



**COMMISSION MEETING  
MINUTES**

**June 17, 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, Barry Zimmerman

Excused Absence: none

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Tyla Adams, Cristina Alvarez, John Anderson, Lauren Arzu, Jhoelle Aspuria, Liz Cervantes, Juana Chaparro, Tiffany Charaabi, Amy Cook, Hope DeMoss, Sandra Diaz, Sharon Elmendorf, Fahim Farag, Shelby Ferns, Hilcia Garcia, Heather Guerrero, Lilia Gurrola, Teresa Gutierrez, Jimena Hernandez, Andrew Huizar, Jennifer Johnson, Sam McCoy, Breanna Monette, Grace Montejano, Blanca Morales, Nani Oesterle, Kelly Petrula, Veronica Reynoso, Megan Switzler, Margarita Valadez

Public Present: Robin Folino, Alicia McFarland, Mabel Munoz

**OPENING**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Marquez-O'Neill opened the meeting at 1:04 p.m., reminded attendees how to participate via public comment, and shared quotes regarding happiness.

**2. Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2021 Commission Meeting**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Levin, seconded by Commissioner LaVere, to approve the minutes from the May 20, 2021 Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. 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 Zimmerman, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

**4. Public Comments/Correspondence**

There were no comments from members of the public.

**5. Recognition of Steps to Our Future, Inc. for Financial Donation to First 5 Ventura County**

Chair Marquez-O'Neill noted that Steps to Our Future generously donated funds to First 5 Ventura County for early childhood materials. She thanked Steps to our Future on behalf of the Commission and the children and families we serve. Robin Folino noted that she is a long-time supporter of First 5 Ventura County and is happy that the funds will support children and families.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**6. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Reports as of April 30, 2021**

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

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**7. Review of First 5 Ventura County FY 2020-22 Strategic Plan in compliance with Health and Safety Code Section 130140**

Petra Puls noted that it is a statutory requirement and best practice to review the Strategic Plan annually. As the Commission typically adopts a new strategic plan one year prior to implementation F5VC is technically still operating under the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, with implementation of the plan approved and adopted in June 2020 beginning on July 1, 2021. She noted F5VC background information is included in the 2020-22 Strategic Plan and highlighted transition activities in recent years, including increasing our focus on systems building and systemic change, and on prenatal–3 investments.. During the most recent strategic planning process, the Commission approved extending year 4 and 5 strategies from the FY 2015-20 plan for two years in the current FY 2020-22 Strategic Plan.

Petra reviewed the revised F5VC Mission, Vision, and Core Values as well as the core priorities and strategic framework for FY 2020-22. The language used in the strategic priorities, Comprehensive Child Health and Development, Strong and Resilient Families, and Quality Early Learning, aligns with the First 5 Association's language to increase consistency of messaging across the state. F5VC strategic investments, such as Neighborhoods for Learning (NfL) and Help Me Grow (HMG), are intended to help achieve our mission, vision, and strategic priorities. The NfLs and Parent and Child Together classes are key strategies within our investments to address the gap in services for infants and toddlers. HMG is a systems initiative that works to connect families with existing services once a need or concern has been identified, working with both families and providers. Petra detailed the Desired Outcomes Framework in the Strategic Plan, noting F5VC is working with an evaluator to further refine our evaluation framework.

Commissioner Gollub asked staff to look into funding improvements in prenatal care and maternal health and wellbeing. He noted upstream investments in the womb can prevent expensive interventions later on.

Petra reviewed the Implementation Plan, which was based on an assessment of all current investments for fidelity and alignment with local and state priorities. The largest change from that assessment was to bring the Neighborhoods for Learning in house under direct management by F5VC. Petra outlined recent activities to prepare for that transition and noted NfL staff officially joined the F5VC team on June 14. Petra noted F5VC has aligned resources with implementation strategies, including launching a new

website and web-based annual report, working to develop new evaluation framework, and a new database for participant information and outcome tracking. Looking forward, F5VC is focusing on how best to strengthen the entire early childhood system, including advancing support for HMG and the ACEs network of care, increasing investments in prenatal-5, supporting child care providers, strengthening partnerships with stakeholders and families, and continuing to seek dedicated quality facilities in areas where families live and in high-need neighborhoods.

Petra concluded the staff recommendation is spending the next several years implementing the new plan before considering any changes to the Strategic Plan.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill expressed her support of the staff recommendation.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to receive and file the presentation. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **8. Report of Committees**

### **a. Administration and Finance**

Commissioner Morales noted the Committee met earlier in June and reviewed and approved the forthcoming items.

#### **i. Recommendation to update Employee Handbook**

Lauren Arzu noted the Commission periodically conducts a full review of the handbook, with many of the proposed updates due to approved F5VC policies, new legal requirements, or updates to staff positions. The handbook begins with F5VC's commitment to being a family-friendly, employee centric workplace and the Mission and Vision statements, which have been updated to match revisions made during the most recent strategic planning process. Lauren detailed proposed changes for the Commission, including updates to titles, sections regarding work schedules, remote work and time reporting, TB testing requirements for employees working on school campus sites, and annual performance evaluations. Language has been simplified where possible, such as the prohibition against supervising a relative and the section on the introductory period. Updates have been made to match new legal requirements, including sharing salaries with potential employers and the legalization of marijuana. The section on benefits has been updated to remove the employee cap on sick time accrual, clarify COBRA requirements, and expand bereavement for planning funerals out of the state or country. Lauren noted Veterans Day has been added as a paid holiday to align with school calendars, and the personal leave policy has been expanded to increase equity for staff who don't have school-aged children and allow employees to observe religious holidays that are not observed by the Commission. She asked the Commission for feedback regarding the recently approved Juneteenth Federal Holiday, which is expected to be signed in to law in the near future.

The Commission expressed support of adding Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday if signed into law. Commissioner Gollub asked if service and administrative locations will be closed for the holiday. Lauren reported NFL locations would be closed for the day but contracted partners

such as preschools would not be required to close. She added the new holiday may align with breaks between NFL cohorts.

Commissioner Gollub asked about how to enforce the prohibition against reporting to work under the influence of marijuana. The Commission engaged in a discussion regarding how to monitor whether employees report to work intoxicated or unable to perform their duties for various reasons. Lauren noted county counsel approved this section but did not provide guidance on enforcement. Commissioner Zimmerman expressed his support of the revised section and noted the policy is intended to set expectations for reporting to work ready to perform, regardless of the reason. Petra noted this section conveys F5VC's expectations of employees and action taken would be based on individual circumstances.

Commissioner Gollub asked if Jewish employees would be required to use personal leave to observe religious holidays. Lauren reported the F5VC Holiday schedule is intended to align with federal holidays and this revised policy is meant to expand eligibility to allow use of personal leave for such holidays. Currently, the personal leave policy only allows for parents of school-aged children to participate in their children's education. Petra offered to do additional research on how other public entities approach religious holidays that are not federal holidays.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill reported that President Biden signed the new Juneteenth Federal Holiday into law.

Lauren thanked the Commission for their feedback and noted staff will return with revised travel procedures and meal reimbursements in the coming months.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Levin, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to approve the staff recommended updates to the Employee Handbook and include Juneteenth as a paid holiday. The motion passed unanimously.**

**ii. Recommendation to approve a policy and procedures for the prevention of abuse and molestation**

Jennifer Johnson noted that this policy is necessary as we begin to offer direct services and to obtain Abuse and Molestation insurance as a lease requirement for some sites. This is a precautionary policy as NFL services are different than typical child care or school setting in that children are not left unaccompanied by their parent/caregiver at any time. The policy addresses prevention at the workplace level. She noted legal counsel has reviewed this policy and it was approved by the Administration and Finance Committee. She detailed the proposed Policy and Procedures for the Commission, which is based on best practices and guidance from the National Education for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and tailored to the NFL program.

