

## First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

### Minutes of Meeting – Friday, October 29, 2010, 5:30 PM 601 Texas Street, Conference Room B, Fairfield, CA

#### Attendance

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

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

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 3:07 PM by Chairperson Gossell.

#### I. Greetings, Introductions, Public Comment

The Commissioners introduced themselves.

#### II. Approve Agenda for October 29, 2010 Commission Meeting

*Motion: Approve agenda for October 29, 2010 Commission meeting.*

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

#### III. Consider deployment of up to \$761,902 as a forgivable loan to Solano Family and Children's Services to continue CalWORKs "Stage 3" child care services for eligible children aged birth-to-5 for the period November 1, 2010 to January 31, 2011.

*Source of funding: FY2010/11 Community Stability Fund and Discretionary Fund (redirected funding as outlined in the staff report)*

*Motion: Consider deployment of up to \$761,902 as a forgivable loan to Solano Family and Children's Services to continue CalWORKs "Stage 3" child care services for eligible children aged birth-to-5 for the period November 1, 2010 to January 31, 2011. Source of funding: FY2010/11 Community Stability Fund and Discretionary Fund (redirected funding as outlined in the staff report)*

Discussion: Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director for First 5 Solano, thanked the Commissioners for moving quickly to make this meeting possible. She then reviewed the staff report for this motion. The non-supplantation guidelines for the Community Stability Fund (CSF) were reviewed for this funding, and this loan is within those guidelines. County Counsel was also consulted in making this review.

Ms. Arrostuto noted that the loan is designated as a forgivable loan so that, if the funding does not materialize from the state, the non-profit would not be in the position of obligation for funds it could not guarantee. She emphasized that the Commission may not be repaid, however the state legislative leadership had demonstrated their commitment to supporting legislation to restore the program effective November 1, 2010. For the funding to be restored to Solano Family and Children's Services (SFCS), the legislature would have to pass the restoration of the Stage 3 Child Care program, and the governor would have to sign the bill.

Commissioner Betz commented that he had spoken to a few parents who receive Stage 3 funding and are working. If Stage 3 funding stopped, they would be forced to quit their jobs, since they

could not afford child care.

Commissioner Fairchild commented that if the loan were approved, and the funds are not returned, she would not see that as a loss to First 5, since the funds were invested in children. However, she was concerned about giving up prior commitments and asked if there a way to fund the loan and the other services as well.

Ms. Arrostituto commented that if the motion were approved today, the money outlined in the motion would be used, but a proposal could be brought back on how the other programs could still be funded if the Commission so directed. If the Commission chose that option today, additional funds would needed for the program, and the Board of Supervisors (BOS) would have to approve (on a 4/5 vote) to access the funding from the Contingency.<sup>1</sup>

Elise Crane, a local parent, commented that a restraining order has been put in place by a judge to protect the Stage 3 child care funding. A hearing was set for November 4, and funding from the state would be continued until the hearing. She stated she was grateful to the Commission to propose the loan. Not having access to this funding meant parents would lose their jobs, or be forced to put their children in daycare situations that might not be as safe. Also, if all the children whose parents received Stage 3 were pulled out of care, that would affect the capacity of providers, which is already low.

Yajaira Ferreira, a local parent with four children under age five, commented that she depended on Stage 3 to pay for child care for her children. Her hours at work were just cut, and if Stage 3 was taken away, she would be forced to quit her job. She had read the First 5 Solano mission, vision and values, and commented that everything First 5 wants for children in the county was the same as what she wanted for her children.

Jenny Caskey, Center Director for KinderCare in Vacaville, commented that there were fifteen children at the center she works in, ten of whom were under age five, that depend on Stage 3 funding. It would be a huge detriment to these families to have this funding disrupted. She stated numerous parents from her center wanted to come to the meeting to speak, but they had to work. Stage 3 funding allowed these families to contribute to society and community.

Kim Thomas, Executive Director for Children's Network, thanked the members of the public who had spoken. She agreed that restoring this funding was the right thing to do.

Christie Speck, Solano Community College Child Development Programs Director, SFCS Board Vice-President and Local Child Care Planning Council President, explained that once the Stage 3 cuts took effect, there would be a "domino effect" on the children, families and child care providers. It was invaluable for a child to be able to continue with their peers and providers who love them.

Commissioner Gossell commented that in her work with the Vacaville school district, she saw that children who attended a quality child care are much better prepared for school than those who didn't. She was in favor of this item.

***Commissioner Alarcón moved to approve this motion. Commissioner Ayala seconded the motion.***

Commissioner Fairchild asked that another way to fund this be figured out, so the programs that

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<sup>1</sup> This has to do with the County Budget process. Once the annual County Budget is approved, funds not included in that budget must be accessed via a Contingency Fund which is set by the Board on an annual basis. Accessing funds from Contingency requires a 4/5 vote of the Board.

the programs designated in the staff report that would be forfeited, should the funds not be repaid, could still happen.

The Commission discussed different funding options for the Stage 3 loan, as well as the basic needs outreach plan, set-aside to respond to unanticipated opportunities and TANF/ECF basic needs set-aside.

**Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve the motion as amended: Consider deployment of up to \$761,902 as a forgivable loan to Solano Family and Children's Services to continue CalWORKs "Stage 3" child care services for eligible children aged birth-to-5 for the period November 1, 2010 to January 31, 2011. Source of funding: Long Term Financial Plan.**

Michele Harris, Deputy Director for First 5 Solano, explained that if this amended motion was approved, and the money was not repaid, there would be a \$175,000 budget deficit in the FY2010/11 budget, which could be withdrawn from the Commission's contingency fund, and which would require BOS approval with a 4/5 vote to access.

Commissioner Thigpen commented that she would like to revisit the financial commitments already approved for the CSF and the Discretionary Fund (DF) allocations. She liked the idea of outreach, but maybe more funding was needed for basic needs.

**Commissioner Ayala seconded the amended motion.**

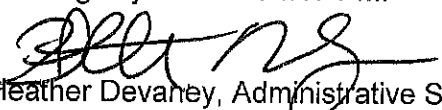
The Commission discussed different options for funding this motion and what previously allocated items might be given up.

**Commissioner Ayala withdrew his second for the amended motion. The amended motion failed for lack of a second.**

**The original motion passed 8-0-0.**

The Commission directed staff to bring back the plans for the CSF and DF so the Commission can consider proceeding with all its outreach plan, unanticipated opportunities set-aside, and TANF ECF expansion funding whether or not the forgivable loan is repaid.

Meeting adjourned at 4:17 PM.

  
Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary

Approved: *December 7, 2010*