

First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, August 5, 2008, 5:30 PM Florence Douglas Senior Center 333 Amador Street, Vallejo, CA

Attendance

Commissioners: Dr. Sharon Tucker, Chair; Norma Thigpen, Vice-chair; Dee Alarcón; Dan Ayala; Stephan Betz; Sheryl Fairchild, Debbie Gossell, Barbara Kondylis, Dr. Elaine Norinsky.

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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 5:51 PM by Chairperson Tucker.

I. Greetings, Introductions, Public Comment

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

There was no public comment.

II. Consent Items

Commissioner Alarcón moved to approve the consent agenda, including the August 5, 2008 agenda, June 3, 2008 minutes and the 2009 Commission Meeting Schedule.

The motion passed unanimously.

III. Rescheduled Consent Items

There were no rescheduled consent items.

IV. Vallejo Services Presentation

Tony Pearsall, Executive Director of Fighting Back Partnership Family Resource Center (FRC) in Vallejo, gave a brief overview of the services the FRC offers in the area, including youth programs for drug-free communities, Families and Schools Together (FAST) and a Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The FRC also has a very successful voluntary parolee reentry program. The recidivism rate of parolees going back to jail has dropped from 74% to 14% since the start of the program. Almost all of these programs are run with the help of federal and local grants.

Josephine Wilson, Project Director of the Fighting Back FRC, thanked the Commission for all of the support over the years. She informed the Commission that there are three sites in Vallejo that the FRC runs and gave brief overviews of the locations and programs of each site.

Kay Bosick, Executive Director of Youth and Family Services (YFS) in Vallejo, informed the Commission that they have been serving Solano County for almost 25 years. Ms. Bosick discussed different programs and funding sources for YFS, such as programs to help parolees and their families/children, substance abuse treatment, children's mental health and community

outreach, among others. YFS is also a part of the First 5 Solano-funded BabyFirst Solano and Integrated Family Services Initiative (IFSI) Collaboratives.

Deanna Niebuhr, Director of Health Programs for the Bay Area Partnership, presented information on the North Vallejo Health Collaborative/Widenmann Healthy Start program, including the work-to-date planning for the Healthy Start operational grant school-based health center at Elsa Widenmann elementary school.

Toni Millholland DeHaven, Recreation Supervisor for the Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD), gave a brief overview of the history of the GVRD and Children's Wonderland. Ms. Millholland presented a slide show of pictures to the Commission from the Vallejo Celebrates Youth event on August 2nd, which was held at Children's Wonderland. Over 900 people (mostly families with young children) attended the event.

The Commission took a short break at 6:45 PM and reconvened at 6:59 PM.

V. Early Childhood Developmental Health Strategic Plan

Motion: Endorse the Solano Early Childhood Developmental Health Strategic Plan.

Discussion: Chris Shipman, Health Programs Manager for First 5 Solano, introduced the topic with a review of the planning and launch of the First 5-funded early childhood mental health strategic planning process. To move this issue forward and convene all the partners, First 5 Solano provided a 2-year grant for resources to fund the collaborative process.

Debbi Davis, Executive Director of Children's Nurturing Project and Coordinator for the Early Childhood Developmental Health (ECDH) Collaborative¹ continued the presentation on the development of the ECDH Strategic Plan, which the ECDH Collaborative approved on July 31, 2008. The Plan provides for a services approach, a policy approach and an investment approach. Over the coming year, the Collaborative and its subcommittees will work on priority areas such as expanding funding, promoting best-practice services and advocating for policy changes that benefit young children's development.

Commissioner Kondylis asked about working across other initiatives funded by First 5 Solano. Ms. Davis informed the Commission that the ECDH Collaborative will work across initiatives, and involve BabyFirst Solano and the School Readiness and IFSI Collaboratives to enhance service integration.

Commissioner Betz informed the Commission that while he does support this plan, he still does not like the fact that screening and assessment are combined. He believes it leads to a belief that children with positive first level screen results are automatically eligible for assessment and/or treatment, which is not always the case. Commissioner Betz would also like to bring back the "RTI Response to Intervention" structure, which was omitted from the plan.

Commissioner Fairchild commented that she does not want the plan to reinforce the idea that mental health issues only come up in lower-income populations, making it clear that, while mental health issues affect all aspects of the population, the ECDH Collaborative is first concentrating on the low-income populations that might not have access to services.

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

¹ The group voted to change its name from "Mental" to "Developmental" early on in the process, to capture the wide range of issues (physical, mental and developmental) that must be taken into account to plan effectively for young children's optimum readiness for school.

VI. Committee Meetings

A. Program Committee

- 1. Commissioner Norinsky moved to approve the December 13, 2007 Program Committee minutes. The motion passed unanimously (3-0-0), with Commissioners Kondylis, Norinsky and Thigpen voting and Commissioners not serving on the Program Committee at that time abstaining.**
- 2. Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve the February 14, 2008 Program Committee minutes. The motion passed unanimously (2-0-0), with Commissioners Kondylis and Fairchild voting and Commissioners not serving on the Program Committee at that time abstaining.**

B. Internal Systems Committee

- 1. Commissioner Kondylis moved to endorse the Solano County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 2008-159 Supporting Preservation of Proposition 10 and Opposing any Efforts to Divert or Reprogram Proposition 10 Funds. The motion passed unanimously.**
- 2. Commissioner Kondylis moved to adopt the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission Resolution No. 2008-01 Supporting Preservation of Proposition 10 and Opposing any Efforts to Divert or Reprogram Proposition 10 Funds. The motion passed unanimously.**
3. Item: Discuss options for deploying additional funds identified by the updating of the First 5 Solano Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP)

Discussion: Commissioner Thigpen, chair of the Internal Systems Committee, informed the Commission that at the last committee meeting, they discussed different options for deploying additional funds in the LTFP. The Committee decided not to make any decisions at the committee level. They felt the discussion should come to the full Commission. The purpose of this item is to get ideas and options. The LTFP topic will be brought to the retreat in October for a more in-depth discussion.

