

# First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission

## Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday, January 12, 2010, 5:30 PM Multi-Purpose Room 2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield, CA

### Attendance

Commissioners: Debbee Gossell, Chair; Dan Ayala, Vice-Chair; Stephan Betz; Dana Dean; Sheryl Fairchild; Linda Seifert; Norma Thigpen.

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

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at: 5:32 PM by Chairperson Gossell.

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

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

Debbie Peralez, acting Director of Child Start, Inc., gave a brief update on the new slots being offered through Early Start in Solano County.

#### II. Approve the Commission Meeting Agenda for January 12, 2010

*Motion: Approve the Commission meeting agenda for January 12, 2010.*

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

#### III. Approve Minutes of the December 1, 2009 Commission Meeting

*Motion: Approve minutes of the December 1, 2009 Commission meeting.*

*Commissioner Seifert moved to approve this motion. The motion passed with six ayes and one abstention. Commissioner Dean abstained from voting on the minutes as she was not present at the December meeting.*

#### IV. Introduction of 2010 Officers

Commissioner Gossell informed the Commission that Commissioner Betz is re-appointed as Chair of the Community Engagement Committee and Commissioner Ayala is appointed as Chair of the Internal Systems Committee.

#### V. Community Engagement Committee

*A. Motion: Consider approval of the First 5 Solano "Business Engagement Strategy Team (BEST®)" Approach report and implement the BEST® Approach as outlined in the report.*

Discussion: Commissioner Betz, Christina Arrostuto (Executive Director for First 5 Solano), Cheryl Ellington (Community Programs Manager for First 5 Solano), Steve Pierce (Solano County Public Information Officer), Sandy Person (Vice-President of Solano Economic Development Corporation (EDC)) and India Alarcon of LFA Group (First 5 Solano evaluator) presented a PowerPoint about the BEST® Approach report.

Ms. Arrostuto explained that the business engagement strategy developed over the past year is based on business focus groups held at Chambers of Commerce throughout Solano County. She noted that the First 5 Solano business engagement strategy will be implemented over the coming 18 months and includes membership and participation in local Chambers and the EDC, formation of a business advisory group to the Commission, and recruitment of a local business leader to serve as the Solano representative on the Bay Area Council's Early Childhood Education subcommittee.

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

***B. Consider approval of deployment of \$10,000 to support the development of a Solano County Volunteer Center. Source of funds: FY2009/10 Discretionary Fund.***

Discussion: Commissioner Betz gave the Commission some background on this item.

Aimee Durfee, Vice-President of United Way of the East Bay, informed the Commission that some of the other financial partners are United Way and CAP Solano. Also, each member of the Advisory Council has donated money either from their organization or personally. Ms. Arrostuto advised the Commission that its contribution is not a donation but a grant that will be used to ensure that services for children 0-5 are included in the Volunteer Center planning and implementation.

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

Ms. Arrostuto informed the Commission that by contributing these funds, First 5 Solano will then become a member of the Advisory Council. Commissioner Betz volunteered, and the Commission agreed by consensus, to appoint Commissioner Betz to represent First 5 Solano on the Volunteer Center Advisory Council.

## **VI. Program Committee**

***Motion: Consider approval of a deployment of allocated funding to extend current grant services for Prenatal, Children's Health, Quality Child Care, and Family Support Initiatives, totaling up to \$6,715,902 for the period of July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012 as outlined in the staff report. Source of funding: 2007-2012 Program Investment Plan.***

***Note: Commissioners Betz and Thigpen recused themselves from the discussion and vote on this item and left the room.***

Discussion: Commissioner Fairchild reviewed the staff report for this item and the process the Program Committee and Commission has gone through to get to this decision.

Commissioner Dean asked if any of the grantees whose contracts are being renewed have been asked to look through their budgets and see if there was any way to decrease their spending.

Commissioner Seifert commented that she had the same question at the Program Committee. The ultimate decision was that staff would go back to the grantees and work with them to see if there was any way to reduce the contract budgets. No one would be forced to make any changes, but they would be asked to take a look at ways to reduce spending and maximize First 5 Solano dollars.

***Commissioner Fairchild moved to approve the motion. The motion passed with five ayes and two abstentions.***

Commissioners Betz and Thigpen returned to the meeting.

## VII. Internal Systems Committee

Commissioner Gossell reviewed the co-sponsorship requests heard at the last Internal Systems Committee meeting.

***Motion: Annual review of Commission policies: Consider approval of a revision to the Signature Authority Policy regarding the information requirements for approving signature of letters of support.***

Discussion: Michele Harris, Deputy Director for First 5 Solano, reviewed the staff report behind this item. Commissioner Dean asked for examples of situations where some of the formerly required documents were not needed. Ms. Arrostuto explained that over time, staff noticed that items like proposed performance measures might not be clear at the time the organization is applying. Other times, the estimated number of children is available, but the exact number is not known at the time of application. Most details similar to these do not become known until after the application is approved.

***Commissioner Ayala moved to approve the motion. The motion passed with five ayes and one no.***

## VIII. Executive Director's Report

***A. Motion: Consider approval to set February 3, 2010 at 5:30pm at 2101 Courage Dr., Fairfield as the date, time and location of a special Commission Meeting on the Community Stability Fund.***

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the report behind this motion.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of deploying the Community Stability Fund this fiscal year. Commissioner Gossell asked staff to review the back history of the Commission and send information on sustainability to Commissioners previous to the February meeting. Ms. Arrostuto explained that it was doubtful the staff could have extensive new information ready by February 3 as the lead time for the packet would be one week, giving staff and grantees only about 2 weeks to prepare.

