



April 26, 2021  
**April Meeting Minutes**  
 Zoom Conference Call

**Commissioners Present**

Paul Tichinin	Jim Flaherty	Sandra Applegate	Jenine Miller
John Haschak	Erica Baumker	Ben Anderson	Lucresha Rentería

**Public Present**

Julie Fetherston	Jenna Flesch	Alexandra Rounds	Amber Shrum
Samantha Bond	Megan Cavalli	Andres Alvarado	

**ITEM 1 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Commissioner Tichinin called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed participants. The Commission and staff made introductions.

**ITEM 2 PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS**

Commissioner Tichinin asked for public comment on non-agendized items and opened the public hearing. No public comment was received. Commissioner Tichinin closed the public hearing.

**ITEM 3 CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION)**

- Meeting Agenda
- DRAFT Minutes from February 22, 2021 Commission Meeting
- DRAFT Minutes from March 29, 2021 Commission Meeting
- Financial Report
- Staff Report

Commissioner Flaherty suggested editing the March 29, 2021 Minutes (page 3.11, paragraph 7) to describe his concern. He explained there is an “inherent conflict of interest in negotiating with the auditor, who created the issue that F5M has been trying to address for the last 4-5 years. It is unfair to F5M.”

*Motion to approve the Consent Calendar with modification to the March 29, 2021 Commission Meeting Minutes as suggested.*

*Motion: Haschak, Second: Anderson*

*Yes: Tichinin, Anderson, Applegate, Baumker, Flaherty, Haschak, Miller, and Rentería*

*No: none*

*Motion Passed.*

**ITEM 4 STRATEGIC PLAN WORK – ALIGNING LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL PRIORITIES FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT AND EQUITY CONSIDERATION (ACTION)**

ED Fetherston shared a PowerPoint presentation to show the directions, local priorities, and intersections between the American Recovery Act, California Master Plan of Early Learning and Care, First 5 California, and the First 5 Association. The presentation was provided to inform the Strategic Planning process.

**American Rescue Plan – Has 5 areas of support for families with young children with a Whole Child/Whole Family agenda.**

1. **Childcare and Early Learning** - \$40B for Childcare; \$1B for Head Start/Early Head Start; Enhanced Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit; and \$250M for part C of IDEA – Early Intervention (for children with disabilities).
2. **Economic Security and Basic Needs** - Enhanced Child Tax Credit for 2021; \$300 Emergency Unemployment Insurance 09/06/21 and enhanced staffing; \$1,400/person direct payment; \$4.5B

- LIHEAP through 2022; \$43B for renters (and/or small property owners with renters); \$800M to support children experiencing homelessness; \$390M for WIC updates to increase outreach and boost the benefit to \$35/month; and 15% SNAP increase through 09/30/21.
3. **Family Resilience** - \$250M for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grants; \$100M for Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act state grants (F5M gets some of this from HHSA and Court Appointed Specialist Agency); \$150M for Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (Early Head Start); and \$10M for National Technical Assistance Center for grand families and kinship families.
  4. **Mental and Emotional Health** - \$10M increase for National Child Traumatic Stress Network to address violence related stress (ACEs prevention, intervention and outreach); \$3B for substance abuse and mental health block grants; incentives for states to adopt Medicaid Expansion; state option to provide 12 months post-partum coverage for women on Medicaid with a 5 year sunset; \$80M increase for Pediatric Mental Health Care Access program; ACA improvement (fully subsidizing coverage for up to 150% poverty rate for 2 years; 100% coverage of private health insurance for laid off workers until September 2021).
  5. **COVID-19 Local Fiscal Relief** - \$130.2B to cities, counties, and non-entitlement units of local government through 12/31/2024 (\$16,824,434 to Mendocino County to be used until 12/31/24). The areas this local fiscal relief may be spent on include responding to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts; providing premium pay and grants to essential workers; providing government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue; making necessary investments in water, sewer, and/or broadband infrastructure.
    - Commissioner Tichinin asked Commissioner Haschak if the Board of Supervisors are aware and researching how to distribute and implement the funds, or if the Commission should take action on how this money is distributed. Commissioner Haschak responded that he created a matrix to be used to score proposals for the distribution of money within the county. Some ideas from the Commission include emergency funds for childcare providers who have remained open during the pandemic, direct supplies, data systems for resource referral, start-up costs, access to childcare, etc.
      - ED Fetherston will confer with Commissioner Rentería about uses and restrictions for the COVID-19 Fiscal Relief Funds.
      - Commissioners will discuss uses for these funds at the May Commission meeting and report to the BOS.

