

Minutes

February 5, 2007

6:00 pm

1465-D Enea Circle, Diablo Room, Concord, CA

Item 1.0 – Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:06 p.m.

Sean Casey informed the Commission that the Deputy Director position has been filled by Cheryl Smith. He then introduced Cheryl to the Commission.

Chairman Joe Valentine introduced Valerie Earley, Alternate Commissioner for Danna Fabella. He also informed the Commission that Danna Fabella has resigned her position with Contra Costa County and will no longer be a Commission member.

Item 2.0 – Roll Call.

Commissioners in Attendance:

Judith Ortiz, Cheri Eplin, Joan Means, John F. Jones, Supervisor Federal Glover, Joe Valentine, Danna Fabella

Alternates in Attendance:

Susan Wittenberg, Belinda Lucey, Kathy Lafferty, Cheri Pies, Valerie Earley

Commissioners and Alternates who arrived after the initial roll call:

Dr. Michael Zwerdling, Dr. William Walker

Item 3.0 – Consent Items.

Item 3.1 – Approve minutes from the December 4, 2006 meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2006 meeting.
Approved.

Item 3.2 – Review, Discuss, and Acknowledge 1st Quarter Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2006-07.

Sean Casey informed the Commission that the report reflects format changes in order to be more user friendly, and two columns have been added, Other Funds and Limited Funding Period. He explained the purpose of the columns:

- **Local Funds.** These funds are Prop.10 revenue that the Commission has allocated for strategies, evaluation, and administration as envisioned in the Strategic Plan.

- **Other Funds.** These are funds received entirely from outside sources; currently all are from First 5 California.
- **Limited Period Funding.** These are local funds that the Commission has approved for a particular project for a finite amount of time.

Sean noted that while the total budget is \$13.1 million, the actual amount that is sustained local funding is \$9.6 million.

Item 3.3 – Executive Committee Reports from the following meetings:

Chairman Joe Valentine briefly reviewed the Executive Committee reports as listed.

December 18, 2006

- Review Executive Director Workplan progress.
Sean Casey reviewed progress on his workplan with the Committee.
- Review 18 month calendar for standing Commission and Committee meetings for Jan 07-June 08 and discuss possible retreat for February 2008.
The Committee reviewed the proposed Commission calendar through the 2007-2008 fiscal year. In particular, the Committee discussed the grantee celebration event, which the Commission has held for several years in October or November. The Committee supports the event but wondered whether the focus could be shifted somewhat, less about First 5 and perhaps more about early childhood and the organizations that provide services. The Committee also considered whether the event could get to a larger audience, beyond the familiar agencies and people the Commission works with.

The Committee also proposed moving the Commission meeting to other parts of the County only once every six months, so that the meeting location does not become too confusing for the public. The Committee also endorsed the staff recommendation to hold the annual retreat in February rather than September, to allow staff more time to analyze evaluation information and to make the retreat more strategic.

- Receive an update on the Bay Point First 5 Center activities.
Sean Casey reported that the contract with Pittsburg Preschool will end January 4, 2007. Staff will still need to negotiate the final payment, if any, to the contract when it is submitted at the end of January. Staff will be preparing an RFQ to go out in mid-February for a new contractor.
- Discuss presentation to Commission on budget development and sustainability.
Staff have reviewed projections of the current budget and the sustainability fund and anticipate recommending to the Commission that funding be increased by approximately \$1 million or more in the near term. This will be discussed with the Commission at its next meeting, in anticipation of the April retreat.
- Discuss current agency salary structure.
This item was pulled from the agenda at staff's request.

- Discuss County changes in employee benefits structure.
The County has made changes in its benefits structure for management employees. Although First 5 staff are not county employees, staff are covered under the County benefits plan and are thus affected by the change. Staff have analyzed the changes and determine the affect on the Commission's budget will be minimal.
- Review January 8, 2007 Commission meeting agenda.
The Committee reviewed the agenda for the January 8 Commission meeting.