***Commissioner Dean moved to approve this motion.***

Commissioner Seifert commented that this item has come to the Commission three times, and it has not moved forward yet. She asked staff what value there would be in having a February meeting to discuss the fund.

Ms. Harris explained to the Commission that the question is whether or not the money should be spent, and it doesn't appear that the Commission has reached consensus yet.

Commissioner Betz commented that he doesn't necessarily think the money should be spent this fiscal year, but it should be spent next fiscal year. He would like to consider the needs of families looking for employment. He asked that if this money is going to be spent next fiscal year, the options should be brought to the Commission in February or March at the latest.

Commissioner Gossell asked staff to go back to the grantees and ask them what their current needs are, then compare that to what the needs were in the previous survey. This information should be gathered regardless of whether the February meeting happens.

Commissioner Dean commented that she feels the Commission can't vote on whether or not to spend the funds until they know what the options are for spending it. She suggested that staff take the time they need to gather the information for options and bring it to the Commission when it is

ready. If the information can't be gathered by February 3<sup>rd</sup>, then there should not be a meeting that day.

Ms. Arrostuto explained that if the Commission made a definite decision in February, it would still be difficult to get any funds deployed this fiscal year. Any expansions the Commission would like to consider in their current contracts could be brought to the March Commission meeting.

Public Comment: Ms. Peralez expressed concern about waiting too long to deploy these funds. She asked the Commission to consider where the agencies might be in a few months.

***Commissioner Dean withdrew her motion.***

***Commissioner Betz moved to approve this motion. The motion failed to pass with four ayes and three nos<sup>1</sup>.***

***B. Motion: Consider approval of a deployment of up to \$15,000 to support registration fees for First 5 grantees for the First 5 California Annual Conference in March 2010. Source of funds: FY2009/10 Organizational Support Fund.***

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

***C. Motion: Consider approval of a change in the scope of work for the BabyFirst Solano initiative to replace mentoring services with: a) expansion of the "4Ps Plus" substance use screening process; b) expansion of outreach to include "Go Before You Show" early prenatal care activities; and c) expansion of homevisiting services through partial matching funds for the Nurse Family Partnership program for a 1.0 FTE Public Health Nurse. (No increased funding needed; changes are within current contracted funding amounts).***

***Note: Commissioners Betz and Thigpen recused themselves from the discussion and vote on this item and left the room.***

Discussion: Ms. Arrostuto reviewed the report behind this motion. She noted that the BabyFirst Collaborative requested that funds available due to the ending of a subcontract be re-deployed within the Collaborative, mainly to help support the Nurse Family Partnership program by contributing the cost of one Public Health Nurse. Staff noted that the Collaborative had committed to fully funding the 1.0 PHN for Nurse Family Partnership through the end of the FY2007-2012 funding cycle.

***Commissioner Seifert moved to approve this motion. The motion passed with five ayes and two abstentions.***

Commissioners Betz and Thigpen returned to the meeting.

## **IX. Commissioner Remarks**

Commissioner Gossell presented Commissioner Thigpen with a plaque of appreciation for serving as the Chair of the First 5 Solano Commission for 2009. Commissioner Gossell also thanked her for the hard work she put in as the Chair. Commissioner Thigpen thanked the Commission for the

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<sup>1</sup> At the time, it was not clear whether this motion passed or failed since staff did not have a copy of the Commission By-Laws on hand. Staff alerted the Commission that they would check on whether this 4-3 vote would carry the motion. Staff subsequently notified the Commission after the meeting ended that the motion had failed, since a majority of the full Commission must vote "aye" to approve any motion. Section 8.1 (b) of the First 5 Solano Commission Bylaws state "Actions of the Commission shall be by majority vote of the full Commission".

recognition and commented that it was a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Commission.

Commissioner Betz commented that it was a benefit to have an even-handed Chair who conducted meetings efficiently and helped keep the discussions on track.

Commissioner Seifert thanked Commissioners Ayala and Fairchild and Ms. Arrostuto for their efforts in presenting the FY2008/09 First 5 Solano Evaluation report to the Solano County Board of Supervisors that morning. She commented that it was well done and was very well received by the Board. She also thanked the community partners for the great work they have done.

Commissioner Ayala thanked Commissioner Betz for the great job the Community Engagement Committee has done on the BEST© report.

Commissioner Gossell commented that when she read the BEST® Approach report, it made her very proud to be a part of this Commission.

Ms. Arrostuto welcomed back Ms. Harris and commented that she is very glad she is back. She also thanked all the First 5 Solano staff for helping out while Ms. Harris was gone.

#### **X. Future Agenda Items, Meeting Time/Date/Location**

The next regularly-scheduled Commission meeting will be held on March 2, 2010 at 5:30 PM, Multi-Purpose Room at 2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield, CA 94533. Future agenda items include: FY2010/11 Proposed Budget; First 5 CA Annual Report Presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 PM.

  
Heather Devaney, Administrative Secretary

Approved: *March 2, 2010*