COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

January 16, 2025

Commissioners Present: Matt LaVere, Dr. Cesar Morales, Dr. Christine Walker, Dr. Loretta Denering, Kimberly Naslund, Barbara Marquez-O'Neill, Rachel Champagne

Excused Absence: Bruce Stenslie

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Lauren Arzu, Jennifer Johnson, Sam McCoy, Jina Jue, Sharon Elmensdorp, Lysa Urban, Christina Laubacher, Sky Limón, Lilia Gurrola, Shelby Ferns, Jhoelle Aspuria-Arca, Mario Rodriguez, Marisol Hernandez, Desiree Campos, Elisheva Hollis, Hope DeMoss, Veronica Reynoso, Christina Espinoza

Public Present: Alicia McFarland

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

   Chair LaVere opened the meeting at 1:04 p.m. and asked Commissioners to introduce themselves.

2. **Seating of 2025 Commission Chair and Vice Chair**

   Commissioner LaVere accepted the role of Chair, and Commissioner Walker accepted the role of Vice Chair for the upcoming year.

3. **Approval of Minutes from November 21, 2024 Commission Meeting**

   A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Marquez-O'Neill, to approve the minutes from November 21, 2024 Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets**

   A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Denering, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Public Comments / Correspondence**

   There were no comments from members of the public.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. **Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Expenditure Report as of November 30, 2024**

7. **Approval of Commissioner Authorized Signatories for 2025**

8. **Recommendation to adopt a revised resolution per Government Code 54954(a) to modify place for holding regular Commission meetings**

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

REGULAR AGENDA

9. **Report of Administration and Finance Committee**

   a. **Recommendation to Update Records Retention and Destruction Policy – Jennifer Johnson**

      Jennifer Johnson briefly shared the background of the policy, which was adopted in September of 2014. The policy includes a schedule of retention periods that is used for the destruction of non-permanent records. She stated that no changes are being proposed to the policy itself and highlighted the proposed changes to the retention schedule. For the Commission/Committee category only minutes and recommendations will be retained and on a permanent basis. A Participant/Client category was added as a result of being a direct service provider and documents retention up to 5 years after date of completion. The Insurance category was clarified with retention remaining permanent and employee health & life insurance records being excluded. Human Resource records retention extended from 3 to 4 years. Due to the passage of new laws, the Workplace Violence Prevention category was added. Lastly, under the General category, grievances/investigation notes and site evacuation/safety plans were added. Jennifer added that if there was a difference between what a contract indicates versus state regulation for records retention, then the higher duration will be upheld.

      A motion was made by Commissioner Morales, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve updates to the records retention and destruction policy. The motion passed unanimously.

   b. **Recommendation to Modify Family and Medical Leave Section of the Employee Handbook – Lauren Arzu**

      Lauren shared a brief background of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which allows an employee to elect, or an employer to require an employee to substitute accrued paid leave for FMLA leave. She then shared two recent changes to the Paid Family Leave (PFL): employees may receive up to 90% of their pay while on leave and they cannot be required to use accrued vacation *before* accessing paid leave. The Commission integrates benefits with PFL so that the employee receives their normal wages by using applicable paid leave until it is depleted. Employees may want to reserve their sick/vacation time for when they return to work. The suggested modification will allow employees on a leave of absence to retain up to

120 hours of sick and/or vacation leave instead of the 80 hours currently allowed. This will increase the safety net when time off is necessary for employees recovering from illness, caring for a family member with an illness, or new parents attending well-child visits or caring for a sick infant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Marquez-O'Neill, seconded by Commissioner Morales, to approve modifying the Family and Medical Leave section of the Employee Handbook. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Committee Updates - Jennifer Johnson

Jennifer shared the data on the changes in birth rates for Ventura County and California. First, she detailed the distribution process of Prop 10 revenues. She stated that Ventura County birth rates as a percentage of total births in CA determines F5VC revenue. The amount of tobacco sales per county is not a factor. Tobacco sales have declined over the last twenty-five years.

She reviewed birth rate trends for Ventura County and California at the inception of First 5 Ventura County in 1998. The most current birth rate data available is from 2023 at 8,337 for the County and 398,783 for the state.

Jennifer mentioned that there is a two-year lag between data and disbursements. The County reaped the benefits of the higher rate of 2022 due to the lack of birth rate data for 2020. In 2022 there was an increase in birthrate and then it stabilized in 2023. Jennifer explained how the statewide birthrate trends impact the County's revenue distribution.

Commissioner LaVere inquired whether the Ventura County birthrates are compared with those of the other fifty-seven counties' birth rates in regard to distribution. Jennifer clarified that County rates are compared to statewide rates. Counties with an increase in percentage of births compared to total births in the state will receive a larger percentage of revenue disbursements.

10. Strategic Planning – Petra Puls

Petra shared that the current Strategic Plan will be expiring June of 2026, and the new Strategic Plan will be finalized in March of 2026. She discussed what is currently being considered for the first phase of strategic planning: environmental contexts, demographics, First 5 participants, and the outcomes that are being achieved.

