



Commission Meeting MINUTES

Monday, February 1, 2016, 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 6:07 pm.

Commissioners in attendance were:

Chair PJ Shelton, Kathy Gallagher, Gareth Ashley, Maria Fort, Barbara Cappa, Supervisor Federal Glover, Wanda Session for Dr. William Walker, and Alternate Commissioner Kathy Marsh for Joan Miller.

Alternate Katharine Mason was present.

Also present were County Counsel Keiko Kobayashi and Assistant County Counsel Mary Ann Mason.

Absent: John Jones, Joan Miller and Alternate Matt Regan.

2.0 Public Comment

Sharon Bernhus introduced Shelter Inc.'s interim Executive Director Beth Schecter. She reported that the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter is currently in its highest capacity this winter expansion season and is currently housing 12 families totaling 36 people.

Family Support Specialist Angela Gattis from Care Parent Network thanked the Delta First 5 Center for "adopting" a family with four young children during the recent Holidays with gifts for each of them. She thanked the Centers for collaborating with Care Parent Network in reaching out to families in dire situation especially during the Holidays.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Kathy Gallagher and Gareth Ashley seconded to approve the consent calendar.

AYES: PJ Shelton, Kathy Gallagher, Gareth Ashley, Maria Fort, Barbara Cappa, Wanda Session for William Walker, and Kathy Marsh for Joan Miller

NOES: None

ABSTENTION: Federal Glover

The motion was **APPROVED**.

5.0 Presentation of Conflict of Interest laws pertinent to Commissioners and staff

Assistant County Counsel Mary Ann Mason presented the updated Conflict of Interest laws, clarifying pertinent items with regards to the Commission and staff responsibility in disclosure and reasons and processes of recusal.

After the presentation, she addressed questions from the commissioners with matters pertaining to when or how to disclose. All Forms 700 will due on April 1, 2016.

6.0 Appreciation of the Thomas J. Long Foundation for its support of Preschool Makes a Difference

Sean welcomed Executive Director Mark Friedman of the Thomas J. Long Foundation.

He reported that December, 2015 marked the official end of our five-year, \$6 million grant from the Thomas J. Long Foundation to provide scholarships for low-income children to attend high-quality preschool.

He thanked Mark Friedman, and the Foundation's Chair of the Board of Directors Ms. Sydne Long and Board Member, Hank Delavati, for their generous support of this project.

PMD began as a pilot in 2009, with 20 children receiving scholarships in East County. The program had a two-pronged approach: provide free scholarships for children who otherwise couldn't access quality programs and allow parents to choose from a list of programs carefully pre-screened for high-quality practices. Once selected, PMD preschools would get training, support and incentives to insure children continued to receive the best early care and education possible.

The Long Foundation first approached First 5 Contra Costa in the fall of 2009, interested in early childhood and hoping to learn more about it. We had many stimulating conversations with Bob Coakley, the Foundation's Executive Director at the time and with Hank and Sydne. They talked a lot about preschool quality and they seemed intrigued by our idea of creating a market-based system to incentivize providers to raise the quality of their preschool classrooms. Eventually, The Long Foundation made a \$6.25 million, five-year grant to expand our reach and provide quality preschool to more low-income children and to more providers. The program expanded to Concord and West County, growing from 40 to 150 scholarships and from a handful to 70 participating PMD providers.

The program ultimately provided scholarships for 650 children, most of who were able to have two-years of high-quality preschool, and improved child care quality for another 5,000 kids who also attended the PMD classrooms.

One mother of a child enrolled in PMD, who at first suspected that her son might have a speech delay, couldn't stop talking about all the great things that her son had learned and how excited he was to come home and tell the whole family what he had done and learned during the day. She said, "This is the best thing that has happened to our son."

Similarly, the Thomas J. Long Foundation is one of the best things that has happened to us. We thank the Long Foundation for taking a leap of philanthropic faith, for helping to make Contra Costa a California leader in early education quality, and for making a difference for thousands of Contra Costa's children and their families.

7.0 Appreciation of Evaluation Specialist Denece Dodson on the occasion of her retirement

Sean announced that Denece Dodson, First 5's long-time Evaluation Specialist, will be retiring at the end of the month.



Although Denece recently celebrated her 10th year of employment with First 5, we have known her since almost the beginning. Our relationship with her started when she was hired by our evaluation contractor at the time as their local program manager. Denece has ever since been a stalwart as we've built out systems for data collection from our many contractors over the years.

She has carried out the process for our annual report to First 5 California every year. She has always put in the hours to make sure it's right. No loose end went untied; all discrepancies were resolved. And that's how she approaches everything, with the conscientiousness of an artist who can't just let it be until fully realized.

