

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, June 2, 2009, 5:30 PM Solano County Health and Social Services Center Multi-Purpose Room, 2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield, CA

Attendance

Commissioners: Norma Thigpen, Chair; Debbee Gossell, Vice-Chair; Dee Alarcón; Dan Ayala; Stephan Betz; Sheryl Fairchild; Dr. Elaine Norinsky; Linda Seifert; Dr. Sharon Tucker.

Staff/Public: Commission staff and approximately 16 members of the public were present.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 5:44 PM by Chairperson Thigpen.

I. Greetings, Introductions, Public Comment

Commissioner Thigpen asked for a brief moment of silence in memory of Reverend Julia Burns-Robinson, who recently passed away. Rev. Burns-Robinson was the Executive Director of Everlasting Hope Ministries and helped found the Nubian Mentoring Program.

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves. There was no public comment.

II. Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for June 2, 2009

Motion: Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for June 2, 2009

Discussion: Staff requested that on agenda item VII.A, the motion be amended to read: Allocate up to \$150,000 for the period July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 for the purpose of renovating the Fairmont Charter School facility, contingent on site approval by Vacaville Unified School District by October 31, 2009, for expanded childhood development and/or preschool slots. Source of funding: FY2009/10 Discretionary Fund.

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

III. Approve Minutes of the April 7, 2009 Commission Meeting

Motion: Approve the Commission Meeting Minutes for April 7, 2009

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

Commissioner Thigpen recognized Commissioner Tucker, who will be rotating off the First 5 Solano Commission this month. Commissioner Thigpen informed the Commission that Commissioner Tucker served four years on the Commission, one year as Chair and was a strong leader on the Internal Systems Committee. Commissioner Tucker was presented with a plaque to thank her for her service on the Commission.

Commissioner Thigpen congratulated Commissioners Norinsky and Fairchild, who were reappointed to the Commission today for another four-year term.

IV. Prenatal Services Research and Policy Update

Nancy Calvo, Health Services Administrator for the Solano County H&SS Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health bureau, gave a brief explanation of what BabyFirst Solano does in the community and introduced Dr. Ira Chasnoff.

Dr. Chasnoff, President and Medical Director of Children's Research Triangle and Principal Consultant for BabyFirst Solano, gave the Commission some background information on the Children's Research Triangle and the agency's activities with the country. Dr. Chasnoff's presentation included current statistics on the substance use/abuse among pregnant women in Solano County, collected from the "4Ps Plus" screening tool used by BabyFirst Solano and noted that Solano County's rates of pregnant women using substances are higher than the rates for California as a whole.

Studies in Solano County show that Caucasian women ages 19 to 35 have the highest rates of substance use in pregnancy. Hispanic women in Solano County are less likely to use substances while pregnant than Caucasian and African-American women. However, the rates for pregnant Hispanic women using substances are the highest found by Dr. Chasnoff's programs in the nation. Dr. Chasnoff reviewed data that showed the significant cost savings when pregnant women found to be using substances received a "brief intervention."

Commissioner Thigpen presented Ms. Calvo with an Award of Excellence for all of her work in the perinatal substance abuse services field for Solano County. She is also a mentor for Solano College students and a former First 5 Solano Commissioner. Ms. Calvo thanked the Commission for the award. She also thanked Dr. Chasnoff and all of her colleagues for their support.

V. Chair's Report

Commissioner Thigpen introduced the speakers presenting on the current budget issues: Patrick Duterte, Director of Solano County H&SS; Rosalia Velazquez, Executive Director of Solano Coalition for Better Health; Leticia Allen, Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services & Operations for Solano County Office of Education (SCOE); and Kim Thomas, Executive Director of Children's Network.

Mr. Duterte handed out the latest CSAC update on the state budget crisis. He explained that a common misconception is that people who receive CalWORKs have their issues resolved once they receive cash grants. All this actually does is to provide subsistence at the poverty level. Some of the current cuts proposed by the state include: 1. eliminating the CalWORKs program (will affect over 10,000 Solano County children), 2. eliminating the Healthy Families program (will affect over 5,400 Solano County children), 3. lowering the amount the state pays for child welfare services, and 4. reducing the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment program.

Ms. Velazquez informed the Commission that the Coalition for Better Health is in the process of convening their partners to see what can be done in Solano County about the budget crisis. With the unemployment rate going up, more people are in need of health coverage. If health coverage is lost through the state budget cuts, there will be more emergency room visits and more people holding off on their medication, which will raise the emergency room rates.

Ms. Allen distributed a document showing the impacts that the current proposed state budget would have on local school districts. It shows about \$49 million dollars in proposed reductions for the school districts in Solano County. This comes out to approximately a \$1600 reduction per student. Multiple schools have already closed throughout the county. There have also been discussions at the state level of reducing school transportation money by 65%.

Ms. Thomas discussed the power of collaboration in hard times and the importance of keeping the

networks of communication open and keeping collaborations intact between agencies in Solano County. The budget cuts could come quickly and dramatically. The cuts to the CalWORKs child care program could have a serious effect on the centralized child care eligibility list for the county. Over 10,000 children are currently waiting for child care in the county, which could double if the CalWORKs program is cut.

Commissioner Seifert commented that she noticed the emphasis is on "reacting," and that the Commission and community should focus on being proactive. This could include the convening that Ms. Velazquez spoke about. The Board of Supervisors has been informed that due to the decreases in property taxes, it could take twelve years to get back to the previous level of support from this revenue source.

Commissioner Thigpen suggested continuing to look at the long term financial plan to find places where the Commission could invest dollars to protect the programs that are currently funded. The retreat would be a good arena to look at the plan and current Commission priorities.

VI. Executive Director's Report

Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director of First 5 Solano, reviewed her Executive Director's report.

A. Motion: Allocate up to \$150,000 for the period July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 for the purpose of renovating the Fairmont Charter School facility, contingent on site approval by Vacaville Unified School District by October 31, 2009, for expanded childhood development and/or preschool slots. Source of funding: FY2009/10 Discretionary Fund.

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the staff report behind this motion. In the time since the report was written, it came to light that there are several vendors looking to use the Fairmont site that Child Start was proposing to use. The item was amended to set aside the funds for utilization by the vendor that is selected by the School District, subject to some restrictions (such as demonstration of need).

Grayland Hilt, Executive Director of Child Start, Inc., informed the Commission that if Child Start was awarded the Fairmont facility, their primary interest in the site would be to provide 32 infant and toddler slots. Their community assessments show the greatest need in the county for child care is for infants and toddlers.

Commissioner Betz moved to approve this motion. The motion passed with eight ayes and one abstention. Commissioner Gossell abstained from the vote.

B. Motion: Establish a "Community Stability" fund of up to \$1,000,000 for Fiscal Year FY2009/10 for the purpose of addressing the economic downturn. Source of funding: Long-Term Financial Plan.

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the staff report behind this item. While the Commission is prohibited by statute from supplanting (or "backfilling" program cuts), there may be ways to protect the Commission's current investments and/or intervene to promote children's health, safety and development that arise due to the economic downturn. Ms. Arrostuto recommended these funds be earmarked now so that they can be included in the County's FY2009/10 budget, which will be up for review and approval at the end of June 2009. This would save time if the Commission wants to act quickly once the level and type of state cuts is decided. Staff will bring a report on the status of the state budget and local impacts, which may or may not include recommended levels and types of deployment of these funds, to the August Commission meeting. Ms. Arrostuto noted that the times are uncertain and it might even be necessary to call a special meeting should the need for Commission consideration of options arise before the next meeting. That said, she also recommended that the Commission carefully consider any deployment of these earmarked

funds as they are being allocated outside the Long-Term Financial Plan and thus impact the Commission's ability to fund in the years following the FY2007-2012 Program Investment Plan.

