

**Commission Actions 4/25/2022:**

- ⇒ Approved Consent Agenda
  - Meeting Minutes March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Commission Meeting
  - Contracts Executed by the Executive Director, March, 2022
  - DRAFT First 5 Sonoma County Commission Resolution (Amendment 6): Ongoing Determination of Safely Holding First 5 Sonoma County Public Meetings to Prevent Transmission of COVID-19, 4/25/22
- ⇒ Approved Commission Policy on Annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA)
- ⇒ Approved Commissioner participation in Phase 2 of work with Everyday Impact Consulting: Strengthening DEI through Equitable Framework Development and Team/Capacity Building



**First 5 Sonoma County  
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
April, 25 2022**

***NOTE: MEETING CONDUCTED VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM PLATFORM***

**I. Call to Order:**

The First 5 Sonoma County Commission met virtually this date in regular session via Zoom. A quorum was present, **Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** called the meeting of the First 5 Sonoma County Commission to order at 3:34 pm.

**Commission Members Present:** Oscar Chavez, Raissa De La Rosa, Anna-Maria Guzman, Jennielynn Holmes, Nora Mallonee Brand, Karissa Kruse, Dr. Jose Morales and Denia Candela

**Absent:** Supervisor Lynda Hopkins

**Staff:** Angie Dillon-Shore, Sandra Uribe, Margaret Ingold, Leslie Corral Cisneros, Nora Cuevas, Kathleen Hohnstein

**II. Potential Conflicts of Interest**

**Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** requested that Commissioners identify potential conflicts of interest and recuse themselves from discussing or voting on the identified matter.

No conflict of interest.

**III. Public Comment on Non-Agendized Items**

**Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** asked if there was any public comment on non-agendized items.

No public comment.

**IV. Consent Agenda**

**Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** asked if there was any discussion, or public comment on the consent agenda.

No discussion, and no public comment.

**ACTION: Approve Consent Agenda**

MOTION: CHAVEZ/KRUSE

AYES: CHAVEZ, KRUSE, HOLMES, GUZMAN, BRAND, MORALES, CANDELA, DE LA ROSA

NAYS: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

RECUSE: NONE

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### **V. Approve Commission Financial Policy: Annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)**

**Angie Dillon-Shore**, Executive Director, presented on a new policy being brought to Commission for formal adoption regarding annual cost of living adjustments (COLA), elevating the importance of this policy due to high cost of living in the county and across the Bay Area. She noted that at the May Commission meeting she will bring the preliminary budget for FY 22-23, and a proposed budget for approval at the June meeting. First 5 has given a 3% COLA across board in fiscal years 20-21 and 21-22 which is in line with the County's policy. The new proposed policy would consider a COLA to salaries on an annual basis, coinciding with the annual budget development process. The COLA is not guaranteed, and the percentage would be based on the Finance Director's analysis of annual change in the Consumer Price Index, the County, and other First 5's in the area. She then noted that there was a 10% bilingual differential pay policy that was recently implemented, and that the implementation of this policy was not only just and equitable but critical to support the organization and overall strategies and goals.

**Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** invited public comment and Commission discussion.

No discussion or public comment.

**ACTION: Approve the Commission Policy on Annual Cost of Living Increases**

MOTION: KRUSE/GUZMAN

AYES: CHAVEZ, KRUSE, HOLMES, GUZMAN, BRAND, MORALES, CANDELA, DE LA ROSA

NAYS: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

RECUSE: NONE

### **VI. Legislative Policy & Advocacy Update**

Kathleen Hohnstein, Program Coordinator, presented on First 5 Advocacy Day. The First 5 Association organized the virtual and main focus of Advocacy Day this year was to emphasize the Whole Child/Whole Family Policy agenda and the importance of systems change. Renee Alger, Program Director, and Natalie Kramer, Program Manager, also attended Advocacy Day and all met with five legislators, along with other First 5's in each legislator's district.