We will miss her unflinching spirit and sense of humor, her interesting baked goods, always persimmon in the fall, and the many stories of her adventurous travels. We should all be like her: always ready to go on the next adventure, taking inspiration from the outdoor landscape, never taking life too seriously.

We congratulate her on her many accomplishments and invite her to return as often as she likes.

8.0 Executive Director's Report

First 5 Association report

At our state Association meeting last week, we learned about the new advocacy efforts going into place this budget season. Our policy director, Alexis Fernandez, had been conducting a series of webinars for First 5 staff on the budget process and on tips for talking with legislators about our issues. Our Association has also created a policy agenda on which to structure its efforts and particularly "prioritizing children in all policies. Association staff are also creating collateral materials such as the summary of First 5 investments in home visiting, to describe how our local efforts add up on a statewide basis. To that end the Association has also taken all of the county year-end state reports, and created a one-page summary of statewide First 5 investments, which total to nearly \$560 million.

The governor's budget is on our mind this year because the Governor has made a significant policy proposal for preschool funding, something no one anticipated. His proposal is to combine existing Prop 98 funds for preschool into one funding stream. These would include existing funds for the California State Preschool Program, which includes about 40 sites in Contra Costa, funds for transitional kindergarten programs which most districts in Contra Costa currently provide, and funding for the preschool QRIS block grant initiative, which we carry out with our partner, the County Office of Education. Obviously, there are many opinions on the proposal. The Governor has asked the Department of Education to carry out a stakeholder process to provide input on his proposal; the First 5 Association is one of the stakeholders at the table. I hope to be able to report more on this at our April meeting.

With all this going on, our Association will be sponsoring a First 5 Advocacy Day in Sacramento on April 5. If any Commission members might be interested in joining us for that, please let me know.

California Ballot Initiatives of interest

I also want to draw your attention to the \$2 tobacco tax initiative currently gathering signatures.

It includes provisions for a "backfill" for Proposition 10 tobacco revenues which will be reduced if the measure passes, and also would establish the tobacco tax structure for e-cigarettes as well. The

likelihood of this appearing on the November ballot is high, given that billionaire Tom Steier has now joined the effort.

Another initiative process is making its way to us. SEIU has put forth two separate California measures for the November 2016 ballot. Both would increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, but there are some differences. SEIU's United Healthcare Workers has already collected signatures and their initiative will be on the ballot which will raise the wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 for large businesses (26+) and 2021 for small businesses. This initiative does not include paid sick leave. SEIU's State Council is just beginning to gather signatures for their initiative which would raise the wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 for everyone and would include 3 additional days of sick leave (total = 6).

There are ongoing conversations in an effort to not have two competing ballot initiatives on the ballot. In addition, Senator Mark Leno is sponsoring legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$13 an hour by 2017.

The Ensuring Opportunity Campaign – which supports the concept of a \$15/hour wage by 2020 – is encouraging the SEIU backers of these two initiatives to combine their efforts so that we and others can support one, all-encompassing proposal. I hope to be able to bring to you such an initiative at a future meeting so that you could consider taking a formal position.

EITC

For the first time, California has a state EITC, joining 25 other states and the District of Columbia. Workers earning less than \$14,000 in wages in 2015 could qualify. While that's a very low threshold amount, it applies to nearly 15,000 Contra Costa residents with children. Many of these extremely low earners may not even file for taxes, so there will be extra efforts to bring them in to tax preparation sites so that they can benefit not only from the state, but also the federal, EITC. A family with three or more children could receive as much as \$6000 in the combined refundable tax credits. We have materials for anyone who would like them; for more information please contact First 5's special projects coordinator, Fran Biderman.

Funding Update

Two weeks ago, we submitted our application for First 5 California's IMPACT initiative, which, when approved, will provide us the funding to continue the quality improvement and professional development work we have been developing over the last five years. Many thanks to Cally Martin, Edirle Menezes, and the rest of our staff and many partner agencies that helped craft this application.

Similarly, the CDE released last week the application process for the "Infants and Toddler Quality Improvement block Grant", funded for the first time in the current fiscal year's budget. With our partner, the COE, we submitted a letter of interest and learned that Contra Costa is eligible for up to \$660,000 in funding for quality improvement efforts both in the current year and in the 2016-17 year as well.

Film Recommendation

Sean also encouraged the Commission to watch "The Raising of America" series, all 5 episodes of which are now available for free streaming through February 15 at www.raisingofamerica.org. It's a compelling and inspiring look at how America supports early childhood and families with young children.

9.0 Communications

PJ Shelton informed that this month's Commission Agenda packet included an article on a new playground at Antioch Park thanks to local parents and the members of the First 5 Community Engagement Group.

10.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

There were no updates.

11.0 Adjourn

PJ Shelton reminded that there will be no Commission in March.

The next meeting is on April 4, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.