

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, March 1, 2011, 5:00 PM 601 Texas Street, Conference Room B, Fairfield, CA

Attendance

Commissioners: Dan Ayala, Chair; Linda Seifert, Vice-Chair; Stephan Betz, Dana Dean, Sheryl Fairchild, Debbie Gossell, Elaine Norinsky, Jay Speck, Norma Thigpen.

Staff/Public: Commission staff and approximately ten members of the public were present.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 5:08 PM by Chairperson Ayala.

I. Public Comment

Jayleen Richards, Health Services Manager for Solano County Mental Health, commented that the Solano County Mental Health Services Act FY2011/12 Annual Update was posted for a 30-day period for public comment. Ms. Richards then introduced Nazlin Huerta, the interim project manager for the Partnership for Early Access to Kids (PEAK) project.

Commissioner Ayala presented Dee Alarcón, who was leaving the Commission, with a plaque thanking her for four years of dedicated service to the Commission and children ages 0-5 in Solano County. Ms. Alarcón thanked the Commission for all the collaboration and partnerships the Commission has developed over the years.

Commissioner Jay Speck, who was appointed to the Commission today by the Solano County Board of Supervisors, gave the Commission a brief summary of his background. He commented that he is a big proponent of early education.

II. Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for March 1, 2011

Motion: Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for March 1, 2011.

Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director for First 5 Solano, requested that items IV and VI on the agenda be switched.

Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Approve Minutes of the January 11, 2011 Commission Meeting

Motion: Approve Minutes of the January 11, 2011 Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Gossell moved to approve this motion. The motion passed with six ayes and two abstentions, Commissioners Dean and Speck abstaining.

IV. Committee Reports

A. Program Committee (no meeting)

B. Internal Systems Committee

1. ***Motion: Consider approval of the Organizational Support Fund Policy***

Commissioner Gossell moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Motion: Consider adoption of a Resolution to endorse a “Bill of Rights for Children and Youth”.

Commissioner Gossell moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Community Engagement Committee

Discussion: Commissioner Betz thanked the Commissioners who had signed up to attend the Community Input Report meetings. He commented that the nexus between the Children’s Fund and funding swimming lessons was to ensure children are safe.

Commissioner Dean commented that the fund had been named the “Delaware Street Safe Children’s Fund.”

V. Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Arrostuto gave an update on the current budget proposal to take \$1 billion of First 5 reserves, as well as eliminate the state First 5 Commission, which would impact First 5 Solano’s School Readiness (SR) and CARES Plus programs. There is question as to whether the legislature has the authority to take First 5 funding without voter approval. Ms. Arrostuto thanked the community partners that have sent letters of support for First 5 to the state legislators.

Commissioner Dean asked what the amount of funding was that the CARES and SR programs would lose if the state Commission was eliminated. Deputy Director Michele Harris commented that SR would lose approximately \$400,309 for FY2011/12, as well as some funding in the current fiscal year. CARES Plus funds (not yet approved by First 5 CA) include a current-year planning grant and \$136,000 annually for the next two years.

Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the rest of her Executive Director’s report, including an update on Stage 3 child care, April Children’s Month, the new Vallejo Career Academies Master Plan and her activities as a new member of the Board of Directors of Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families. For April Children’s Month this year, First 5 had joined with United Way of the Bay Area and the Children’s Network of Solano County to co-host a “Safety Net Summit” on April 27. This event had a multi-agency planning team and would be devoted to learning about the dynamics and impacts of poverty, and how Solano as a community could work effectively to address it.

VI. First 5 Solano FY2011/12 Proposed Budget

Motion: Consider approval of the First 5 Solano FY2011/12 Proposed Budget

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto commented that this budget was being presented in a time of uncertainty. The Commission could subsequently choose to drastically change this budget, depending on the decisions at the state level. However, she emphasized that even should all the proposed First 5 cuts at the state level be authorized, this budget would be fully fundable. Staff were prepared to adapt the proposed FY2011/12 budget and bring it back to the Commission as needed.

Commissioner Seifert arrived at the meeting.

Ms. Harris reviewed a PPT presentation on the proposed FY2011/12 First 5 Solano budget.

Ms. Arrostuto noted changes in the proposed deployment of the FY2011/12 First 5 Futures (FFF)

budget. The Commission had authorized adding a new position with these funds, but with the current economic times, she determined it was not optimal to expand permanent staffing. Staff searched for other ways to achieve the FFF goals and developed a plan that includes a mix of reducing current activities in order to redirect existing staff, adding an extra help Intern, increasing Commissioner participation in the efforts, and reserving funding for contracted support as needed.

Regarding possible changes to the Commission's longer-term financial outlook, Ms. Harris reported that the amount the state would be taking if the measure was approved by the state legislature had been calculated by the state based on the amounts each Commission had in reserve on June 30, 2010. First 5 Solano's contribution would be \$8.7 million to \$9 million.

Ms. Arrostuto explained that if there were insufficient funds in reserve to cover the proposed state takeaway amounts, county commissions could lose future revenue.

Commissioner Speck asked what the timeframe would be if contracts had to be cut because First 5 funds were taken by the state.

Ms. Arrostuto commented that contracts could be reduced or terminated with thirty days notice.

Commissioner Dean asked if the \$12,000 for travel in the FFF budget were the entire travel budget, or only for FFF.

Ms. Arrostuto commented that there isn't a large amount of travel currently planned, however there's an out-of-state early childhood conference of business leaders coming up in July. She was hoping to send a team from Solano County comprised of business and legislative leaders, to help advance corporate partnerships.

Commissioner Dean commented that this was the third year First 5 was cutting into a huge percentage of their reserves. While she respected all the work that had been done, she was uncomfortable with the spending pattern being established.

Commissioner Fairchild commented that when the Commission entered into their Long Term Financial Plan, it was with the understanding that there would be a consistent level of funding over time that the community could count on. The plan was established knowing that after the five year funding cycle, spending would be ramped down.

Commissioner Gossell asked that materials be developed and sent to financial planners to let people who are investing money or planning endowments know about First 5 and the services it funds.

Ms. Arrostuto thanked Ms. Harris for the hard work she had done to bring the Commission this budget and presentation.

Commissioner Seifert moved to approve this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Gossell welcomed Commissioner Speck to the First 5 Solano Commission.

Commissioner Seifert commented that she felt it was very important to make known the impact that service providers, and the First 5 funds, have had in Solano County.

Commissioner Ayala thanked Commissioner Seifert for the trips she had been making to Sacramento to meet with legislators and inform them about the benefits of First 5.

VIII. Strategic Planning

Dr. Lori Allio, 2011 Strategic Plan Update consultant, guided the Commissioners through an organizational history exercise. She commented that she had met with staff and filled in the graphic history board with the base of policies, programs and milestones. She asked the Commissioners and staff to add notes showing when they joined or were hired by the Commission and where the Commission was when they arrived. Staff and Commissioners then commented on the evolution of First 5 Solano over time.


Commissioner Speck commented that using taxpayer dollars to acquire private donations was very important and farsighted.

The Commission discussed and named the Commission's "eras": Infancy; Formative Years; Collaboration becomes Integrated; Initiatives; Community Relationships; Expertise/Maturity; Big Picture Collaboration; Futures/Sustainability.

IX. Future Agenda Items, Meeting Time/Date/Location

The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on April 5, 2011 at 5:00 PM, Rio Vista High, 410 S 4th Street, Rio Vista, CA. Future agenda items include: First 5 California Annual Report Presentation; Rio Vista Services Presentation; Kindergarten Readiness Report; Strategic Planning.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.


Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary
Approved: April 5, 2011