Specific requests of legislators included:

- Support for AB 2402 the Medi-Cal Continuous Eligibility bill
- Support \$250 million budget augmentation for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH)
- Support increased funding for home visiting programs, including supporting \$50 million in ongoing General Fund proposed by the Governor in the January budget
- Support the asks in the ECE Coalition Letter.

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A letter from the ECE Coalition, AB 2402 fact sheet, and a F5 Association Advocacy Day press release outlining the asks were in the Commission packet for reference, as well as the most recent F5 Association Legislative tracker. Legislators and their staff were receptive to the asks and were interested in learning more.

Ms. Dillon-Shore elaborated on some of the policy items, including the IEMCH proposal. She noted that the First 5 Association Policy Committee and a number of local Commission have been very involved in policy conversations around the IECMH, and that the request builds on the recent investment of more than \$4 billion for the Governor's Children and Youth Behavioral Initiative. The IECMH would be a clear call out of dedicated funds for mental health needs of infants and toddlers.

AB 2402, Medi-Cal Coverage Continuity, is co-sponsored the First 5 Association and would help stabilize Medi-Cal coverage for children up to their 5th birthday. This bill would help alleviate enrollment churn which happens when a parent or guardian is not able to follow through with the redetermination process on time which leads to a drop in coverage for the child.

AB 2602, the specialty vehicle license bill, would increase the fees for the initial issuance and renewal of the license plates and continuously appropriate 50% of the fees collected on or after January 1, 2023, to local childcare and development planning councils for specified purposes, including recruitment and training of new childcare providers around health and safety education and other training and continuously appropriate 25% of the fees to the county First 5 commissions to take on the implementation of the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan and evidence-based technical assistance and training for childhood unintentional injury prevention.

AB 1047 (Limon) would expand on the eligibility for California State Preschool Program, promotes a mixed-delivery early learning and care system, and expands CSPP to serve children 18 months through age 5. It would also extend 24 months continuous eligibility for families that have a family member certified as eligible for any public benefits that are income-eligible programs. In general, several of these bills streamlines eligibility for families, reduces administrative barriers, and attempts to destigmatize public benefits.

**Chair Nora Mallonee Brand** invited public comment and Commissioner discussion.

**Commissioner Morales** inquired on how receptive the legislators were to the policy asks on Advocacy Day.

**Ms. Hohnstein** said that a few of the legislators were already supporting some of these policy items and she felt overall they were receptive to the asks.

No public comment.

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## **VII. DEIB Framework Development: Phase 1 Completion & Phase 2 Engagement**

**Angie Dillon-Shore, Executive Director**, presented on the Holistic Racial Equity Assessment Report which was developed by consultants Reflecting Justice who are subcontractors on the consulting contract with Everyday Impact to work with First 5 Sonoma County to advance DEI. She first outlined the phases of the project:

Phase 1: Understanding DEI through Data Collection and synthesis - this phase was recently completed and results in the Holistic Racial Equity Assessment Report.

Phase 2: Strengthen DEI through Co-creation Framework - this phase will include deepening our relationship as a Team and building capacity to advance strategies both internally and externally. It will build off of the findings in the assessment and allow the team to discuss and prioritize recommendations, engaging the Working Group and ideally engaging all Commissioners.

Phase 3: 2020 DEIB Work Planning and Celebration-in November and December, staff will create workplan to implement the framework, leveraging current workstreams.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** noted that the work will not be finished after Phase 3 and she expects the work to become a more integrated and organic part of First 5. She expressed how much time and energy that was put into the HREA report by many people, but noted that the initial recommendations are not final and strongly encouraged the Commissioners to read the report thoroughly, reflect. The report analyzes five dimensions of First 5's external and internal work: Community Relationships and Program Impact, Communications, Organizational Strategy and Decision-Making, and Organizational Culture and investment in Talent and People. It was a mixed-method approach where quantitative analysis of data from the surveys was conducted alongside the qualitative analysis which included reviewing documents, transcripts of focus groups and interviews, and email responses. She noted some limitations as the sample sizes being small and not all Commissioners' perspectives were recorded because not all participated in the process.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** then highlighted each finding in the report. She noted that she did not intend to review all the findings comprehensively, but felt it important to make them public and transparent.

