



**COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

November 21, 2019

Commissioners Present: Dr. Robert Levin, Kelly Long, Stan Mantooth, Barbara Marquez-O'Neill, Dr. Cesar Morales, Bruce Stenslie

Excused Absence: Dr. Michael Gollub, Dr. Carola Oliva-Olson, Barry Zimmerman

Staff Present: Petra Puls, John Anderson, Heather Davidson, Sharon Elmensdorp, Fahim Farag, Jimena Hernandez, Jennifer Johnson, Elizabeth Majestic, Sam McCoy, Nani Oesterle

Public Present: Rachel Champagne, Alicia McFarland, Elizabeth Hardin, Andrew Huizar, Noemi Valdes, Alicia Villicana

OPENING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Marquez-O'Neill opened the meeting at 1:02 and shared a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. Commissioner Mantooth provided a copy of the 2019 State of the Region Report to each Commissioner.

2. Approval of Minutes from October 24, 2019 Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2019 Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets

Petra Puls provided an overview of handouts in the supplemental packet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Long, seconded by Commissioner Mantooth, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments/Correspondence

There were no comments from members of the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

5. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Reports as of September 30, 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Long, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

6. Election of new officers to be seated in January

Chair Marquez-O'Neill noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair are chosen annually by an election and seated in January of the following year. She noted that the Commission's bylaws call for one-year terms, but officers do not have any term limits and have historically served for two years.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill opened up the meeting for nominations.

Commissioner Stenslie nominated Commissioner Marquez-O'Neill as chair and Commissioner Zimmerman and Vice-Chair of the Commission. Both nominations were seconded by Commissioner Mantooth.

The motions to accept the presented nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair for calendar year 2020 passed unanimously.

7. Recommendation to Authorize Pay for First 5 Ventura County Preschools Unable to Operate Due to Circumstance Beyond Their Control

Petra reported on the impact of recent natural disasters on local preschools' ability to operate, including recent closures from power outages, fires, and poor air quality. As natural disaster concerns continue to exist, this recommendation is to address those instances that a preschool contractor is unable to operate due to circumstances beyond their control. She noted the Commission approved a similar recommendation to reimburse funded partners impacted by the Thomas Fire and other natural disasters in 2017.

Petra noted this recommendation is modeled after a Department of Education (DOE) policy and authorizes payment if a program is unable to operate due to circumstances beyond their control yet continues to incur usual expenses. She added F5VC preschool contracts provide reimbursement for the number of days operated and children enrolled. Petra concluded if approved this recommendation mitigates a loss of funds necessary for continued program operations. The previously established process requires contractors to provide a board proclamation explaining the closure. She added legal counsel has confirmed that this is not a gift of public funds as maintaining the preschool programs serves a public purpose.

Commissioner Mantooth asked if there is any fiscal impact or if these are funds are budgeted. Petra confirmed there is no fiscal impact as funds are budgeted within the current preschool allocation.

Commissioner Long noted other state funded agencies, including schools, are able to request reimbursement for revenue lost due to natural disasters and asked if F5VC can seek similar

reimbursement. Petra noted as these are considered local funds, she is not aware of this option. Commissioner Long asked if days lost can be tracked and reported for ongoing data sharing with state and local agencies. Petra confirmed and will follow up for contact information.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mantooth, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve reimbursement to F5VC preschool programs for regularly scheduled operating days that were missed due to circumstances that are beyond the control of the contractor. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Update and Discussion on FY 2019-21 Strategic Investments: Preschool

Nani Oesterle noted this update will provide historical context as well as an update on F5VC FY 19-21 preschool investments. Historically, F5VC has directly supported 1,600 part-day, part-year preschool spaces. Due to ongoing efforts to convert spaces to sustainable state funding, that number dropped to 557 spaces in FY 18-19. Preparing for the shift to Years 4 and 5 of the Strategic Plan, the Commission assessed whether to continue to fund preschool with the depletion of the Sustainability Fund and new state leadership promising increased investments in Early Childhood Education. In March 2019, the Commission approved preschool funding for FY 19-21 as a transition strategy to determine the impact of new state investments, with an emphasis on maintaining licensed capacity and continuity of care.