Moira Kenney, Statewide Program Director for the First 5 Association, was present as a facilitator for this discussion. The Commission has been working for several months on updating the parameters and assumptions in the LTFP. Updates made to the LTFP so far reveal that there is a larger amount of funds available in the LTFP that were estimated to be available by this time (when the Plan was put in place four years ago). The question is, how to deal with those funds. Ms. Kenney reviewed the chart showing the program investment options for the different "spend/save" options. The three options are a) do nothing (in which case the currently-set sustainable level of spending would last approximately two years longer than in the original LTFP); b) utilize the full amount of the additional funds immediately; c) increase the sustainable level of spending across the current life of the Plan or d) some combination of these alternatives..

The Commission engaged in a very productive discussion on this item. The main questions that came out of the discussion were:

1. Whether the Plan adequately accounts for inflation;
2. Stability of the \$5.4 million estimate; and
3. Whether a review the strategic framework would identify any specific gaps.

The main ideas and/or suggestions that came out of the discussion were:

1. Leaving these funds unobligated/unencumbered means they are at risk of being taken away from First 5;
2. Elongating the graph shown to allocate smaller amounts of the extra funds each fiscal year;
3. Identifying where the MHSA/PEI funds would come into play;
4. Reviewing the current grantee needs regarding current service demands and reaching capacity;
5. Increasing the funding in 5- 10- or 15% increments;
6. "Greening" First 5 Solano projects;
7. Technology upgrades for grantees;
8. Creating a new matching funds pool; and
9. Putting these ideas into context with the MHSA funds, current politics and demands on First 5 funds.

The Commission staff will use the points from this discussion to structure the Retreat discussion. The Commission thanked Ms. Kenney for her service in most effectively facilitating this discussion.

C. Community Engagement Committee

1. *Proposed Motion: Approve updated Community Engagement Fund Policy requiring Letter of Agreement for acceptance of funds.*

Discussion: Commissioner Betz, chair of the Community Engagement Committee, reviewed the staff report. This is a recommendation to revise the Policy currently in place to include a legal agreement protecting the Commission from liability associated with Community Engagement Fund grants.

Commissioner Fairchild voiced her concerns that the language in the new policy and legal agreement make it sound like only an agency or service provider can apply for these funds. The original intent behind the Community Engagement Fund was for parents, caregivers and other community members to be able to receive funding.

Christina Arrostuto, Executive Director for First 5 Solano, informed the Commission that these documents were developed with the consultation of County Counsel. There is a minimum level of legal obligation for any individual or entity receiving government funds. Staff will work with individuals applying for these funds to help them with adhering to these requirements. It is still the intent and vision that any individual wanting to put on a community event can apply for and receive these funds and that the legal agreement not be a barrier.

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

VII. Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Ayala thanked Elena Villalpando, the First 5 Solano Community Programs Manager, for helping him at the Dixon City Council meeting. They gave a presentation to the city council to provide more information on First 5 Solano and what we do in the community.

Commissioner Norinsky commented that she was very happy she could attend the Children's Wonderland "Vallejo Celebrates Youth" event. The best part of the event was that the adults and kids were learning, playing and having a "ton of fun."

Commissioner Kondylis informed the Commission that on a recent flight, she sat next to an elementary school principal from England and discussed the fact that England has now instituted a mandatory preschool program for all children ages three and up. The program is free of charge, and it is doing wonderfully. Ms. Arrostuto noted that the U.K. program's strategic plan was

developed by none other than Mark Friedman of the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute, who created the "Results-Based Accountability" model used by First 5 Solano and so many other entities.

VIII. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Arrostuto informed the Commission that there has been an outpouring of support from the community for preserving Proposition 10 funds. This began with the Solano County Board of Supervisors passing their landmark resolution supporting Proposition 10. Several local city councils, school boards and community partners have also passed resolutions or written letters of support for preserving Proposition 10 in its current structure and funding. Ms. Arrostuto thanked the Commission for having the foresight to partner with public and community agencies, leverage federal and state dollars and document the cost savings to government by strategic deployment of First 5 Solano funds.

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

The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on October 7, 2008 at 5:30 PM, Multi-Purpose Room at 2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield, CA 94533. Future agenda items include: Public Hearing on FY2007/08 Annual Audit, Public Hearing on First 5 California FY2007/08 Annual Report, First 5 Solano Family Survey, Nominating Committee for 2009 Officers and Annual Retreat Draft Agenda. Note: The annual First 5 Solano Commission Retreat will be held on Saturday, October 18, 2008 at the Joe Nelson Community Center, 611 Village Dr., Suisun, CA.

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.

Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary
Approved: