



**COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

January 28, 2021

Commissioners Present: Rachel Champagne, Dr. Michael Gollub, Matt LaVere, Dr. Robert Levin, Barbara Marquez-O’Neill, Dr. Cesar Morales, Bruce Stenslie, Dr. Christine Walker

Excused Absence: Barry Zimmerman

Staff Present: Petra Puls, John Anderson, Lauren Arzu, Sharon Elmensdorp, Fahim Farag, Heather Guerrero, Jimena Hernandez, Jennifer Johnson, Sam McCoy, Grace Montejano, Nani Oesterle

Public Present: Elizabeth Hardin Boyett, Brian Brennan, Kelly Long, Mabel Munoz, Sara Rivera

OPENING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Marquez-O’Neill opened the meeting at 1:01 p.m., reminded attendees how to participate via public comment, and shared a quote.

2. Seating of New Chair and Vice-Chair

The Commission Chair and Vice-Chair for calendar year 2021 were seated, with Commissioner Marquez-O’Neill serving as Chair and Commissioner Stenslie serving as Vice-Chair. Chair Marquez-O’Neill noted she is honored to be elected as chair again, and welcomed Commissioner Stenslie as Vice-Chair.

3. Recognition and Appreciation of Commissioner Long for her work on behalf of First 5 Ventura County

Chair Marquez-O’Neill thanked Supervisor Long for her service on the Commission since 2017 and for being a strong advocate for children at the local and state level. She presented Supervisor Long with a plaque as a thank you.

The Commissioners shared their appreciation for Supervisor Long’s service, dedication, and leadership over the years.

Petra Puls thanked Supervisor Long on behalf of all the staff at First 5 for always being a supporter of our work locally and statewide.

Supervisor Long thanked everyone for their kind words and will continue to advocate for young children.

4. Welcome Dr. Christine Walker, Superintendent of the Hueneme Elementary School District, and Matt LaVere, Ventura County Supervisor District 1, as New Commissioners

Chair Marquez-O'Neill shared new Commissioners LaVere and Walker's bios and welcomed them to the Commission.

5. Approval of Minutes from December 17, 2020 Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Gollub, to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2020 Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets

Chair Marquez-O'Neill provided an overview of regular and supplemental packet items, noting materials were sent via email and are posted on the F5VC website.

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

7. Public Comments/Correspondence

There were no comments from members of the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

8. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Reports as of November 30, 2020

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

REGULAR AGENDA

9. Review and Discussion of Key Accomplishments and Findings from the First 5 Ventura County FY 2019-20 Annual Report

Sam McCoy presented the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Annual Report, which is available at report.first5ventura.org. He noted this is the first annual report produced in a digital format and detailed highlights, including demographics of the population served, partnerships with organizations such as MICOP, and data from the Neighborhoods for Learning. PACT classes, which served nearly 1,100 individuals, are the highlight of the work we do with families, and the report includes data on participants, screenings, and program outcomes. Sam noted investments in Help Me Grow, Triple P, and 2-1-1 were also included in the report and will be discussed later in today's agenda. He concluded his report noting outcomes from Census work, advocacy efforts, and F5VC's response to the pandemic.

Commissioner Levin asked how the numbers served compare to previous years with higher funding levels. Sam commented that with one contract with ICFS far fewer families were served than in prior

years with 11 NfL contracts and significantly higher funding levels. Petra Puls added that as state investments increased in preschool, fewer spaces are directly funded by F5VC.

10. Report of Committees

a. Administration and Finance

Commissioner Stenslie noted the Administration and Finance committee reviewed and approved the upcoming items at the most recent meeting.

i. Recommendation to Update Commission’s Policy and Procedures on Internal Control

Jennifer Johnson noted that the Internal Controls need to be updated to reflect new titles for the Director of Finance and Administration and Director of Human Resources and Operations. The internal controls also were updated in the spirit of continuous quality improvement to reflect approvals required when the Executive Director is not available, payroll, and other certain procedures related to procurement etc. She detailed proposed changes for the Commission.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to update the Commission’s Policy and Procedures on Internal Control to reflect recent changes to titles of positions and clarify certain procedures related to scope when Executive Director appoints a designee, payroll procedures, and receipt of purchases. The motion passed unanimously.

ii. Recommendation to Approve Policy and Procedures to Accept Digital Signatures

Jennifer Johnson shared that the Commission can reduce the use of paper and increase efficiency by utilizing digital certificate signatures for certain documents such as timecards, purchasing, journal entries, and contractual agreements. This policy is especially important as staff are working remotely and does not preclude staff from obtaining wet signatures. Jennifer noted all processes are aligned with current internal controls and legal counsel and auditors have reviewed and approved the policy.

