

**FIRST 5 VENTURA COUNTY
ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

June 4, 2021

Present: Commissioner Morales, Pamela Grothe, Joseph Richards, and Kara Ralston

Staff Present: Lauren Arzu, Amy Cook, Fahim Farag, Jennifer Johnson, and Petra Puls

I. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

Commissioner Morales began the meeting at 9:40 a.m. Amy Cook was introduced in her new role as Project Manager.

II. Approval of Minutes from May 7, 2021

A motion was made by Kara Ralston, seconded by Pamela Grothe, to approve the minutes from the May 7, 2021 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Kara Ralston, seconded by Pamela Grothe, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

V. Recommendation to Update to Employee Handbook

Lauren Arzu reviewed the discussion from the last Committee meeting on updating the Employee Handbook. She stated that many of the proposed updates for 2021 are being made to bring the handbook in alignment with new laws and existing policies that have been approved by the Commission, such as the Advocacy Policy and the Remote Work Supplemental Payment Policy. Lauren referred to the Employee Handbook and provided a detailed review of the proposed updates. There was discussion on at-will employment and language related to an introductory period. It was suggested that it might be more appropriate to refer to it as an initial performance review. The Committee agreed that staff would consult with legal counsel and revise the language accordingly.

A motion was made by Pamela Grothe, seconded by Kara Ralston, to update the Employee Handbook with any revisions to the introductory period finalized in consultation with legal counsel. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. Recommendation to Approve Policy and Procedures for the Prevention of Abuse and Molestation

Jennifer Johnson stated that the Commission will begin implementing direct services in-house for the Neighborhood for Learning (NfL) initiative as of July 1, 2021. The nature of NfL services are different than typical child care or school settings where children are not accompanied by their parent/caregiver, in which liability for abuse and molestation is a necessity rather than voluntary precaution. A need exists to obtain liability coverage for abuse and molestation as it is a requirement in some of the leases. Staff are attempting to maintain as many of the

current sites as possible for the first year to minimize disruption and to evaluate program needs. While most of the current sites do not mandate this type of liability coverage, four school districts do require it. The Commission's insurance broker is attempting to obtain quotes for a stand-alone policy as the limit that can be acquired as an add-on to our existing general/professional liability policy does not meet the coverage required of the school districts. A policy and procedures are needed to proceed with the quoting process.

Jennifer reviewed the proposed policy and procedures for the prevention of abuse and molestation, which are based on best practice guides and guidance from the National Education for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and tailored the NfL program approach. She noted legal counsel reviewed the document. The Committee agreed to two modifications: 1) reframe language that states children will not be left alone with staff to instead say that staff are not permitted to be left alone with children and 2) simply state that parents will discipline their children, rather than stating that parents will receive coaching to address behavior issues.

A motion was made by Joseph Richards, seconded by Kara Ralston, to approve the proposed policy and procedures for the prevention of abuse and molestation with the changes discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Update on Commission Activities

Petra Puls provided an update on the NfL transition activities and hiring staff. Petra referred to the May 2021 Report from Commission Staff. She highlighted the report, noting advocacy efforts. Petra reported that the Commission approved all the recommendations brought forth by the Committee last month as well as approved vendors for a new evaluation system and for a pilot project to implement a child care management system to support family child care providers.

VIII. New Business/ Miscellaneous

There was no new business.

IX. Closure

Commissioner Morales concluded the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

X. Next Meeting

Friday, August 6, 2021, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Location TBD
(This meeting was subsequently cancelled)