January 29, 2007

- Review Executive Director Workplan progress.
Sean Casey reviewed his workplan for the first six months of the year.
- Update on home visiting data system (HVDS).
The Commission allocated \$750,000 in September 2005 for the development and implementation of a data system for the home visiting strategy and related programs. The system will provide valuable data for management and evaluation of both individual programs and the larger system, as well as provide functionality for more effective services. After review of several vendors, the HVDS workgroup selected Persimmony International, Inc. as the new developer of the system. Sean discussed with the Committee the expected use of funds for personnel, system development, and for computer hardware for the initial users. The Committee requested that Sean review the Commission's policies and obligations on the acquisition of computers by contractors and grantees. The Committee recommended that the cost of wireless connection not be borne by the Commission, assuming that the providers already had contracts in place for their departments. The Committee also suggested that training and user help be augmented in the first year as the system comes on line. Sean and the Committee agreed that the full Commission should be updated on the HVDS.
- Update on strategy reviews and linking bees.
The PEC Committee had its first strategy review, of the home visiting strategy, January 10. The process was successful though staff will be making some adjustments. John Jones reported that it was very educational and informative for Commissioners. Staff have also held two "linking bees," in West and East County, which, though under-attended, have also yielded useful information about how services are being utilized.

On one other contract issue, Sean recently met with Mike Erwin, CEO of the Mt. Diablo Region YMCA and Bryan Montgomery, the Oakley City Manager to discuss the possibility of the Commission partially funding site development for a First 5 Center in Oakley on a site currently occupied by the YMCA. The development would involve moving modular units currently being used by the YMCA to the rear part of the site, behind a permanent structure soon to be built by the YMCA. The YMCA would also operate child care in the modular units. Sean was not sure that the location, on O'Hara Street next to a middle school, is in a location conducive to the program participants that First 5 would hope to reach. The Committee expressed concern about investment in modular units, and suggested that staff review other ways to bring First 5 Center programming to Oakley.

- Review draft first quarter financial statement.
The Committee reviewed the draft first quarter financial report.

- Personnel
Sean informed the Committee that the new Deputy Director, Cheryl Smith started January 16 and is already settling nicely into her new position.
- Review of Attendance (June-Dec 2006).
The Committee reviewed the attendance record for the Commission for the last six months of 2006 and found attendance to be good, with no concerns.
- Discuss vacancy created by retirement of Danna Fabella, Children's Services Coordinator.
Danna Fabella was appointed to the Commission in the new position of Children's Services Coordinator from the Office of the County Administrator last fall. At that time the Commission asked the County Administrator to appoint the "current" Children's Services Coordinator to the Commission, given that the position was a new one and its permanency was not established. With Ms. Fabella's retirement, the CAO has indicated that it will maintain the position and has developed a plan for the structure and function of the office. The Executive Committee instructed staff to inform the CAO of the Commission's desire that the Children's Services Coordinator remain on the Commission.
- Update on statewide activities.
Chair Joe Valentine and Vice Chair John Jones reported on their participation January 24 at a statewide meeting of local First 5 Commissioners in Sacramento. The meeting followed up on a similar session at the First 5 Conference in May 2006. The discussion last week touched on a variety of issues including local initiatives to cover health insurance, local sustainability reserves, legislative advocacy, and the relationship between local Commissions and the State Commission. Sean suggested the Commission may want to revive its Legislation and Advocacy Committee. Sean will also send Executive Committee members the schedule of State Commission meetings.

Sean informed the Committee of "All About the Kids Day", March 21, a statewide First 5 advocacy day in Sacramento. Secretary/Treasurer Cheri Eplin indicated she may be interested in participating.

Sean also informed the Committee that he has been elected to the First 5 Association Executive Committee, serving as the Communications Liaison. This will provide him with access to current happenings in state and local First 5s that may have relevance for other counties.

- Discuss challenges faced in securing adequate meeting space for Commission meetings.
Staff are facing growing challenges securing adequate space for meetings, including the monthly Commission meeting. The regular space at 50 Douglas will no longer allow food due to cutbacks in janitorial services. The Commission will need to pay for the use of space for its meetings. Staff will be including larger meeting space in its list of needs as it reviews options for office space in the coming year. Staff will also be comparing the costs and benefits of leasing versus purchase of office space.
- Review February 5 meeting agenda
The Committee reviewed the agenda for the February 5 Commission meeting.