Nani reported on increased investments in California State Preschool Program (CSPP), general child care, and alternative payment voucher program. Other changes included updating the CSPP income eligibility and lifting of age restrictions, which increases the percentage of local families that qualify for state preschool. As CSPP eligibility has increased from 70% to 85% of State Median Income (SMI), F5VC is targeting families who earn more than 85% of SMI, which is just over \$76,000 for a family of four. She added F5VC is also implementing a cost sharing model for greater sustainability.

F5VC staff have updated criteria for preschool funding and with this new criteria many prior funded partners had their preschool contracts renewed for FY 19-20. She added one partner, Oxnard School District, did not utilize F5VC funding due to converting 42 F5 spaces to CSPP funding. Additional local preschool investments include preschool scholarships in specific communities and the workforce study approved by the Commission in September 2019.

Nani provided an overview of the sliding fee scale, noting a flat fee was considered but was not implemented due to concerns about a lack of equity. She added all funded partners expressed confidence in their ability to collect family fees. Nani reviewed the sliding scale parent copay chart, noting F5VC contributions range from 10%-75% based on family income.

Commissioner Long asked how many days per month children attend preschool. Nani noted it is 20-25 depending on holidays and the number of weekdays in each month. Petra added the average is 22 days, with a family earning \$1 over 85% of SMI having a monthly family fee of about \$150.

Commissioner Levin asked if family size distinguishes between children and adults. Nani noted total household income is reported and the number of wage earners in the home is not considered.

Nani reported on current contracted preschool partners, total spaces contracted, and spaces filled. One program is fully enrolled, two are about 50% enrolled, and three are under enrolled. She stated the CDI spaces listed includes the 48 spaces that were subsequently converted to CSPP. Nani detailed enrollment challenges, including more families qualifying for state preschool, TK impacting preschool enrollment, declining birth rates, challenges for families utilizing a part-day program, sliding fee scale implementation, immigration concerns, and market saturation. She added data aggregation indicates a lack of general cause for lower enrollment, but local data does not exist on what families need and want when it comes to preschool.

Commissioner Long asked about average monthly costs for preschool. Nani stated that a five-day part-day program costs \$500-\$600 a month or more. Commissioner Long asked if F5VC can provide data on costs for part-day vs. full-day programs. Petra noted F5 reimbursement rates are based on state reimbursement rates, which tend to reflect market rates. She added CDR tracks market rates for full-day preschool and such information can be provided to the Commission.

Commissioner Stenslie asked if F5VC can only fund part-day three hour preschool programs. Nani noted staff previously presented the option to add three hours onto existing part-day CSPP programs but the Commission preferred to fund part-day programs in order to serve as many children as possible.

Commissioner Stenslie asked if providers are under-enrolled for spaces other than those funded by F5VC. Nani noted many providers are able to fill CSPP funded spaces but with increased eligibility and enrollment issues many providers are not seeking funding for additional spaces at this time.

Commissioner Stenslie noted F5VC is currently underspending the \$1.4 million allocation and requested staff review allocation amounts in the coming months to determine where funds will be most impactful. Commissioner Mantooth concurred and noted if current allocation is underspent by \$500,000 over two years he would like the Commission to review how best to use that allocated amount to support local children and families.

Commissioner Long noted as more children are able to enter TK there may be a reduced need for preschool support. Commissioner Mantooth agreed and added there may be more opportunity to support 0-3 year olds if F5VC moves away from investing in preschool spaces.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill asked if there are any known studies on the challenges for families of a part-day preschool program. Nani reported while it is anecdotally known that three-hour programs are challenging for working families, she is not aware of research on this issue.

Nani reported next steps include continuing to monitor implementation, better understand parent needs, and collaboration with partners such as VCOE and CDR. She added F5VC staff will also work with funded and community partners to determine how best to invest F5VC funds.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill asked if any partners may be interested in outreach to local migrant families. Nani confirmed F5VC staff will look into how to reach such families and added this issue impacts more than just preschool.

Commissioner Long noted part-day preschool programs allow parents two hours "free time" when travel to and from school is considered. Nani agreed and added while anecdotally this is true, the Fillmore

School District converted a full-day program to part-day preschool due to a lack of families' interest to enroll in the full-day program.

Commissioner Mantooth advised F5VC continue to focus on supporting a child's development and not just day care. Petra confirmed and added every F5VC funded program is required to participate in QRIS and to maintain a minimum Tier 3 quality rating to ensure high quality.

Commissioner Levin agreed about the need to reinvest the balance of the \$1.4 million allocation, and would like staff recommendations for how best to utilize those funds. Petra confirmed and noted this amount was based on the projected number of preschool spaces to be funded. She added future budgets will consider enrollment shortfalls and how to maximize outcomes for local children.

9. Discussion of Strategic Planning

Petra noted F5VC staff have prepared binders for each Commissioner with documents pertaining to strategic planning, with materials from the October 2019 Strategic Planning timeline discussion included for reference. She reviewed the Strategic Plan timeline and explained the one-year delay in implementation. In October 2019, the Commission approved the proposal to refine and extend the current plan due to the amount of work done to design investment models that were implemented July 1, 2019. Petra reviewed the timeline of activities and noted this timeline intentionally allows time for determining shifting state Early Childhood priorities and to examine effectiveness of current implementation strategies. She noted the objective for this discussion is to review and provide input for potential updates to F5VC mission, vision, and guiding principles. Feedback from this discussion will be used to revise the F5VC mission, vision, and guiding principles, which will be presented to the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

Petra noted the vision is our preferred picture of the future, while the mission is the actions we take and the intended benefits for specific target audiences. Commissioner Morales read the vision statement: F5VC envisions a future where all Ventura County children thrive in healthy supported environments. Petra asked for feedback on whether this still articulates our preferred vision of the future.

Commissioner Levin advised "supportive" may be more appropriate than "supported".

Commissioner Mantooth advised "all" and "thrive" are critical words. He added it may not be the role of F5VC to ensure environments, but perhaps thriving entails being in supportive environments.

Commissioner Morales noted "envisions" is passive and would prefer active language such as "works towards". Commissioner Long concurred she prefers a statement that reflects intentionality.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill noted she likes the word "envision" as it is an aspirational statement of our goal, and added the mission should be the statement of our actions to achieve the vision. She added she agrees with the importance of "all" and "thrive".

Petra presented two alternative vision statements developed by staff, noting staff's proposal is very similar to that of the Commission.

Commissioner Levin advised the statement “thrive” may be more than F5VC can address, it may be more impactful to focus on building healthy supportive environments.

Commissioner Stenslie noted he prefers to keep the language about environments because resilient people can thrive in bad environments. He added he prefers our current vision statement to either of the proposed revisions.

Commissioner Long asked to reconsider the term “envision” and use language that expresses our vision in terms of what our value is to the community.

Petra thanked the Commissioners for their input and asked to proceed with a similar exercise for the mission statement. Commissioner Levin read the mission statement: our mission is to promote school readiness through investments in health, early learning and family strengthening, benefiting children from prenatal to 5 years of age. Petra noted the mission statement is meant to describe how we act to achieve our vision and the outcomes we are working towards and asked the Commissioners for feedback on the current mission statement.

Commissioner Mantooth noted he would suggest we add life readiness in addition to school readiness, and would prefer the statement to read “school and life readiness”.

Commissioner Stenslie noted our current primary activity is to approve investment allocations. As the focus of these investments shifts and we take on more community leadership should we broaden language beyond just investments? Commissioner Long concurred. Petra noted staff sentiment was similar and presented three alternatives developed by F5VC staff. She added the current vision and mission statement has been largely the same since 2000.

Commissioner Long and Chair Marquez-O’Neill expressed support of the third revision. Commissioner Mantooth advised he would prefer “learning” be added to the third proposed version.

Petra reviewed current F5VC guiding principles and asked the Commissioners to review them with a thought towards whether these should be revised to be more general value statements.

Commissioner Levin noted he would like leadership added as a guiding principle.

