

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 5:30 PM
601 Texas Street, Conference Room A, Fairfield, CA

Attendance

Commissioners: Jay Speck, Dan Ayala, Erin Hannigan, Marisela Barbosa, Liz Niedziela, Stephan Betz, Aaron Crutison, Elise Crane, Dana Dean (Commissioner Crutison arrived at 5:35 PM, Commissioner Crane arrived at 5:39 PM, Commissioner Dean arrived at 5:40 PM, Commissioner Hannigan departed at approximately 6:45 PM)

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM with a salute to the flag.

I. Public Comment

No public comment.

II. Consent Calendar

- A. Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for March 4, 2014
- B. Approve Minutes of the January 14, 2014 Commission Meeting

Moved: Commissioner Ayala

Vote: 7-0-0 (Item IIA) and 6-0-1 (Item II B)

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa and Hannigan, with Commissioner Hannigan abstaining from Item II B.

Nay: None

III. First 5 Solano FY2014/15 Proposed Budget

A. Consider approval of the First 5 Solano FY2014/15 Proposed Budget

Megan Richards, Deputy Director, presented the proposed budget for FY2014/15. The Proposed Budget will go before the Solano County Board of Supervisors in June 2014 as part of the overall annual FY2014/15 County Budget. The Proposed Budget funds the third year of a 3-year funding cycle. Ms. Richards reported that overall revenues are projected to increase by \$33,714, and an overall projected increase of \$187,668 in expenditures from FY 2013/14 estimates. The projected fund balance at the end of FY2014/15 will be \$6,669,047.

Discussion: Commissioner Dean asked about how administrative cost and program costs are calculated. Ms. Richards explained they are based on the First 5 Cost Allocation plan. Ms. Arrostuto noted that the designation of "Administration," "Program" and "Evaluation" comes from statewide legislation several years ago resulting from recommendations from the Bureau of State Audits.

Commissioner Hannigan asked about the training costs in the First 5 Futures budget and asked if there were other training costs in the budget. Ms. Richards yes, in the 3-page Line Item Budget, and pointed them out.

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Commissioners discussed the budget in the context of the Program Investment Plan. FY2014/15 is the third year of a 3-year budget cycle. Ms. Richards advised the Commission that First 5 and Health and Social Services (H&SS) staff are working on an item that will come to the Commission in April. This item will require the Commission to partially extend its current Program Investment Plan in order to align with the three-year renewal planning timeframe for state Mental Health Services Act/Prevention and Early Intervention funding. H&SS again wants First 5 Solano to manage this portion of their funding, and is offering to overmatch the First 5 commitment for a three-year period. However this will require approving matching funds and soliciting for services in an accelerated time frame. This item will be presented to the Program and Community Engagement Committee on March 6, and come to the full Commission on April 1.

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 9-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Hannigan, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

IV. Awards of Funding - Request for Applications #2014-01: First 5 Solano Pre-Kindergarten Academies

A. Consider approval of awards of funding of up to \$175,649 for 2014 Pre-Kindergarten Academy services as recommended below by the Review Panel and outlined in the staff report, from among requests for funding as follows:

1. Up to \$20,000 for 2 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Benicia Unified School District
2. Up to \$20,000 for 2 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Dixon Unified School District
3. Up to \$65,651 for 7 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District.
4. Up to \$10,000 for 1 Pre-Kindergarten Academy session to River Delta Unified School District
5. Up to \$19,998 for 2 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Travis Unified School District
6. Up to \$20,000 for 2 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Vacaville Unified School District
7. Up to \$10,000 for 1 Pre-Kindergarten Academy session to Circle of Friends Child Development Center (Fairfield)

Discussion: Cherelyn Ellington Hunt, Childcare and Community Engagement Manager, reported that there were eight applicants for the 2014 Pre-Kindergarten Services grants. Applicants represented all cities in Solano County except for Vallejo.

Commissioners asked why there were two motions to this item. Ms. Ellington Hunt explained that, as in 2013, the level of response to the Pre-K Academy Services Request for Applications (RFA) exceeded the level of funds designated by the Commission for this purpose, so Motion A reflected the top recommendations of the Review Panel and Motion B was a combination of Review Panel and staff recommendations, should the Commission wish to deploy additional resources for the 2014 Pre-K Academies.

Commissioners asked why there was no recommendation for Vallejo. Ms. Ellington Hunt reported there was no Vallejo applicant. First 5 staff inquired with staff from the Vallejo City Unified School District (which attended the application workshop but didn't subsequently apply) and found there had been some confusion over language in the RFA regarding whether the space had to be licensed. The VCUSD staff indicated they would be willing to apply now that there was a better understanding, and First 5 staff recommended that, like last year for the city of Dixon, that a follow-up solicitation be issued for Vallejo, with outreach to the community to solicit 1 or more Vallejo applicants. Staff recommended (see Motion B) that additional funds be deployed for up to two Vallejo sessions in anticipation of this process.

Commissioners discussed the numbers of sessions recommended by the Review Panel, particularly for Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District (FSUSD), which was recommended for a total of 10 sessions in Motions A and B, with other applicants being recommended for far fewer sessions. Ms. Ellington Hunt reported that, as in 2013, FSUSD applied for far more sessions than other applicants. This applicant had difficulties keeping some of their sessions full last year. Ms. Arrostuto noted that FSUSD tried something very helpful for children but logistically difficult (bringing children on the waiting list in for a Friday-only session). Commissioners commented that they would like to see more applications for the larger areas of the county. Ms. Arrostuto noted that staff had actually recommended an additional session for Dixon in Motion B because Head Start had closed their operation there, and [erroneously] stated that there was no State Preschool in Dixon.

(Commissioner Hannigan spoke in support of the awards of funding. She left the meeting at approximately 6:45 PM, prior to the vote on the two items.)

Public Comment: Stacy Burke of FSUSD commented that FSUSD staff were confident that they could manage the number of sessions for which they applied, and noted that their experiment with "Friday" children last year hadn't worked out well, and they were not proposing to include that in their model this year. Becky Billing spoke to correct Ms. Arrostuto's information, saying that there was State Preschool at every elementary campus in Dixon.

Moved: Commissioner Dean

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

Dean
Nay: None
Abstaining: None

B. Consider approval of additional awards of funding of up to \$58,137 for 2014 Pre-Kindergarten Academy Services as recommended below by the Review Panel and outlined in the staff report, from among requests for funding as follows:

1. Up to \$28,137 for 3 additional Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions to Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District
2. Up to \$10,000 for 1 additional Pre-Kindergarten Academy session to World Changers Academy-Miracle Christian Worship Center (Dixon)
3. Up to \$20,000 for 2 Pre-Kindergarten Academy sessions in Vallejo and approval from the Commission to release RFP #2014-03 to solicit Pre-Kindergarten Academy Services in Vallejo.

Discussion: Ms. Ellington Hunt explained that the Review Panel and staff crafted a second set of recommendations should the Commission choose to deploy additional funding from its Discretionary Fund for 2014 Pre-K Academies.

Commissioners expressed dismay that there was no Vallejo applicant, and asked why staff had only recommended \$20,000 be set aside for a Vallejo applicant when Vallejo is the largest city, with a high need for these services. Staff explained that they made this recommendation as a placeholder and that they suggested \$20,000 because that was the amount awarded for Vallejo for 2013 Pre-K Academies. Ms. Ellington Hunt noted that, should the Commission approve additional funding, staff would issue the follow-up solicitation in time to bring recommendations for awards of funding to the April 2014 Commission meeting.

Commissioner Crutison proposed amending Motion B. 3. to deploy up to \$40,000 instead of \$20,000 for Vallejo Pre-K Academy Services.

Staff noted that the additional up-to-\$78,137 of funding will come from the FY2013/14 Discretionary Fund.

Moved: Commissioner Crutison [amending motion for up to \$40,000 instead of \$20,000 in Discretionary Funds for Vallejo Pre-K academies]

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

V. Committee Reports

A. Systems and Policy Committee

Information: There were no action items.

B. Program and Community Engagement Committee

Discussion: Ms. Jones Boyd reported that, as directed by the Commission, staff researched and brought forward a recommendation to continue Parent Education services in Dixon through the end of the current funding cycle. Staff recommended that the funds be re-deployed to Children's Nurturing Project, which is currently providing Parent Education services in the rest of the county. Ms. Boyd noted that CNP is ready and willing to take on this additional work. They expect to be able to complete 6 families in FY2013/14 and 24 in FY2014/15, consistent with the original scope of work for these services in Dixon. They will work to ensure a smooth transition for families.

The Program and Community Engagement Committee recommends the motion.

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 7-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

(Note that Commissioner Dean had temporarily left the room)

2. Consider redeployment of up to \$163,218 (up to 79,329 for FY2013/14 and up to \$83,889 for FY14/15) to Health & Social Services (H&SS) BabyFirst Solano Initiative to continue behavioral health and other prenatal services

Discussion: Christine Shipman, Health Programs Manager, reported that, as directed by the Commission, First 5 staff met with BabyFirst Solano staff to develop recommendations to re-deploy funds freed up by the termination of a subcontractor agreement within the BabyFirst initiative. Funds will go for additional support to implementation of Healthy Families America, and to support the Public Health Nurse in the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) program. In addition, staff recommend that up to \$20,000 be deployed to help co-fund the Baby Coach program for FY2014/15. Baby Coach, administered by Children's Nurturing Project, was funded up to \$50,000 by the County for FY2013/14 and seeks co-funders for their FY2014/15 services. Ms. Shipman reported that BFS staff agree that adding Baby Coach services to the BabyFirst Solano continuum would be consistent with their overall model. First 5 staff noted that if Baby Coach becomes a First 5-funded service, they plan to deploy evaluation funding to help establish this program as a best practice, making it more competitive for future funding.

The Program and Community Engagement Committee voted to recommend this redeployment of funds.

Commissioners asked about Baby Coach. Staff reported that the Commission has funded this program in the past. Baby Coach is able to serve mothers that fit the risk level for NFP but may not have been referred early enough in their pregnancies, or are not first-time mothers.

The Program and Community Engagement Committee recommends the motion.

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

3. Consider a motion to deploy of up to \$75,000 for FY2014/15 to Interfaith Council of Solano County for transition to permanent housing services (Source of Funding: Discretionary Fund)

Discussion: Ms. Jones Boyd reminded the Commissioners that the original funding for this purpose (\$100,000) had been deployed from the \$1 million Community Stability Fund during the onset of the Great Recession. The grant took almost two years to start up, and when it finally did (thanks to a recommitment on the part of the grantee after a transition during which their Executive Director was ill, then retired and a new ED was brought on board), the funds were quickly and effectively expended.

The Interfaith Council of Solano County partnered with other homeless shelters in Solano County and other community partners and they were able to quickly assist a total of 96 homeless families with transition to permanent housing. Upon a preliminary follow up of the applications granted, out of 54 of the clients contacted thus far, 48 (89%) are still in the assisted dwellings after 90 days. Not all families have yet reached the 90-day follow up period.

Staff, in consultation with the local shelters involved in the grant, reported that demand for these services is still high – which some aspects of the economy are improving, Solano County has lagged behind the Bay Area in housing recovery and many families are still struggling.

Commissioners asked about the 90-day follow up period/transition to permanent housing and staff reported that this level of follow-up is typical for this type of grant, and that additional follow-up would require additional funding to track families.

Commissioners on the Program and Community Engagement Committee voted to recommend that funds be deployed from the Discretionary Fund to re-fund this grant in the amount of up to \$75,000 for FY2014/15 to finish out the current funding cycle. The grant has proven successful and the demand for services remains high.

Moved: Commissioner Crutison

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

4. Receive a report on child care data

Kathy Lago, Resource & Referral Program Manager at Solano Family & Children's Services, presented data that describes child care statewide and in Solano County. The data shows that there is a decrease in total licensed

Ms. Lago answered a question that Commissioner Betz had asked at a prior Committee meeting asking why child care in Solano County is as high or higher than in San Francisco. The SF representatives actually thought their costs were higher than reflected in the Portfolio. They conducted their own study and found that their rates are much higher than the Regional Market Rate survey that is used for the portfolio.

Becky Billing of the Children's Network/Solano Child Care Local Planning Council reported on the American Institutes for Research Early Learning Systems Database study.

Christina Branom of Applied Survey Research/First 5 Solano Evaluator, reported on Solano County Poverty Rates. Data was taken from the *U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2011 5-year estimates*. Solano County child poverty rates are 25.4% for children under 5 years of age, and 17% for children 5-17 years of age.

Data from the *American Community Survey State Median Data, Family Income Data, and Labor Force Participation Data* also shows that Solano County income eligible children under 5 years of age potentially needing care due to parents being in the labor force rose from 5,710 in 2008, to 7,040 in 2012.