Because of the President's Day Holiday, the Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 20.

Item 4.0 –Executive Director’s Report.

Sean Casey updated the Commission on the following items:

- Meeting Locations. We were unable to continue to meet in Martinez due to a loss of janitorial staff for the department that runs 50 Douglas Drive, however, we have since obtained janitorial services and will be again meeting at 50 Douglas in Martinez. We are set to hold the March meeting in South County and then will hold a Retreat in April, so please carefully check agendas for meeting locations.
- The California Senate Republicans recently proposed a health plan for ensuring Californians’ health care. This proposal is based partly on abolishing First 5s and using Prop. 10 funds to fund health services. While this proposal is unlikely to be supported, and would require a voter initiative, local First 5 Commissions must educate their representatives as to the work we do and what the landscape would look like if we didn’t exist. One response to this will be March 21 during the annual All About the Kids Day in Sacramento which is an opportunity for all First 5 Commissions to visit their legislators and educate them about the work we do. This will be a coordinated effort by all First 5 Commissions with a common set of messages about First 5, as well as presenting local efforts. I will be letting you know more as we get closer to the date.
- Earn It, Keep It, Save It Campaign. Sean was part of a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on this program to assist eligible people in Contra Costa secure the earned income tax credit. This is a coordinated effort among First 5, Employment & Human Services staff as well as other county staff, the IRS, and a number of CBO’s. It is estimated that \$30 million dollars went unclaimed in Contra Costa County last year. Our combined efforts helped people claim over \$2 million dollars. Flyers are being distributed countywide and include the locations of the Vita sites, which are all staffed by volunteers.
- First 5 Centers.
 - Bay Point. Lisa Morrell has been working hard to provide programs for the community which are taking place Monday through Friday. A lot of outreach has been done and families are coming to the center. Thanks to Lisa for all her work to keep the sustained effort going. We remain committed to carrying out a First 5 Center in Bay Point.
 - West County First 5 center. March 17 is the planned opening date at the site located on Dover Street in San Pablo and more information will follow about the opening.
- Linking bees and strategy review meetings have been taking place as discussed at the September retreat. That information will be presented to the Commission at the April meeting.
- Supervisor Federal Glover has again been appointed as the Commissioner representative from the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Susan Bonilla has been appointed as the Alternate.
- As stated in the Executive Committee report, Sean met with Mike Irwin, CEO, Mt. Diablo YMCA. The YMCA has a site in Oakley and wondered if First 5 would be interested co-locating a First 5 Center there. Oakley is an area that lies between Brentwood and Antioch which have existing have First 5 Centers; however staff has heard that the transportation system makes it difficult for people from Oakley to get to Antioch or Brentwood. Sean would like for the Commission to consider, at the April meeting, the question of additional First 5 Center sites.

Item 5.0 – Committee and Program Updates.

Item 5.1 – Program and Evaluation Committee.

- a. The Commission will receive an update from the Program and Evaluation Committee from the following meetings:

Sean Casey updated the Commission on the following PEC meetings:

December 13, 2006

- Discussed the strategy review process and linking bees.
- Staff requested PEC approve a recommendation for the use of vendor credits from prior Ready, Set, Read Child Care Literacy Fairs. There is a fair amount of these credits that have not been used. Staff will use them to obtain materials for the First 5 Centers, Home Visiting programs, etc.
- Discussed next steps for the Bay Point First 5 Center.
- Received an update on the special reserve funds.

January 10, 2007

- Summary of Home Visiting Strategy Review.
The goal is to review strategies individually over the course of two years therefore significant time is spent reviewing how we doing on a particular strategy; how can we improve and if the Commission were to have any addition funds available how could we use those funds. PEC discussed who is/not being served. Additionally, the committee is particularly reviewing whether all areas are being covered as intended by the Commission, and exploring the value of linking our strategies with others. This information will be rolled up into a report which will be provided to the Commission at the April retreat.

John Jones stated that he thought this was a great process in which two hours were focused on one strategy. He liked the idea of linking strategies and shared resources so the Commission is maximizing dollars.

Kathy Lafferty stated that it was valuable having service providers and contractors attend the meeting and answer questions to really understand roadblocks.

Sean Casey stated that he hopes these meetings will become the main focus of the Commission's evaluation plan; that over a couple of years, each strategy can be reviewed individually. The next two PEC meetings will be held as follows:

2/7 – Substance Abuse Strategy Review
2/21 – Mental Health Strategy Review

Danna Fabella asked if any particular issues that came up during the discussion on Home Visiting.

Sean Casey replied that the discussion included eligibility, use of screening tools, and participants agreed that West County is being underserved-the African American community is being underserved, and the barrier of relationships with the home visitor was identified.

Item 6.0 – Update on the Home Visiting Data System.

Sean Casey provided a handout entitled Home Visiting Data System: Proposed expenses. In September 2005 the Commission approved \$750,000 for up to three years to develop and launch a data system that would support agencies providing home visiting services. This was intended to deal with the fact that the Commission is trying to do a larger systems effort to link agencies. Staff have since been in a development mode in working with the agencies funded by the Commission and with Public Health Nursing.

Sean discussed how funds those have been used and how they will likely be used in the coming year. The contractor that was initially hired to provide the data system was MetSYS, Inc., however, the collaborative group has decided that this is not the right contractor for this project. A new vendor, Persimmony, has been selected to provide the data system which will allow staff to be able to pull out data for First 5 California reporting.

Funds will also be made available for participating programs to purchase equipment for use in the field to access and input data. When we started out on this, the Commission said that hardware would be part of the budget, but that we would only make a one-time investment in hardware; programs would maintain it on their own.

Danna Fabella referred to the handout and asked if the consultant/help desk person would continue after year three.

Sean Casey replied that as we get to year three, we will better know whether a staff person would provide support or if we would continue to have a contract person. This is a collaborative effort and all the agencies involved in this their staff has put in a huge amount of work.

Joe Valentine stated that there was a lot of discussion at the Executive Committee as to ownership of hardware.

Sean Casey replied that this has been an ongoing question. As all these computers are purchased, we will have to look at whether we are granting money, or are we requiring the computers to be Commission property for three years. Staff will be working on that and will come back to the Commission on that issue. With each agency having their own software programs and IT departments, it's important to consider the impact of this. We have basically said we will pay up to \$2,000 for the computers and beyond that they will need to find their own funding.

Joe Valentine stated that this is an important investment in one of the Commission's core Strategies.

Public Comment.

None given.

Item 7.0 – Sustainability Plan Review.

Sean Casey informed the Commission that this discussion is in preparation for the April Retreat. He then gave a presentation to the Commission.

He also stated that in reviewing the yearly planning, the Commission's meeting schedule will be rearranged somewhat and rather than hold future Commission retreats in September they would be held in February.

Item 8.0 – Communications.

Communications were acknowledged.

Item 9.0 - Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates.

Joe Valentine informed the Commission that he and John Jones had the opportunity to attend the January 24 State Commissioner meeting. Common themes/issues that were discussed included access to health care for children, the build-up of financial reserves, and media relations. Local Commissions feel disconnected from the State Commission and those present at the meeting requested that at the next statewide meeting there be a round table discussion with local Commissions and the State Commission.

John Jones informed the Commission that this is the second time that he has had the experience that this County is a front runner for other First 5s.

Danna Fabella informed the Commission that due to her retirement, this will be her last meeting. She stated that one of the things she has done before leaving her office is put together a list for the County Administrator of what she thinks the office of Children's Services should focus on. In the research she has done, she has found there is a lot of work going on trying to coordinate among County departments. There are so many committees taking place in departments and there isn't a way to coordinate them yet. She thinks the CAO can become a clearinghouse for that kind of information. She is also recommending there be a strategic plan for children in Contra Costa County.

Joe Valentine thanked Danna Fabella for her huge contribution to children and families in the County.

Kathy Lafferty informed the Commission that she has been asked to be on a panel to develop a countywide plan to prevent obesity in preschool kids and believes that items will come up that relate to First 5 activities. She will keep the Commission informed on this topic.

Joan Means informed the Commission that the statewide CAEYC conference will be March 8-10 in San Jose.

Item 10.0 – Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.