

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

**March 3, 2023**

Present: Commissioner Morales, Pamela Grothe, and Joseph Richards

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Lauren Arzu, Jennifer Johnson, and Alma Perez

**1. Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions**

Commissioner Morales began the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes from January 6, 2023 and February 3, 2023**

**A motion was made by Pamela Grothe, seconded by Joseph Richards, to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2023 and February 3, 2023 meetings. The motion carried unanimously.**

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**A motion was made by Joseph Richards, seconded by Pamela Grothe, to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.**

**4. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**5. Recommendation to Update Employee Handbook**

Lauren Arzu reviewed proposed revisions to the Employee Handbook. The majority of proposed edits were based on recent changes made to labor laws. The proposed changes include: removing gender pronouns and replacing them with inclusive language, updating non-discrimination policies, increasing notice requirements for an unscheduled absence, clarifying Life and AD&D insurance coverage restrictions, adding a designated person for sick leave utilization, and aligning bereavement leave with new legislation. The committee was in favor of adopting these changes.

The Committee also discussed Pamela Grothe's suggested edits particularly related to the introductory period, bereavement leave, outside employment and jury duty sections of the employee handbook. Staff will further review the suggestions and return with recommendations at a future meeting.

**A motion was made by Pamela Grothe, seconded by Joseph Richards, to approve the proposed updates to the employee handbook. Revisions to bereavement leave days based on relationship and any additional changes will be brought back to the Committee for review. The motion passed unanimously.**

## 6. Recommendation to Maintain Commission Investments

Jennifer Johnson stated that the Commission adopted an Investment Policy in 2009 and updated it in 2019. As part of the annual review of the Investment Policy, the Committee needs to determine 1) whether the one-year of operating funds should be invested in the County Pool or the State Pool - Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) and 2) whether funds beyond the one-year operating requirement should be maintained in the County Pool, Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF), or be invested externally for FY 2023-24. Jennifer reported that the Commission has maintained its investments in the County Pool since its inception. The Committee reviewed data on current market rates for both long-term securities and investment pools. Jennifer noted the significant improvement in market rates and the anomaly with an inverted yield curve whereby short-term securities have a higher yield than long-term. The Committee discussed whether this is cause to seek external investment of funds, recognizing that 1) procuring an external investor to serve as the fiduciary would take time and resources, 2) with this improvement in short-term securities, it is anticipated that the rates in the pools will also improve, and 3) the future trend is uncertain – this inversion could soon reverse the usual upward trend. Jennifer stated that the County Pool is currently (and has historically) outperformed the State Pool and she discussed the efficiency in keeping funds with the County where monthly tobacco tax distributions are received. Therefore, the staff recommendation is to maintain the one-year operating funds in the County Pool. For funds beyond the one-year operating requirement, the staff recommendation is to monitor the performance of the County Pool over the next six months. If there is data to suggest that consideration should be given to external investments, staff would come back with a recommendation to modify the investment plan for FY 2023-24. Jennifer stated that there are no recommended changes to the Investment Policy at this time.

**A motion was made by Joseph Richards, seconded by Pamela Grothe, to maintain the Commission's investments in the Ventura County Treasury Pool for FY 2023-24 and to monitor external investments for potential revision to the FY 2023-24 investment plan, if warranted. The motion passed unanimously.**

## 7. Review of Preliminary Assumptions for the FY 2023-24 Budget

Jennifer Johnson provided an overview of the budget assumptions for the Commission's FY 2023-24 internal cost centers, including Program and Systems Integration, Neighborhoods for Learning (NFL), Help Me Grow, Results-Based Accountability, and Administration. She stated that the purpose of the discussion is to receive input on the budgetary assumptions. Jennifer shared the approach for developing cost estimates and the timelines for the budget review process. Jennifer reported on the success and positive feedback received from staff on the recruitment and retention strategies that were implemented last year with the budget. She thanked the Committee and the Commission for their support.

Jennifer reviewed the preliminary budget assumptions and the proposed staffing pattern. She reviewed the preliminary proposed staffing changes, including: 1) adding an additional Specialist position with available resources under the Neighborhoods for Learning; 2) reassigning the Operations Manager as a centralized administrative staffing position in lieu of hiring the unfilled coordinator-level position; and 3) increasing a vacant Program Manager position from a .25 full-time equivalent (FTE) to a .75 FTE with resources freed up from reassignment of the Operations Manager. Jennifer provided an overview of operating costs, including anticipated rate increases. Jennifer reviewed the methodology for allocating centralized administrative staffing support and shared operating expenses. Jennifer stated that the assumptions will be refined over the next month as more information is obtained on historical usage and rate increases. At the April meeting, staff will present the proposed FY

2023-24 budgets, updated financial plan, proposed changes to Administrative Cost Policy, if needed, and the proposed FY 2023-24 administrative cost rate.

## **8. Update on Commission Activities**

Petra Puls referred to the February 16, 2023 Report from Commission Staff. She provided an update on Commission business, including the approval to ratify committee members. Petra discussed the grant application that has been submitted to implement a Healthy Steps pilot program. Petra provided an update on the ARPA grant and noted that it is funding a pilot of Welcome Every Baby – a light touch home visiting program and working towards a coordinated home visiting system with the County of Ventura. She highlighted the Commission's strategic planning/visioning efforts and encouraged the Committee to find more information posted on the Commission's website. Petra concluded her report with an overview of the child care business management online system (Wonderschool) for family child care providers.

## **9. New Business/ Miscellaneous**

There was no new business.

## **10. Closure**

Commissioner Morales closed the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

## **11. Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 12, 2023**, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at First 5 Ventura County, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room