Key Finding 1: First 5 Sonoma County has begun integrating racial equity into the strategic plan and funding processes, and has an opportunity to continue operationalizing an explicit focus on race where possible, as well as integrate this shift in all communications.

Key Finding 2: First 5 Sonoma County staff provide strong overall support and a positive sense of belonging with funded partners, and need an explicit focus on race in organizational strategy, as well as additional support structures to navigate ongoing change management.

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Key Finding 3: As First 5 Sonoma County has begun operationalizing racial equity, the data collection process has solicited a mixed response from the funded partner community and demonstrated a need for future clarity.

Key Finding 4: There are reported differences in experience across constituent groups in the RFP/funding process, particularly with regard to the application, evaluation, and funded partner selection process.

Key Finding 5: To build on foundational best practices, additional feedback structures and stronger Commissioner engagement are needed for ongoing internal and external racial equity work.

Key Finding 6: First 5 Sonoma County staff co-create a largely collaborative and supportive internal culture, and have a need for continued investment in examining and addressing white supremacy culture.

Key Finding 7: Current decision-making and feedback practices sometimes result in amplified power dynamics and impact staff sustainability, indicating a need for more consistent, structured practices.

Key Finding 8: First 5 Sonoma County has developed a baseline of supportive benefits and policies, and there is a need for creation, revision, and documentation of policies and processes to ensure equitable access for all staff.

Key Finding 9: First 5 Sonoma County has established foundational practices for demographic data collection in HR policies and practices, and has an opportunity to utilize that data proactively to mitigate potential inequities.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** noted that staff processed this information in a structured manner and shared the agreements that were set by Reflecting Justice during processing sessions. In her role as ED, she had a range of reactions and emotions, she found it painful to look at how much of what she has learned throughout her career about organizational leadership and structure was rooted in white supremacist culture and thinking. She found it uncomfortable to look at her beliefs and mental models about how to run an organization but it is an opportunity for everyone to transform as leaders and the agency. She then called on Chair Mallonee Brand to share her experience.

**Chair Mallonee Brand** asked of her fellow commissioners to spend some time with the findings. Although she spent time with the consultants to process the report in her role as Commission Chair, she did not participate in conversations with staff. She thanked everyone for their engagement and support in the process and noted how impressed she was with the time and resources it took, noting the level of thought, time, and energy staff has put in that had not risen to the Commission's attention.

She uplifted the issue brought up in the report regarding the disconnect between the staff and Commission perceptions and reflected on how the Commission has been virtual for so long which can lead to feelings of discomfort around discussing these topics. The Commission needs to work on pushing back on white supremacy culture, and Commissioners need to get to a place where they are more comfortable with each other. She noted that had never seen a report that is so thorough and thoughtful and, commended everyone who participated

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for being vulnerable. She then posed the question of how the Commissioners could support the work on the ground and how can they help integrate the findings and recommendations into the workplace, families, and communities.

**Leslie Corral Cisneros, Program Manager**, uplifted that staff has started this journey to look at how First 5 can embed DEI practices throughout the organization. The HREA process gave the First 5 team the opportunity to openly discuss DEI topics and specifically how the findings affect BIPOC communities. She noted that Reflecting Justice created a safe space for First 5 team to have those discussions.

As a Latina woman with familial roots in Mexico, she felt there is still a lot of healing and things to navigate, but ultimately the process emphasized that even though we are swimming in the white supremacy waters, we really have started the individual process in dismantling white supremacy culture, and she appreciates and welcomes the process and the work that lies ahead.