### **California State Budget – Has 5 areas of support for families with young children with a Whole Child/Whole Family agenda**

1. **Childcare and Early Learning** - \$55M for childcare providers and families; \$21M FY 20-21 and \$44M ongoing for 4,700 more slots; \$250M one-time to Prop 98 for grants to local education agencies that offer early access to T-K; \$200M one-time funds for construction and retrofitting of T-K and full-day kindergarten programs; \$15M for Cradle to Career Data System revisions; \$50M one-time funds to support T-K preparation and professional development; and \$5M one-time funds for the Department of Public Health to provide books to low-income children.
2. **Economic Security and Basic Needs** – Golden State Stimulus \$600 rapid cash to eligible families; extension of eviction moratorium and help for property owners; approximately \$30M increase for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and affiliated programs; approximately \$50.1M CalWorks Maximum Aid Payment; \$30M to fund existing emergency food programs; and \$838M for CalFresh county administration including \$3M for increased staffing.
3. **Family Resilience** - \$250M for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grants; \$100M for Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act state grants; \$150M for Maternal and Infant Early Child Home Visiting; and \$10M to National Technical Assistance Center for grand families and kinship families.
4. **Comprehensive Health and Development** - \$300M one-time funding for Special Education Early Intervention Grant program; \$5.3M for California Department of Developmental Services to contract with Family Resource Centers to implement the Community Navigator Model; extension of Prop 56 supplemental payments; \$1.1 funds to re-launch CalAIM initiative; and \$95M to expand COVID telehealth flexibilities.
  - ED Fetherston will find more information about applying for Community Navigator Model and Family Empowerment Center grants. Commissioner Tichinin encouraged this and added that collaborative efforts locally have helped maximize services throughout the county.

**First 5 Association – Has 4 areas of support for families with young children with a Whole Child/Whole Family agenda**

1. **Financial Stability for Family Stability** – Support for immigrants and families through the CalEITC (SB 691); ensure workers can access Paid Family Leave by increasing program to 90% replacement [AB 123 (Gonzalez)].
2. **Health Equity for Young Children and Moms** – California ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. for providing preventative care for young children with Medi-Cal and nearly half of all births are covered through Medi-Cal. It is a high-priority equity issue. Medi-Cal will provide continuous coverage for children up to age 5; and continuous Medi-Cal coverage for women 12 months postpartum.
3. **Early Childhood Mental Health and Trauma Support** – 70% of parents of young children in California are worried about their family’s mental health. \$112M over 3 years will be provided to expand Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, create of a dyadic care benefit financed by Medi-Cal (to improve preventative care, address social and emotional needs, and maternal mental health); and launch a pilot program to expand home visiting services through Medi-Cal.
4. **Quality Child Care and Early Learning** – 3 in 10 childcare workers lost their jobs during the pandemic. \$434M to improve the inequitable rates to childcare providers [SB 246(Leyva)]; \$1.75B for new childcare spaces across mixed delivery (family childcare homes, friends, and family networks); \$325M to waive all family fees through 9/24 [AB 92 (Reyes)]; and approximately \$1.9B in one-time stipends to childcare providers to defray increased COVID-19 costs.

**Roadmap to Recovery – Strong Whole Child/Whole Family focus; focus on prevention; 7 Areas of supporting resilience.** Strategies in the Roadmap to Recovery echo the key areas of the federal government, state government, and First 5 (to strengthen economic supports to families; enhance access to intervention; teach skills of family resilience; promote social norms that protect against violence and adversity; increase quality childcare and learning to ensure a strong start for children.