A motion was made by Commissioner LaVere, seconded by Commissioner Stenslie, to adopt a new policy and procedures to allow for the use of digital signatures, using a certificate-based digital ID, for specified documents requiring a signature of authorization/approval. The motion passed unanimously.

iii. Recommendation to Update Advocacy Policy and Policy Platform for 2021

Lauren Arzu noted the Commission adopted an Advocacy Policy in Fall 2017 to allow F5VC to advocate for systems change such as increased state investments in preschool. She detailed recent successful advocacy efforts and noted this recommendation includes updating the Advocacy Policy to align with the First 5 Association and the new F5VC Strategic Plan as well as the annual update to the Policy Platform. Lauren noted the Advocacy Policy will be

updated with the next update of the F5VC Strategic Plan and the Policy Platform will continue to be updated annually.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to adopt an updated advocacy policy and policy platform for 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

iv. Recommendation to Extend Policy for Paid Sick Leave and Extended Paid Family Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

Lauren Arzu noted the Commission approved policies and procedures to comply with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in April 2020, including paid sick leave and family medical leave. She noted the provisions were slated to expire on December 31, 2020 but Congress approved an extension which allows employers to voluntarily extend these paid leave benefits from December 31, 2020 to March 31, 2021. The proposed extension of benefits will support the health and well-being of our employees and was approved by the Administration and Finance Committee.

A motion was made by Commissioner LaVere, seconded by Commissioner Gollub, to extend the FFCRA paid leave benefits through March 31, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

v. Recommendation to Approve Policy and Procedures to Comply with New COVID-19 Employee Safety and Reporting Laws

Lauren Arzu reported that AB 685, which went into effect in January 2021, requires employers to notify employees of positive COVID-19 cases at the workplace. Additionally, SB 1159 requires employers to report all confirmed positive serum tests to their workers' compensation carrier within three days. Additionally, in December 2020, Cal/OSHA adopted the Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) for COVID-19 Prevention. F5VC developed a COVID-19 Prevention Plan and trained all employees. The ETS requires employers to provide pay and benefits for employees who were exposed at work while they remain off work if the employee is unable to work from home, and allows employers the option to require paid sick leave benefits to be exhausted before providing exclusion pay under the Cal/OSHA ETS. Lauren noted staff recommend providing up to two weeks of additional COVID paid sick leave to ensure employees are not motivated to report to the workplace while ill and preserve existing sick leave. She added paid sick leave does not have a cash value upon end of employment and as new staff join F5VC they would not have accrued sick leave.

A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Gollub, to make sick leave available, up to two weeks, to employees who were exposed to COVID-19 at work, cannot work from home, and do not have FFCRA paid leave benefits available. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Recommendation to Approve Unspent Funds for Activities to Facilitate Transition of First 5 Neighborhoods for Learning (NfL) Initiative Utilize Unallocated Preschool Funds for a Two-Year Family Child Care Shared Services Pilot

Petra Puls noted that F5VC is in a transition year as we prepare to implement our new Strategic Plan and staff are reviewing current investments for effectiveness and alignment. Last month, after reviewing the Neighborhoods for Learning initiative, the Commission voted to bring the NfL services ‘in-house’ to F5VC as of July 1, 2021. She noted as this is a major undertaking staff are working to ensure a smooth transition for families by bringing current NfL staff onboard to F5VC. Petra highlighted transition activities already underway and outlined planned activities that will require additional funding to smoothly transition the NfL initiative. Such activities include bringing key leadership positions on board before July, providing security deposits for leases, and hiring staff in June rather than on July 1st to ensure seamless health insurance coverage. She noted staff recommend allocating up to \$450,000 from NfL prior year unspent funds to support NfL transition activities.

A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Gollub, to approve the use of up to \$450,000 in available unspent funds to be used for strategies and activities to facilitate the transition of the First 5 Neighborhoods for Learning initiative from the current contractor to First 5 Ventura County, from February 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Review and Assessment of Current Implementation of Ongoing Key Investments, and Discussion of FY 2021-23 Implementation Models

Petra Puls noted that F5VC adopted a new strategic plan in June 2020 with implementation to take effect in July 2021. A review of all current strategic investments is underway as part of the transition to the new plan. She noted this presentation will focus on Early Identification and Linkage (Help Me Grow and 2-1-1) and current NfL subcontracts (MICOP and Triple P). Petra reviewed the Strategic Plan Implementation timeline and noted all investments are considered in respect to fidelity to model; alignment with overall strategies; and local, state, and federal priorities. She asked the Commissioners to provide feedback on additional information needed to consider a recommendation at the February meeting and introduced Sam McCoy to lead the presentation.

Sam McCoy noted research shows a child’s brain develops faster from birth to age three than in any other period. Yet in California only one in three children are screened for developmental delays and many families miss the opportunity for early intervention. F5VC supports investments in early intervention through Help Me Grow (HMG) and 2-1-1. Sam asked F5VC Program Manager Dr. Sharon Elmensdorp to provide more detail on the HMG model and current implementation.

Sharon detailed F5VC’s HMG initiative, which is a national systems change model to support healthy development of young children. HMG-VC is a national affiliate and one of 32 affiliate counties in the state, with HMG-CA coordinating activities run through F5CA. Working collaboratively with partners, HMG can identify kids early who may need developmental support and connect them to available services. In prior years, F5VC funded partners were responsible for carrying out pieces of the HMG framework, resulting in a fragmented system. In July 2020, F5VC took on all components of HMG-VC and relaunched the core components of the HMG model. Currently staff are working to expand capacity and direct services in joint efforts with key partners including the Gold Coast Health Plan, MICOP, VCOE, and the Landon Pediatric Foundation. F5VC relaunched our HMG-VC centralized access point

(call line), hired a full-time care coordinator to educate parents and providers, and provides developmental screenings through an online portal.

Commissioner Champagne requested a presentation on Help Me Grow for the Local Planning Council.

Sam McCoy noted at this time the anticipated staff recommendation is to continue the current F5VC investment and implementation model for HMG-VC for FY 2021-23.

Sam discussed F5VC's investment in 2-1-1 since 2003 and showed investment levels for FY 2010-18 and FY 2019-21. He shared FY 2019-20 data on the number of callers with children 0-5 and visits to the children and family page on the 2-1-1 website. Sam McCoy noted at this time the anticipated staff recommendation is to continue a F5VC investment in 2-1-1 for FY 2021-23 at a level based on pending discussions and assessment.

Commissioner Walker asked about other funders of 2-1-1. Sam noted F5VC's annual investment is a small portion of the whole 2-1-1 budget and staff have requested details from ICFS about overall funding. Petra added F5VC was an initial investor in 2-1-1 along with the County of Ventura and the United Way of VC, but as the system has evolved current funding levels must be known prior to making a recommendation.

Sam McCoy detailed F5VC's investments in MICOP since 2006 to offer Parent and Child Together classes and other opportunities for Mixteco families throughout Ventura County. He reviewed prior year funding levels through direct contracts and NfL subcontracts prior to consolidation to a current \$250,000 subcontract with ICFS in 2019. Sam concluded at this time the anticipated staff recommendation is to continue a F5VC investment in MICOP for FY 2021-23 at a level based on pending discussions and assessment.

Sam outlined Triple P, an evidence based "Positive Parenting Program" to support families in group and individualized settings. F5VC has funded Triple P services since 2007, with a total investment of \$200,000 annually in FY 2019-21, and details on participants served are available in the F5VC annual report. Sam noted staff have identified existing sources for billing direct services for families such as MediCal and Beacon but costs for staff training are not funded. Additionally, there some families that are not eligible through these funding sources. Sam concluded at this time the anticipated staff recommendation is to continue a F5VC investment in Triple P for FY 2021-23 at a reduced level with a focus on staff training and capacity building while also funding services for families who can't access other funding sources.

13. Report from Executive Director

Petra Puls delivered highlights from her written report, beginning with welcoming Grace Montejano as the new Help Me Grow Care Coordinator. She noted updates on Prop 10 and Prop 56 backfill revenue projections through November 2020 have been received and are included in the report, noting staff will continue to budget conservatively in spite of currently running 11% higher than at this time last year as pro rata and other costs have yet to be calculated. F5VC is reducing administrative office space by eliminating the upstairs office suite, allowing staff to work from home, and will consider office space closer to where services are offered for 2022 and beyond.

Petra and other staff are offering weekly ‘office hours’ for current NfL staff to ask questions, share ideas, and get to know F5VC staff. Petra provided updates on recent work by HMG to train pediatric health care providers to conduct development screenings and noted the Child Abuse Prevention Council in partnership with F5VC received an ACEs Aware Trauma-Informed Network of Care grant in the amount of \$300,000. Petra added F5VC is one of nine communities in the country participating in the Nemours Learning Lab with intensive technical assistance to partner with Gold Coast Health Plan, noting an enclosure is included with more information.

As more than one LOI was received in response to the F5VC child care management software pilot, staff are currently developing an RfP to be released in the near future. Petra noted F5VC offered technical assistance to childcare providers to apply for a Small Business Assistance grant, with 123 providers receiving \$5,000 grants, resulting in \$615,000 invested in local childcare. She directed the Commission to the enclosed analysis from the F5AC on the Governor’s budget, which proposed a variety of investments in young children. Petra concluded her report noting the appointment of Dr. Nadine Burke Harris and Elsa Mendoza Jimenez to the F5CA Commission, noting a press release is enclosed with more details.

14. Commission Member Comments

Chair Marquez-O’Neill welcomed Grace and shared her excitement that Dr. Nadine Burke Harris was appointed Chair of the First 5 CA Commission.

Commissioner Gollub commended staff on an excellent meeting and welcomed the new Commissioners.

15. Next Meeting

Thursday, February 25, 2021, format TBD.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.