



## Commission Meeting MINUTES

Monday, September 9, 2013, 6:00 pm  
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200  
Large Conference Room  
Concord, CA

### 1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 PM.

Commissioners in attendance were Chair PJ Shelton, Secretary/Treasurer Maria Fort, Vice Chair Valerie Earley, John Jones, Gareth Ashley, Barbara Cappa, Dr. William Walker, and Kathy Gallagher.

Alternates in attendance were Toni Robertson and Katharine Mason.  
Mister Phillips arrived at 6:46 pm.

Also present was County Counselor Keiko Kobayashi.

### 2.0 Public Comment

Shelter Inc. Director of Program Services, Jennifer Baha reported that in the last fiscal year (2012-2013), they received 45 families with 69 children (53 were between 0 to 5 years old). 100% went to stable housing, either permanent or transitional housing. She also described a 33 year old mother who just entered facility today who had a one-year-old boy. She will hopefully get her set up with employment search and be entered into stable housing soon.

### 3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

Gareth Ashley moved to have the consent calendar approved.  
Maria Forte seconded.  
Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

### 4.0 Consider for discussion any items removed from the consent calendar.

There were no items removed from the consent calendar.

### 5.0 Presentation on "Raising a Reader"

Sean Casey introduced Molly Wertz, the Executive Director of Raising a Reader San Francisco and Alameda Counties (RAR). First 5 has been a Raising a Reader affiliate for several years, starting with school readiness programs and later building RAR into Preschool Makes a Difference. With this steady expansion, First 5 now supports RAR in over 160 early learning classrooms, as well as the First 5 Centers. We have been looking at joining RAR San Francisco-Alameda so the program can be maintained and grown in the context of a larger agency devoted to childhood literacy. Sean began discussions with Molly earlier this year and met with the RAR board in the summer. We also hosted an opportunity for Contra Costa funders to meet Molly and learn more about her agency and the potential for expanding into Contra Costa. That meeting has yielded funding commitments for RAR support.

Our target date for transitioning RAR is January 1, 2014. We expect that our current staff member

would become an employee of RAR. The RAR board will be making its final decision in October.

Molly showed the Commission a sample of the “Raising A Reader” bag that children takes home to their families every week. She explains that the program empowers families to build one of the simplest and most transformative of regular routines: weekly book sharing. She presented a PowerPoint overview of the RAR concept and agency.

She explains that each week, children take home these bright red bags filled with high-quality developmentally appropriate multilingual and multicultural children’s books. This simple routine, sustained weekly by educators and caregivers who implement the program, is key in getting families truly engaged in their children’s learning.

RAR currently serves over 110,000 families in San Francisco and Alameda Counties. They anticipate serving over 3, 000 young children in Contra Costa County through home visiting programs, resource centers, preschool centers and family literacy programs.

PJ Shelton asked how RAR determines age-appropriate and culturally-appropriate books. Molly replied that Raising a Reader nationally employs a rigorous selection process to ensure that selected books are appropriate for children at each age and appropriate for children from many backgrounds. Locally, RAR has supplemented with books in Mandarin and other languages.

Gareth Ashley was concerned about the condition of the books being rotated and asked about how RAR plans to maintain the “refresh” cycle. Molly noted that a major component of RAR is regularly visiting with providers and replenishing their book stock to ensure that children are taking home books in good condition. And they encourage provides to remind parents to take care of the books.

Sean said he expected to bring the contract approval to the Commission at the December meeting.

## **6.0 Executive Director’s Report**

Sean Casey reported the following:

Encouraged all to visit the interactive Data Dashboard on the First 5 Contra Costa website, which now provides easy-to-digest facts and information on First 5 programs and outcomes.

Sugar Bites – California First 5 is printing Sugar Bites materials for distribution to over 1,500 dentists statewide. And, Salud America, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Research Network to prevent obesity among Latino children, has taken notice of El Asugar Muerde and will be promoting it in a future segment on marketing likely in the Spring of 2014. Meanwhile, the new Sugar Bites Campaign featuring the “Juice Box” is expected to occur in the spring of 2014.

California First 5 is updating its strategic plan. Cally Martin and Sean Casey participated with Directors from almost all the counties in a session with California First 5 staff and their planning consultants in late July to provide input on how California First 5 can be best positioned in the years to come. Our auditors completed their on-site work on August 30<sup>th</sup> and found no issues or problems to address. Sean thanked Marnie Huddleston, Marianne Dumas, Shawn Garcia, and Lisa Johnson and her assistants for keeping all financial, personnel and contracts affairs compliant and in order with accounting standards. The auditor will be reporting to the Commission at the upcoming October

## Commission Meeting.

The State of California will be receiving more federal funds for the Race to The Top Early Learning Challenge program to augment the existing program funding. We currently receive about \$1.5 million over 3 calendar years; the augmentation is expected to be about \$660,000 for the remaining 2 calendar years. What those funds are to be used for, and how we will obtain them, is still to be determined. It's possible that other Bay Area counties who had not been involved in RTT, such as San Mateo County, may be brought in with the funding augmentation. Currently the counties that are participating are Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco and Santa Cruz.

Thursday, September 19, from 5:00 – 7:00 PM there will be a special event at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties, "Confronting Suburban Poverty in Contra Costa County," with Alan Berube of the Brookings Institution, author of *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America*.

Also Thursday, October 10, the Family Economic Security Partnership will be holding a forum on the ACA and its impact for low-income families in Contra Costa featuring Wanda Session and Kathy Gallagher among the speakers.

November 15<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of Proposition 10. There will be some statewide activities. The First 5 Association is preparing a "tool kit" of materials for the occasion and all counties are encouraged to acknowledge the day. More information will be forthcoming.

All contracts for the fiscal year 2013-2014 are now fully executed.

The First 5 Contra Costa office's street name has changed from "Enea" to "Civic" Court effective August 2013.

### **7.0 Communications**

Chair, PJ Shelton reminded everyone that the next Commission meeting will occur on Monday October 7<sup>th</sup>. We will not be in session on November. We will meet Monday December 2<sup>nd</sup> and Monday February 3, 2014. There is no meeting in January 2014.

Please go to the First 5 Contra Costa Website for the Standing Meetings Calendar.

### **8.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates**

Gareth Ashley reported that the Monument First 5 Center's first year anniversary celebration at 1736 Clayton Road in Concord was well organized and well attended.

### **9.0 Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.