**Sandra Uribe, Program Manager**, echoed what the team has said, the process was really challenging, but it grounded her in her our values, and as a Mexican-American woman she knows the importance of shifting these systems and programs in our community. The First 5 team shares similar values, but as Leslie mentioned, there is a lot of work ahead professionally and personally around DEIB work, but she has confidence in the First 5 team and the Commission that will set up an inclusive and safe environment to be able to do the work.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** noted that Renee Alger and Natalie Kramer were in a training and were not able make the meeting, but she did want to convey that Ms. Alger shared that she found the experience challenging and eye opening and staff is no longer waiting for the framework, that they are doing more intentional work now, and she is open to exploratory process of what the First 5 can look like and how we get there.

The staff recommendation brought forward as an action item was that all Commissioners engage in Phase 2 of DEIB Framework Development to the best of their ability and capacity, which would take place May-July 2022. The format will be facilitated circles to mitigate impact of positional power, to process findings, deepen relationships and build capacity, and prioritize recommendations as per feasibility, cost, urgency, foundational value and other criteria, and co-create framework draft.

**Commission Chavez** thanked Ms. Dillon-Shore and the First 5 team for their work, and he said he has been hearing this saying a lot which is, "A bad system will always trump a good program". He noted that as we deepen progress, we really need to understand the system we are living in to really make a change. No more status quo, and no business as usual. He then recommended that the next phase be in person.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** commented that Everyday Impact Consulting also recommend the next phase be in person as much as possible.

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**Commissioner Candela** first acknowledged the staff’s commitment through the whole process and Angie’s leadership and the leaning into the uncomfortable place. She asked if Ms. Dillon-Shore if she knows who is leading these circles, wanting to be conscious of not appropriating indigenous practices.

**Ms. Dillon-Shore** said she was told that EIC and subcontractors have permission to use these practice and the leader is an indigenous person. She will get more information and share with the whole Commission.

**Commission Kruse** echoed the previous comments, and she is thankful to the Angie and the team for doing this work. She is excited to bring these ideas back to the work place and help be a part of systems change. She also expressed feeling a little anxiety in her stomach for all the work ahead, but she hopes this work will become a motivator for a lot of organizations in the community and not just First 5.

**Commissioner Morales** was very impressed at the horizontal instead of vertical approach to this work, and the fact that First 5 is leading with the voices that matter. He shared a book he found informative on this topic, “Me and White Supremacy” by Layla Saad, the book brings up a lot of terminology that these reports reference, and helps with language continuity. He also shared his personal journey regarding equity and inclusivity.

**Commissioner Holmes** expressed her appreciation of this work and is moved to sit down and think and reflect about this more as her role as a commissioner and wants to commend the F5 staff for this process, a lot of organizations talk about doing the work, but the staff has actually done the work. She noted how timely the conversation is, coming out of a pandemic and agreed with the Chair about the need for the Commission to lean in more and to address the disconnect. She is also hoping to support other organizations with this work.

**Public comment:** Socorro Shiels, a prior Commissioner who participated in the working group in Phase 1, said she is overjoyed to have been a part of this process and deeply believes it will serve as a north star for other organizations in the county. She is struck by the authenticity and the depth, from design to experiencing, to creating opportunities as we serve community and is thrilled to see that everyone is in such a committed space to do this DEI work and grateful to have been a part of the change when she used to serve on the First 5 Commission.

**Chair Mallonee Brand** said she hopes that the First 5 staff hears the commitment that Commission is voicing for the next steps and she is looking forward to participating in the next phase.

**ACTION: Commissioners participate in Phase 2: Strengthening DEI through Equitable Framework Development and Team/Capacity Building**

MOTION: CHAVEZ/CANDELA

AYES: CHAVEZ, KRUSE, HOLMES, GUZMAN, BRAND, MORALES, CANDELA, DE LA ROSA

NAYS: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

RECUSE: NONE

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**VIII. Adjourn**

Chair Nora Mallonee Brand adjourned the meeting at 4:51 PM.

The Chair also noted that May 23rd will be virtual, but in June we will be moving to in-person meetings so she asked Commissioners to account for the drive time on your calendars to get to SCOE for the meeting. The virtual meeting attendance will continue to be available to the public, including the opportunity to submit public comment.