1. **Mental health care**
2. **Supportive relationships**
3. **Quality sleep**
4. **Balanced nutrition**
5. **Physical activity**
6. **Mindfulness practices**
7. **Access to nature**

**Nexus of Opportunity – Strong Whole Child/Whole Family agenda with 4 areas supporting families with young children** (focus on equity to reach those most impacted and gain alignment):

1. **Early learning and care**
2. **Family economic security**
3. **Family resilience**
4. **Child and maternal mental health**

**Key Local Priorities –**

- Reducing maltreatment in Foster Care
- Reducing re-entry into Foster Care
- Increasing early child mental health supports
- Improving maternal mental health outcomes
- Reducing substance use (especially during pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Increasing early prenatal care
- Decreasing child death
- Improving resource and referral pathways

**Next Steps –**

1. Convene partners to review funding opportunities.
2. Monitor the budget revision and F5 California Strategic Plan (focus on parent support).
3. Make recommendations for county expenditures of COVID fiscal recovery funds.
4. Monitor and analyze data trends and alignments. The Small County Augmentation (SCA) grant recently received by F5M (\$116,000/year for the next 3 ¼ years) will support this.
5. Create a theory of change (supported by the SCA grant).

6. Create a measurement and evaluation plan as part of Strategic Plan (focus on population level indicators, outputs, outcomes, etc.).

**Discussion** – With regard to the dyadic approach in the Early Childhood Mental Health and Trauma Support mentioned above, Commissioner Flaherty and others agree that more outreach and training is needed to assist providers in conducting evaluations for the diagnosis of risk factors that are qualifiers for additional visits. Integration into the resource and referral pathways for Home Visiting and F5M services would be beneficial. F5M could facilitate this outreach and education for providers. Assessment efforts in the county will assist include gathering data and inform F5M Strategic Planning.

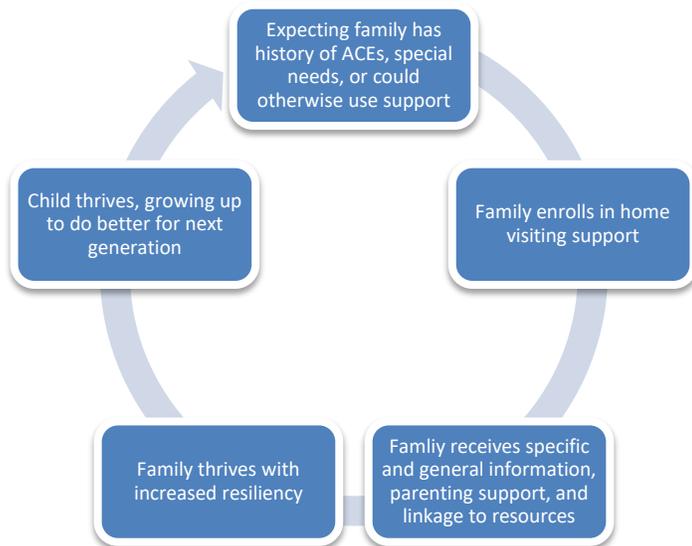
- ED Fetherston will email a Doodle Poll to finalize dates and locations (Fort Bragg, HHSA, UCCE) for May and June planning meetings.
- F5M will explore how to facilitate outreach and training for providers to conduct evaluations.

*No motion passed on this agenda item.*

**ITEM 5 HOME VISITING PROGRAM** – Alex Rounds, Home Visiting Coordinator, presented information regarding Family Support and Home Visiting (FSHV) programs in Mendocino County.

**Model:** Family Support Home Visiting (FSHV) is a voluntary, family-centered, individualized program that serves families with young children (28 weeks pregnancy through 3 years). They provide Triple P parent skills, age-linked assessments to improve early identification and intervention, links to resources, and goal setting assistance for parents (graduation, career, etc.). Due to the pandemic, visits are via zoom, phone, and/or text. Supply drop-offs and technological assistance is available for those who need it.