Commissioners discussed this information. Ms. Arrostuto noted that First 5 staff have had significant discussions with the presenters about how First 5 could be most effective, given its limited resources. Conducting a valid and reliable child care supply and demand survey has been discussed, but Ms. Arrostuto thought it might not ultimately be useful, given that there is already a good sense of the need.

Commissioner Crane commented that in addition to data on child care/preschool availability, we need information about quality. She suggested that First 5, ASR and LPC members/staff work together to further analyze the data (for example, to look at categories such as capacity by 0-3 and 4-5 rather than year by year), do some comparative analysis and then identify what, if any, further data is needed.

Ms. Lago stated that reinstating the Centralized Eligibility List would be very helpful as it not only helps local agencies most efficiently deploy limited child care resources, it also helps make the business case for additional resources by demonstrating the need. Ms. Arrostuto said she would pursue these options and meet with representatives of SFCS and the LPC, and Commissioner Crane (who is a member of the LPC) agreed to participate.

VI. Executive Director's Report

A. Approve a position of support for SB837, the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2014

Discussion: First 5 Solano Executive Director Christina Arrostuto commented that the SB837 is a bill to expand and improve the quality of voluntary Transitional Kindergarten for all 4-year-olds in California through a mixed delivery system of both schools and current subsidy providers. SB837 has a 5-year phase-in and will cost approximately \$1.2 billion annually when fully implemented, with estimated savings far exceeding the cost in the form of reduced special education

Kindergarten for all 4-year-olds in California through a mixed delivery system of both schools and current subsidy providers. SB837 has a 5-year phase-in and will cost approximately \$1.2 billion annually when fully implemented, with estimated savings far exceeding the cost in the form of reduced special education and the costs of eventual school failure that studies show can be avoided if children access quality preschool.

Moved: Commissioner Betz

Vote: 8-0-0

Yea: Commissioners Speck, Crutison, Crane, Ayala, Niedziela, Betz, Barbosa, Dean

Nay: None

Abstaining: None

Information: Ms. Arrostuto shared an update on the Solano Safety Net Summits on Poverty (SNS). Four work groups are forming, and the one devoted to early childhood (“Close the Word Gap”) met on February 24. 16 participants came up with many creative ideas to support parents, caregivers, and the early childhood community in expanding early literacy of young children.

Commissioner Crutison recently appeared on television at the invitation of Phil Matier, in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the War on Poverty. Due to technical difficulties, the television recording was not able to be shared at the meeting. The link to access the discussion will be emailed to Commissioners.

Ms. Arrostuto reported that the Solano SNS Steering Committee launched the Solano SNS Network, powered by Groupsite, on February 21. 298 people in and around Solano County that have participated in or expressed interest in local anti-poverty/pro-prosperity activities were invited to join this site which provides information and resources to address poverty.

Ms. Arrostuto reported that the first-ever regional convening of First 5 County Commissioners that took place on February 13, 2014 went well. Commissioners from four counties in the North Bay met to discuss items of mutual interest. One of the ideas that came out of the meeting was to host a regional “Children’s Cabinet,” to bring sectors together that should be aligning and leveraging resources. Commissioners who attended all agreed that there should be some mechanism for them to share information directly.

Ms. Arrostuto stated that a First 5 Solano Social Media Plan is being developed. The Plan is a required element by Solano County to complement its countywide Social Media Policy for any department that wants to make the business case for use of social media in its work. In response to questions from the Commissioners, she reported that the Social Media Policy will come through Committee to the full Commission for approval, likely in May/June 2014.

Ms. Arrostuto shared that a documentary called “Paycheck to Paycheck” about a single mother living paycheck-to-paycheck, will premiere on HBO on March 17, and will be available for free streaming on YouTube for one week thereafter. The documentary follows one single mother trying to make ends meet, and it relevant to the local anti-poverty work.

In addition, Ms. Arrostuto thanked Megan Richards for her excellent work in developing the First 5 Solano FY2014/15 Requested Budget, and other staff for their hard work over the past two months on items relevant to the Commission.

VII. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Ayala asked if First 5 has information to share on the dangers of E-Cigarettes. Ms. Arrostuto commented that staff will ask the Tobacco Education Coalition to make a presentation on this topic at a future Commission meeting.

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

Future agenda items include: Public Hearing on First 5 CA FY2012/13 Annual Report; Community Partner Presentation; Committee Reports. The next Commission meeting will be held on April 1, 2014 at 5:30 PM at 601 Texas Street, Fairfield.

Meeting adjourned: 7:57 PM

Approved: 