Commissioner Morales expressed understanding from the School District perspective regarding concerns about liability coverage amounts and the inability to obtain Abuse and Molestation insurance. He noted the actual Policy and Procedures does not raise any concerns.

Commissioner Walker expressed her strong support of the Policy and Procedures and wants to ensure the organization is adequately protected. She noted all school districts have the same insurance requirements through a Joint Powers Authority and suggested F5VC develop a master agreement with all school districts for consistency in lease agreements.

Jennifer noted the recommended action to approve the Policies and Procedures does not include any information on the type of policy or insurance amounts to be secured.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerman, seconded by Commissioner Stenslie, to approve a new policy and procedures related to the prevention of abuse and molestation as a result of the in-house implementation of the Neighborhood for Learning Initiative. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **9. Recommendation to Apply for Family Support through Primary Prevention (FSPP) Demonstration Site Grant**

Petra Puls noted the Department of Health and Human Services released a funding opportunity for demonstration sites for Family Support through Primary Prevention. Funds will be awarded for a five-year intensive project to demonstrate a process for integrating public health, primary prevention and cross-sector approaches that engage communities in developing child and family well-being systems. VCHSA Children and Family Services supports one application from Ventura County and nominated First 5 Ventura County to serve as the lead. F5VC staff are preparing an application for submission by the July 2 deadline. Petra reported the delegated authority to the Executive Director for submitting grant applications is for up to \$500,000. As this application is for \$750,000 Commission approval is required.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Zimmerman, to develop and submit an application for a Family Support through Primary Prevention (FSPP) Demonstration Site Grant to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **10. Recommendation to Approve Triple P Funding Allocation for FY 2021-22 and to Delegate Contracting Authority to Executive Director**

Petra noted that the Commission has invested in Triple P, an evidence-based program designed to prevent social, emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems in children by enhancing parents' knowledge, skills, and confidence, for 10 years. Triple P allocations were \$200,000 annually for the last two years for contracted services with Interface Children & Family Services and New Dawn Counseling. Petra reported that continued investments in Triple P aligns with our strategic priorities and both implementation partners can leverage funding services to pay for the actual delivery of Triple P services. However, such funding does not cover training of providers, materials, or families who don't have the necessary health care coverage. Petra concluded the staff recommendation is to allocate \$100,000 as a challenge grant for current partners to support capacity building, training, and for gap funding so that providers can deliver Triple P services. She added contractors would be required to provide a plan for implementing services with families, account for the population served, and propose measurement of tracking family outcomes.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Stenslie, to approve FY 2021-22 Triple P allocations for current First 5 funded Triple P implementation partners and to grant authority to the Executive Director to enter into contracts with designated contract agencies, pending their demonstrated ability to comply with established criteria. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **11. Report from Executive Director**

Petra Puls directed the Commission to her written report and welcomed our Neighborhood for Learning team. F5VC was recognized as one of the best places to work on the central coast by the Pacific Coast Business Times for the third year in a row. She also highlighted an enclosed article from the VC Reporter detailing childcare reimbursement rates and the importance of early childhood education.

#### **12. Performance Review of Employee (Govt. Code, Section 54957)**

The Commission entered closed session at 2:35 p.m. to discuss the performance evaluation of the Executive Director.

The Commission returned to open session at 3:06 p.m.

#### **13. Discussion and consideration of updates to Executive Director's Objectives, Performance Goals, and Compensation**

Chair Marquez-O'Neill reported that the Commission approved a 5% increase to the Executive Director's compensation as of July 1, 2021, with all other compensation remaining the same. She added the Commission approved the Executive Director's updated Performance Goals for Fiscal Year 2021-22.

**A motion was made by Commissioner LaVere, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to approve the Executive Director's compensation for FY 2021-22. The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to approve the Executive Director's updated Performance Goals for FY 2021-22. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **14. Commission Member Comments**

Commissioner LaVere thanked Petra Puls for her recent budget and accomplishments presentation to the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Levin suggested issuing a press release announcing F5VC adopted Juneteenth as a paid holiday.

**15. Next Meeting**

Thursday, July 29, 2021, format TBD.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.