Commissioner Thigpen suggested the ideas/suggestions for expenditures for the Community Support Fund go through the Internal Systems Committee.

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

VII. Committee Meetings

A. Program Committee

1. Motion: Authorize the Executive Director to execute the "Interagency Agreement for the Delivery of Educational Services to Solano County Foster Youth" on behalf of First 5 Solano.

Discussion: Commissioner Norinsky, Chair of the Program Committee, informed the Commission that after reading through all of the materials, she feels this is a very important issue.

Judge Garry Ichikawa, Presiding Judge of the Solano County Juvenile Court, reviewed the program behind this agreement. The most vulnerable children in juvenile court are the ones that were placed in foster care. This agreement would help the courts enforce the educational rights of foster children in Solano County.

Becky Cruz, Youth Activities Specialist for SCOE, explained that the agreement is based on AB 490, which requires a community plan to support the educational needs of children in Foster Care, including their preschool and early learning needs. She informed the Commission that as of Friday, May 29, there were 311 children in foster care in Solano County, of which 98 are between the ages of birth-5. The First 5 Solano Commission's participation in the Interagency Agreement would help ensure the protection of the educational rights of those children.

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

2. Motion: Allocate up to \$62,180 to the Children's Network of Solano County, Inc. to expand child care/preschool facilities development coordination and licensing support for the period July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010 (Contract #2007-501). Source of funding: FY2009/10 Discretionary Fund.

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

3. Item: Receive the FY2008/09 First 5 Solano School Readiness Initiative Kindergarten Readiness Report (KRR)

Discussion: Emily Boer Drake, Evaluation Consultant for LFA Group (Evaluators for First 5 Solano), reviewed the PowerPoint presentation for this item. Outcomes for children who participated in Pre-Kindergarten Academies were measurably positive. The annual Fall assessment of the competencies of entering Kindergarteners was about the same for this year's cohort as last year's group. School Readiness sites continue to use this information at the site level to analyze the impact of, and work to improve, their services.

One concern that has arisen as the results of assessments over time are compared is that of mobility. It appears that significant numbers of the families served by SR programs do not remain in the community for the full five years of their children's lives; thus it is more difficult to link the results of assessments of cohorts of entering Kindergarteners to the effectiveness of the

SR program as a whole. She noted that this assessment is only one of the tools for evaluating the program (each site has performance measures more closely related to services provided). However, they plan to add questions about mobility to the next Parent Survey to try and learn more about this issue.

Commissioner Tucker departed the meeting.

B. Internal Systems Committee

1. Motion: Approve the revised Co-Sponsorship of Conferences & Training/Grantwriting Fund Policy to include the requirement for applicants to sign the "Agreement for Co-Sponsorship of Conferences & Training/Grantwriting Fund Grant" as a condition of receipt of funds.

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

C. Community Engagement Committee

1. Motion: Consider delegation of authority to the Community Engagement Committee to oversee and approve deployment of funds within the Community Engagement Budget as allocated by the full Commission in the annual Budget process.

The Commissioners discussed this item. It was not clear what they would be approving since the line item budget was not provided.

Commissioner Seifert moved to table this item until the August Commission meeting and refer this back to the Community Engagement Committee to provide more information. The motion to table the item passed unanimously.

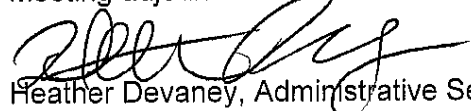
VIII. Commissioner Remarks

There were no Commissioner remarks.

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

The next First 5 Solano Commission meeting will be on August 4, 2009 at 5:30 PM at the Benicia Veteran's Memorial Hall at 1150 First Street, Benicia, CA 94510. Future agenda items include Approval of the 2010 Commission/Committee Meeting Schedule and Statewide Budget Issues Update.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.


Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary
Approved: August 4, 2009