Sam started his presentation with relevant demographic data. The data comes from the County and the First 5 participants and includes population, race/ethnicity, language, and poverty/income levels. Sam shared the breakdown of Ventura County's population and the number of children zero to four years old. Simi Valley and Oxnard zip codes have the greatest number of young children. First 5 Ventura County serves three times more zero to 2 (0-2) year olds (our target population) than three to five (3-5) year olds. Language demographics were compared between First 5 Ventura County families, Ventura residents, and California for English, Spanish and other categories. F5VC, through our partnership with MICOP, serves a larger percentage of Mixteco speaking families than in the County as a whole. Similarly, 66% of the families F5VC serves are Hispanic/Latino, while only 43% of Ventura County residents are Hispanic/Latino. Sam presented data on average household income by race/ethnicity, showing that the Non-Hispanic/Latino population earns more than the County

average, while Hispanic/Latino households earn 32% less. The data also indicated that 70% of families served by F5VC earn less than $50K, compared to 24% for the County overall. Even more concerning, 36% of F5VC families reporting income make less than $20K per year. Next, Sam discussed poverty rates, noting that Ventura County has lower poverty percentages than the state. The highest rates are in the Oxnard Plains (9.75%), Port Hueneme (9.52%), and Santa Paula (9.04%). However, the number of families affected varies by zip code, with Oxnard zip codes 93033 and 93030 reporting 1,441 and 721 families in poverty, respectively, and Santa Paula reporting 722 families. Lastly, Sam shared F5VC's Core Value of Integrity and Equity, stating that F5VC is committed to acknowledge, identify, and address system inequities and racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and ability disparities in early childhood experiences, opportunities, and outcomes.

The discussion focused on how homelessness is defined and how data related to homelessness is collected. It was noted that the County's Point in Time Count uses a different definition of "homeless" compared to school districts. Commissioner Morales explained that the school district follows the McKinney-Vento Act, which defines homelessness for children as anyone lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those in shared housing or couch surfing situations. Commissioner Champagne added that children aged zero to five are not included in the K-12 homelessness data.

Commissioner Marquez-O'Neill inquired about how the County captures homeless data for families who have children under five years of age. Commissioner Morales responded that the data is collected for families whose older children are attending school and who also have a younger sibling at home who is not yet of kindergarten age. Staff will bring back available data on homeless children and families.

Commissioner LaVere pointed out that the data shows a consistent pattern in the same zip codes and asked if there have been any changes. Sam confirmed that the pattern has remained unchanged. Commissioner Champagne added that the Local Planning Council allocates funds based on priority tiers, and the zip codes included in the high-priority tiers have stayed the same.

Petra shared the draft scope of work for the Strategic Planning Consultant, stating that the work will involve staff, Commissioners, key stakeholders, and community members. The first phase will focus on co-creating the planning process, while the second will gather input from the community and stakeholders. The consultant's main role will be to facilitate planning meetings and retreats with the F5VC Commission and staff, and to design agendas and documents that encourage meaningful participation from Commissioners. The final deliverable will be a published Strategic Plan and executive summary. Petra also outlined the Request for Proposals (RFP) timeline and proposal requirements.

Commissioner Marquez-O'Neill inquired how the RFP will be announced. The RFP will be published on our website, social media, through other county Commissions, the First 5 Association, and through partner agencies including the Center for Nonprofit Leadership, and via direct mail.

11. Report from Executive Director- Petra

Petra welcomed a new program manager, Courtney Pyle, to the team. Petra reviewed current Prop 10 revenues, which will be supplemented by Prop56 distribution and quarterly CECET funds. The financial plan will be updated in April as part of the budgeting process. She then shared that the RFP for auditing services resulted in five proposals. They will be reviewed, and funding recommendations will be made next month.

She then highlighted Neighborhoods for Learning activities, the Fatherhood Initiative and Parent Advisory Group activities. The WEB Home Visitors team are highly active with diaper distribution events. The Parent Leader Network initiative grant has ended, but F5VC will continue to work with Parent Leaders in seeking new opportunities and will continue to work on the Parent Leader Handbook.

Petra announced that the First 5 Association membership dues formula has been updated to create more equity across counties and to cover the operating needs for the Association. The dues will be $32,910.92 and go into effect July 1, 2025. She shared that the Association has launched the *Choose Children 2026* campaign to ensure gubernatorial candidates are aware of issues facing young children and their families. Petra then discussed the Governor's proposed budget and the variables that impact the budget.

Commissioner Champagne shared that she will be attending the National Advocacy Day for Early Childhood and Family Support in Washington D.C in February, where early childhood providers will be meeting with advocates and policymakers. She will make efforts to garner support for F5VC during her visit.

Commissioner Champagne addressed the climate in the community regarding the impact of current immigration policies. Petra announced that F5VC does not ask about immigration status; family resource centers are safe spaces, and everyone is welcome. Commissioner Morales added that the school districts will not work with ICE unless there is a court order.

12. Next Meeting

Thursday, February 20, 2025

13. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.