commented that it

would be difficult for our partners or government agencies to support FRC activities if First 5 Solano reduces or eliminates funding. Therefore, in effect, if First 5 Solano wasn't funding this service, it likely would be reduced or eliminated in the community. Ms. Boyd said that First 5 Solano is not the sole source of funding for many of these programs and some FRCs are leveraging in-kind funding from local agencies like the local police department, but this varies greatly by FRC. The Commission agreed to fund at the current level of \$860,000 annually.

Ms. Shipman presented the Goal 2 – Health Insurance initiative. Ms. Harris reminded the Commission that health insurance premiums are currently being covered under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The Commission's funding thus far for this initiative has paid for outreach, enrollment, retention, and premium subsidy. Ms. Harris clarified that under the ACA and new legislation the premium subsidies are no longer needed. Commissioner Huber and Speck abstained from the poll, and there was a tie between option A and B. The Commission agreed to fund at \$245,000 annually as a placeholder and it could be revisited when the Commission looked at the overall picture.

Ms. Shipman presented the Goal 2 – Mental Health initiative. Ms. Harris pointed out that the Commission has committed \$610,000 through FY16/17. Commissioner Huber abstained from the polling. Commissioner Crane said she would like to find other ways the allocation could support more kids such as supporting inclusionary mental health at child care sites, and ensuring primary care providers are not duplicating services. Commissioner Speck expressed his strong support for this initiative. The Commission agreed to fund at the current level of \$610,000 annually.

Ms. Ellington presented the Goal 6 – Parent Education initiative. Ms. Richards explained that the Nurturing Parenting Program under this initiative has struggled in the past, so staff added the option of funding 2 cohorts of the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) which has been successful, but the Commission has not funded in the past. Commissioner Barbosa asked why the funding was only spent within one district (Fairfield-Suisun Unified). Ms. Ellington answered that they were the only ones who responded to the RFP, but there are options to engage other districts. Commissioner Barbosa abstained from the poll as she is on the PLTI design team. Commissioner Niedziela asked if the parent education services were being offered at the FRCs; Ms. Harris confirmed. Commissioner Niedziela suggested eliminating this initiative since it is covered under family support and the Commission agreed.

The Commission recessed and resumed at 12:15pm.

Ms. Richards presented the options for the discretionary fund. The Commission has allocated \$250,000 for the fund in past years, and used it to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities throughout the year. Commissioner Hannigan asked how much of the fund was spent in previous years. Ms. Richards answered the Commission has spent the majority of the fund for the last three years. Ms. Harris added that almost half of the fund was spent on Pre-K Academies in previous years to bring their funding up to the current level. Ms. Richards explained that the Commission currently has a discretionary fund policy that allows the funds to rollover for one year; any unspent portions roll back into the Commission's reserve. Commissioner Niedziela asked how

hard it would be to access the Commission's Contingency fund if the Commission needed to fund something unanticipated during the year. Ms. Richards responded that the Commission would need approval from the Board of Supervisors, so it would take longer, but it was possible. The Commission agreed to eliminate funding for a discretionary fund.

The Commission then looked at their overall funding plan which based on the decisions made was over by \$124,000 a year. Commissioner Crane asked if staff levels would decrease to match the decrease in programs. Ms. Richards replied that the Commission made that decision at the October 2015 Commission Meeting earlier in the month. From FY2015/16 to FY2016/17 administration was decreased by \$40,000, program staffing was decreased by \$137,000, and data collection and evaluation was decreased by \$30,000. Along with other decreases in internal programs, the total internal First 5 budget decreased by approximately 14%.

The Commission decided to decrease the funding for Health Insurance to \$121,000 annually to meet their target of \$2,422,000 in program spending.

The Commission then discussed funding cycle length. Due to current and future variables like Collective Impact, First 5 California IMPACT, and the ACA, along with unknown tax revenue projections, the Commission agreed to a 2-year funding cycle, with a plan to revisit funding beyond the 2 years. During the 2-year funding cycle, the Commission has directed staff to work with grantees on a sustainability plan that could supplement or replace First 5 Solano funding as the fiscal cliff nears. The Commission would also like to further explore the impacts of systems change on the early childhood system.

Commissioner Speck opened up public comment. Ms. Davis stated that while ACA requires it, many providers are not meeting the requirements for mental health services for children 0-5. However, those services may be provided more widely in the near future. Ms. Del Carmen expressed her appreciation for the PLTI program. Ms. Ferdinandi thanked the Commission for their partnership with the FRC network. Ms. Diaz thanked the Commission for acknowledging the FRCs and providing support. Some FRCs are linked with local law enforcement and provide child abuse prevention services. Ms. Lago thanked the Commission for their thoughtful process.

VI. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Huber, Niedziela, Ayala, Crane, and Speck appreciated the thoughtful work that goes into the process of the strategic and program investment planning.

VII. Future Agenda Items

The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on December 1, 2015 at 5:00 PM at 601 Texas St. Fairfield. Future agenda items include: Adoption of the Strategic Plan Update, Long Term Financial Plan Update, and Program Investment Plan; Election of 2016 Officers; and Committee Reports.

Adjourn

Commissioner Speck adjourned the meeting at 1:04pm.

Christiana Lewis, Office Assistant III

Approved:

