



FIRST 5 MARIN

Learn. Grow. Thrive.

First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission Minutes for the January 10, 2024 Commission Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

The First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission meeting was called to order by Dr. Itoco Garcia, Commission Chair, at 4:03 pm at the First 5 Marin offices, 1050 Northgate Drive in San Rafael.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Kari Beuerman

Angie Evans

Aideen Gaidmore

Dr. Itoco Garcia

Eric Lucan

Lisa Raffel

Sandra Rosenblum

Dave Bonfilio, Commissioner Emeritus

EXCUSED:

Dr. Jessica Hollman

Kelly McKinley- joined online; not voting

STAFF: Maria P. Niggle, Michelle Fadelli, and Susanne Kreuzer

GUESTS: Don McCrae, Your Business Legacy

**** Commissioner Gaidmore asked that we open the meeting by acknowledging the tragic death of long-time community advocate Olivia Beltran, who was killed on January 8th. The Commission observed a moment of silence in her memory.*

III. MINUTES

The Minutes of the commission meeting held on November 8, 2023, were presented.

Commissioner Lucan made a motion to approve the minutes; **Commissioner Raffel** seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.

IV. FIRST 5 MARIN's QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial statements for the first quarter of FY 2024-25 were presented. **Commissioner Emeritus Bonfilio** commented on the volatile nature of the revenues received from the State. He noted that monthly receipts varied widely: July 2023 (\$110,000+); August 2023 (\$77K+); September 2023 (\$103K+); October 2023 (\$79K+); and November 2023 (\$83K+). He added that there are built-in delays, with tax revenues going to First 5 California, then to

the County of Marin and then to First 5 Marin. **Executive Director Maria Niggle** added that the First 5 executive directors are concerned; the delayed revenues are particularly difficult for the smaller counties.

MOTION: Commissioner Beuerman made a motion to accept the report; it was seconded by **Commissioner Lucan**. The vote to accept was unanimous.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Don McCrea from Your Business Legacy introduced himself.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORT

Maria Niggle presented her Executive Director's Report. She noted that staff are training on software for grantmaking and contract monitoring for more efficient reporting. She reported that we have been working with Megan Joseph from Impact Launch to refine the RFP process proposal. **Commissioner Gaidmore** said she is very impressed with Maria's work, the issues being brought before the commission, and everything that has been accomplished in the past six months.

Susanne Kreuzer presented the written report for **Help Me Grow Marin** and added that they will be holding a community forum on **March 5th**.

Michelle Fadelli reported on the **Children's Summit** planned for **Thursday, January 25th, 2024** at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Rafael. We have 30 tables reserved by organizations and should have a total attendance of about 275. There will be 12 awards for First 5 Marin's "Champions for Children." The keynote presentation will be delivered by Jeanna Capito from Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies; she will be speaking online via Zoom. [**Commissioner Emeritus Bonfilio** asked whether Congressman Huffman's office had been in touch; Michelle will follow up with them.]

VII. NEW GRANTMAKING PROPOSAL FOR FY 2024-25

Maria Niggle introduced Megan Joseph from Project Launch, who joined the meeting via Zoom. She presented a summary of the proposed RFP process that she and Maria have been working on.

Opportunity - Megan described how the RFP process will help address First 5 Marin's declining revenues; align funding with our Strategic Plan and Equity Statement; update outdated reporting systems; champion best practices; and focus on impact. Maria noted that "best practices" should be "best and *promising* practices."

Funded Partner Input - Megan described the meeting we held with our funded partners on December 13th. In attendance were: Helen Ferrino (San Geronimo Valley Community Center); Carol Barton and Randy Jones (Marin County Office of Education); Balandra Fregoso (Parent Services Project); Amarantha Silva (Parent Voices Marin); Daphne Cummings (Marin Promise Partnership). Also attending were Commissioner Sandra

Rosenblum; Commissioner Kelly McKinley; Commissioner Emeritus Dave Bonfilio; Executive Director Maria Niggle; and Public Policy Manager Michelle Fadelli.

Key points - Megan said this meeting: helped ensure funding categories are comprehensive and representative of community priorities; provided feedback on the RFP questions, criteria and process to keep it accessible and effective; reviewed funding criteria and helped shape questions for focus, equity, accessibility and results.

Michelle Fadelli noted that Balandra Fregoso, as one who regularly applies for funding, had particularly specific and helpful suggestions about the process. **Dave Bonfilio** said it was helpful to get the reminder to “keep finance people in mind, not just the program people; also, a clear budget template is needed.

The Process/Doing Things Differently - Megan explained how our unique approach to the RFP process will help ensure it is equitable and effective:

- **An RFP Workshop**, scheduled for February 15th will provide assistance in navigating the application and online portal; this will be followed by office hours for technical assistance.
- **Evaluation** - plans will be developed by First 5 Marin and the grantee in partnership; evaluation will be simplified to ask, How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?
- **Quarterly Check-In Meetings** - will reduce cumbersome reporting requirements and encourage peer learning
- **Final Reporting** - will include a video component for ease of reporting successes.

Funding Categories - Megan presented a “pie” graphic with (originally) seven funding categories: Child Care Solutions; Children’s Physical Health and Mental Health and Wellness; School Readiness; Family Support and Parent-Led Advocacy; Maternal/Infant Support; Collaborative Efforts; and Developmental playgroups.

Maria Niggle noted there had been more categories; they have been consolidated into these seven. Commissioner Gaidmore if these were linked to the Strategic Plan. (Yes!) **Commissioner Rosenblum** suggested that “Maternal/Infant” should be “Parent/Infant”; she also noted that “Developmental Playgroups” isn’t as broad as other categories; it’s more like an example. (Megan suggested that the category doesn’t belong or match, but it’s important.) It was decided to use playgroups as an example (to show how they may fit in several different categories. **Commissioner Raffel** asked if applicants can check two (or more) boxes. (Yes!)

Commissioner Evans asked about “social-emotional development” and where that would fit. **Susanne Kreuzer** (Help Me Grow Marin) suggested changing “Mental Health” to “Behavioral Health” to capture “social-emotional” categories. **Commissioner Garcia** said there are ramifications for education; children with social-emotional challenges get referred to special education... and families with resources know how to find resources for their

children. Susanne added that schools are not set up to handle kids with severe issues; referrals are made to non-public schools, and there's only one in Marin County.

After referring to Maria's "Priority Areas for Funding" in the meeting packet, it was agreed to use the categories noted there (with the amendment of changing "mental health" to behavioral health). It was asked whether the "Collaborative Efforts" category could be Collective Impact. (Yes!)

Sustainability Discussion - Commissioner Beuerman asked about sustainability. Maria Niggle replied that the results-based accountability would help attract matching funds. **Commissioner Gaidmore** added that limited funding is ok; if you can make a difference in three years, it's worth it. **Susanne Kreuzer** asked if the RFP will ask about sustainability; **Commissioner Gaidmore** said that's an odd question to answer (when you don't know where or how you will get additional funding). **Megan Joseph** suggested that we ask, "How are we collectively going to sustain this project or these results. **Commissioner Gaidmore** said the better question might be, "What would your dream be for sustainability?" **Susanne Kreuzer** added that she's always thinking about sustainability; **Commissioner Gaidmore** said internally, yes. But for an RFP, I can't promise future funding. **Susanne** suggested we should be able to identify (possible) alternate funding. **Maria** asked how are we partners in sustainability? What is the infrastructure for 0-to-5? What support can we provide? Commissioner Garcia said it's ok to ask about sustainability. He said, "I see the collaborative efforts" piece of the pie as important. **Maria Niggle** said First 5 is different because we are "relational" and not just "transactional." We are clear about our role as a government agency, but we are also unique (from the State or County). **Michelle Fadelli** suggested that First 5 Marin could consider funding a position to offer grant writing expertise and assistance to our community partners; Maria noted there is precedent for that in West Marin. **Commissioner McKinley** agreed that sustainability of funded projects is important but we also want to fund experimental ideas. We need to ask if projects should be sustained... Maybe no.

Timeline - Megan shared the timeline for the RFP process:

- December 13, 2023 - Funded Partners/Community Process Meeting - completed
- January 10, 2024 - Commission Review/Discussion; Approval - now complete
- **January 25, 2024 - Announcement of RFP funding at Children's Summit**
- January 29, 2024 - Release of the Online Application
- February 1, 2024 - Outreach campaign
- **February 15, 2024 - Community RFP Workshop**
- **March 25, 2024 - Deadline for Submission** (online)
- March 26-29, 2024 - First 5 Marin Review for Minimum Requirements
- April 1-12, 2024 - Review Panel Scoring
- **April 30, 2024 - SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING** for review and approval of funding
***this date was originally April 23rd; changed during the meeting
- May 8 or June 23 - Approval of First 5 Marin's Budget

- **July 1, 2024**

Award of Funds

Michelle Fadelli asked if, based on the Commission's approval of funding for the successful applications (on April 30th), we can notify the applicants. It was agreed that we need to wait until First 5 Marin's final budget is approved, as final adjustments may be necessary. (However, the April 30th meeting is public and applicants can know if their projects were approved by the Commission.)

Commissioner Gaidmore asked if we are planning to distribute a million dollars. (Yes!) Was that how much we distributed in recent years? (No, last year was \$1.2 million; and it was even more in prior years. What about Impact Funds? (We will still provide the required matching funds.)

Commissioner Lucan asked if all funded partners have been notified. **Maria** said yes; all funded partners were notified by email and invited to the December 13th meeting.

Commissioner Gaidmore suggested repeating a (formal) notice to funded partners in print.

Commissioner Garcia suggested notice be sent by email and "snail mail" with a return receipt requested. All agreed that we don't want anyone concerned that they hadn't been notified about the change of funding.

Commissioner Garcia added that the timeline is ambitious. Hopefully, we can provide more time next year. He noted that proposals related to K-12 will be impacted by the new law requiring notice of potential layoffs (e.g. for a program losing funding) by February 15th and a final layoff notice by May 15th. **Commissioner Emeritus Dave Bonfilio** added a reminder that we can't replace funding; our founding legislation requires First 5 funding to "supplement, not supplant" existing funding.

Maria Niggle added that she had submitted the RFP plan to our lawyers who have reviewed and approved the overview.

Commissioner Gaidmore asked about who may apply. The overview references those

"serving Marin children 0 to 5." Does that include out-of-county applicants? **Susanne**

Kreuzer asked if applicants need a Marin address. **Michelle Fadelli** added that the location of the applicant (and the location of children served) can be part of the scoring process and the Commission's review and approval.

Commissioner Rosenblum noted that April 23rd, the date set for the "Special Commission Meeting" is during Passover. After discussion, it was agreed to reschedule that meeting for Tuesday, April 30th (4 to 6 pm).

MOTION: Commissioner Lucan moved approval of the new RFP funding process with two amendments: changing "Mental Health" to "Behavioral Health" and changing the Special Commission Meeting to Tuesday, April 30th. **Commissioner Evans** seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved; Commissioner Gaidmore had left the meeting and did not vote on this item.

VIII. RESOLUTION DELEGATING FIRST 5 MARIN's SIGNATORY AUTHORITY.

The Commission reviewed a resolution "delegating signatory authority and authority to manage financial accounts to Executive Director Maria Niggle." After discussion, it was agreed that it is helpful to retain an alternate signing authority for emergency need; it was agreed to retain David Bonfilio's authority and to add Maria Patricia Niggle. **Commissioner Raffel** made a motion to retain David Bonfilio's signatory authority and to add Maria Patricia Niggle. The motion was seconded by **Commissioner Lucan**. The vote to approve the resolution was unanimous.

IX. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Evans talked about the social-emotional gap in services. She said she regularly talks with teachers, principals and parents. The focus at Horizon School is early intervention and the school partners with MLK... She shared that one particular child is struggling. The Help Me Grow assessment is that there is no "academic disability" but there certainly is a social-emotional issue.

Susanne Kreuzer added that there is trauma on top of not feeling safe and secure. A child like this will not qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Program) or special education.

Commissioner Garcia added that it is no surprise that we have so many children in this situation; many were at a very vulnerable developmental stage during COVID.

Commissioner Evans added that we are not kicking kids out of school, so our teachers need training on how to handle the needs of these children. **Susanne Kreuzer** added that kids are not getting the support they need; they can't "organize for purpose" in a classroom setting. Some kids were getting kicked out of preschool; now they are getting kicked out of Pre-K/TK and kindergarten. **Commissioner Evans** asked and added that about 90% of expulsions are African American boys. Maria Niggle added that there is no tracking to follow what happens to these children.

Commissioner Beuerman added that "social-emotional" doesn't qualify for services.

Commissioner Evans said we need to involve the whole system, families, teachers, schools. Commissioner Garcia that this situation (behavioral issues, expulsions) lead to segregation. He mentioned that Assemblymember Connolly has special education legislation.

Commissioner Evans asked if there could be funding from First 5; **Maria Niggle** said she would check in with the Association and First 5 Alameda. **Supervisor Lucan** reported that he, Maria and Aideen have been participating in an ECE cohort with the Marin Community Foundation, the Marin County Office of Education, the Marin Child Care Council and the Marin Child Care Commission on a "Roadmap" for early childhood education and care; the Roadmap should be available by the next Commission meeting. It was added that there may be an opportunity for First 5 Marin. It discusses future revenue options. Maria Niggle added that the keynote speaker at our Children's Summit will be Jeanna Capito from Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies. She's excited about this and what she will share with us.

Commissioner Garcia share some state legislation that we should look into: **SB 354** (Bogh) Special Education; Inclusive Practices (vetoed on October 8, 2023); **SB 691** (Portantino) Dyslexia Risk Screening/Jan. 16 hearing in Appropriations Committee; and AB 51 (Connolly)-
- researching correct bill number.

Commissioner Emeritus Dave Bonfilio asked about First 5 Marin taking positions on bills, and noted that we used to track legislation. Maria and Michelle said they would check in with the First 5 Association about a legislative list.

Commissioner Beuerman announced that the County of Marin has selected a new director of Health and Human Services, Dr. Lisa Warhuus. She will be starting on February 20th.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Garcia adjourned the meeting at 5:49 pm.