Commissioner Long advised it may be appropriate to incorporate leadership into sustaining investments and suggested prevention be incorporated into other principles.

Commissioner Mantooth suggest we change focus on prevention to focus on development.

Commissioner Levin noted he prefers to focus on outcomes.

Commissioner Morales asked if we want to maintain and advocate for sustainable investments rather than support.

Commissioner Long added sustainable investments may be modified to sustainable outcomes.

Commissioner Stenslie noted this is a very diverse list and focusing on values may allow for a greater feel of continuity.

Commissioner Mantooth concurred, he added that F5VC does outstanding in minimizing administrative costs and is not sure it needs to be specifically listed moving forward.

Petra thanked the Commissioners for their input and presented staff identified values which can be used to articulate how we achieve our mission and vision. The Commissioners agreed and Petra noted staff will develop a set of values for review at an upcoming meeting.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill advised cultural diversity or a similar term should be listed. Petra suggested equity can be added as a value, Chair Marquez-O'Neill concurred. Commissioner Levin asked if integrity can be assumed and not included. He also requested more information on how efficient, catalytic, and focused will be values that drive F5VC work.

Petra thanked the Commissioners for their input and noted staff will take this feedback to develop potential revised mission, vision, and value statements.

10. Report from Executive Director

Petra Puls delivered highlights from her written report. Health insurance renewals are underway, with no changes recommended to current coverage options. The rate increase of 10% was under the 15% budgeted increase. F5VC Program Manager Holly Goldberg is departing at the end of November 2019 with the conclusion of the Pay for Success grant.

Petra directed the Commissioners to the comprehensive NfL updates, noting the first PACT cohort was recently completed, serving over 600 participants, and that the second cohort started last week. All 13 locations are open for services and screening tools for both children and parents are part of the standard intake process. She summarized recent local Help Me Grow efforts and directed the Commissioners to the enclosed article by F5VC Program Manager Dr. Sharon Elmensdorp in the November 2019 CHDP newsletter.

As one of 29 Pritzker Communities, F5VC received a six month extension for the shared services technical assistance grant, which focuses on family child care providers in partnership with VCOE and CDR. She also noted the Center for the Study of Social Policy's EC-LINC supported two local parent leaders and one F5VC staff to participate in Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) training in Chicago.

Petra asked all Commissioners to mark their calendars for the 2020 Take 5 and Read kickoff on May 1 and reading day on May 8. Both Ventura County Barnes and Noble locations are doing a holiday book drive to support F5VC early literacy efforts again this year, with donated books distributed to NfLs and at Take 5 and Read. She also detailed recent local visits from the First 5 Express in Oxnard and Camarillo, noting over 1,500 individuals were in attendance; F5VC partnered with VCCF to distribute census materials at both events.

Petra shared that the F5AC Executive Director Moira Kenney is resigning as of January, a succession plan is in development as well as recruitment for a new F5AC ED. Petra asked the Commission to review the enclosed press release supporting increases for paid family leave and noted F5VC continues to advocate for it. She added as detailed in the preschool investment update, the State recently released \$275 million for preschool expansion.

Petra concluded her report by noting dates for upcoming events, including the Administration and Finance Committee on December 6, the February 2020 F5AC Summit in Irvine, and advocacy day on April 21 in Sacramento.

11. Commission Member Comments

Commissioner Long thanked ICFS and 2-1-1 for supporting local families and noted the new Mexican consulate representative is focused on the Census.

Commissioner Mantooth announced the Complete Count Committee awarded grants to F5VC, ICFS, and others totaling over \$400,000 to ensure an accurate census count, with additional funding rounds anticipated.

Commissioner Levin asked for a presentation about the census at the next meeting with the intention of empowering all in attendance with an elevator speech in support of census participation. Petra noted Lauren Arzu has been very involved in local census efforts and messaging points should be finalized in January. She added F5VC will be happy to share those once finalized in January.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill asked all Commissioners to provide feedback to her for the annual performance review of the Executive Director no later than December 2, 2019.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 12, 2019, at the Ventura County Office of Education, at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.