**Connecting the ACEs:** 30% of Mendocino County residents have  $\geq 4$  ACEs (compared to 17.6% of Californians).



**Program Benefits -**

***Children Show-Improvement in:***

- cognitive and language development
- school readiness
- appropriate weight gains
- academic achievement
- vaccination rates
- justice system involvement through age 19

***Reduction in:***

- child abuse and neglect
- CPS involvement
- recidivism in CPS complaints
- low birth weights
- preterm birth
- substance exposure
- behavioral problems
- child injuries
- and infant mortality

***Parents and Guardians Show-  
Reduced Rates of:***

- substance use
- short intervals between pregnancies
- pregnancy complications
- pregnancy induced hypertension
- smoking during pregnancy
- intimate partner violence
- maternal depression

***Improvements in:***

- parenting practices
- parent high school graduation
- pregnancy outcomes
- greater socio-economic self sufficiency
- higher rates of employment

***Society Shows-*** FSHV can offset the impacts of ACEs and social determinants of health and save money. Home visiting returns up to \$5.70 for every \$1 spent on programs through increases in adherence to early child health care visits and screenings and family self-sufficiency. It also shows reductions in reliance on public services, health care costs, and incarceration.

**Programs in Our Community-** In addition to education and resources, home visits provide connections and compassion. A Home Visiting Program decision tree will be created and sent to providers once it is approved by the Consortium.

***Family Spirit:*** A culturally tailored program through Consolidated Tribal Health designed by John Hopkins University in partnership with the Navajo Nation's Dine people. Visits vary in timing and duration (45-90 minutes). Service area is from Hopland to Laytonville.

- Eligibility: tribal families and all Consolidated Tribal Health patients
- Weekly visits (up to 3 months old)
- Bi-weekly visits from 4-6 months
- Monthly visits from 7-22 months
- Alternating months from 22 months to 3 years old

***Head Start Home Base:*** A home-based program that prepares children for school with bicultural, bilingual home-based educators. Service area is from Hopland to Laytonville.

- Eligibility: income-based, homelessness, public assistance, cash aid, at-risk, special needs, family troubles, at-risk pregnancy, teen mom, incarcerated family member, enrollment for 3 years.
- 90-minute weekly home visits
- Bi-weekly socialization activities

***Healthy Families:*** The signature product of Prevent Child Abuse America.

- Eligibility: brief enrollment period from pregnancy through 2 months postpartum. Potential Medi-Cal requirement if program reaches capacity. Entire county is within service area.
- 60-minute visits, weekly from 28 weeks gestation through 6 months
- Less frequent after 6 months through graduation or departure from the program

**Capacities:** Mendocino County has a capacity to serve 92 families, with 28 spaces currently available. HFA is preparing to hire two additional home visitors which will increase the capacity by 22 spaces. Many families are eligible based on ACEs, poverty, homelessness, at-risk status, and/or special needs children or parents. Programs can apply for additional funding to serve more families. Funding streams and political support for home visiting is abundant.

**Consortium:** Monthly meetings of the Consortium are held to gather and share information, plan, collaborate, and build relationships. Their first project was an 11-objective action plan which was submitted to First 5 California in February. Goals are to build and strengthen community supports for families, assess current home visiting programs, increase effectiveness, expand access, and strengthen coordination amongst family services within Mendocino County.

**Next Steps:** Increasing equity and inclusive action by inviting enrolled families get involved in meetings, outreach, and/or the Consortium. Long term plans include increasing referrals, streamlining the referral

process, reaching capacity and expanding as needed, unifying program measurements, and increasing community-wide collaborations.

**COMMISSIONER TICHININ CALLED FOR BREAK AT 3:00 PM**  
**COMMISSIONER TICHININ CALLED THE MEETING BACK TO ORDER AT 3:10 PM**

**ITEM 6 UPDATE ON AUDITOR'S OFFICE (ACTION)**

ED Fetherston reported that none of the Commissions surveyed have completely withdrawn from their County office. She has not seen any information that would indicate that it is an option. She believes the best course of action is to seek a reasonable resolution (determine and pay a reasonable rate for back fees, establish reasonable rates moving forward, and continue to maintain a separate account). She provided a spreadsheet with statistics from the other Commissions that were polled [*See attachment*]. All Commissions polled (F5M included) function independently (they maintain independent auditors, a separate bank, and use the County only as a pass-through for funds). The spreadsheet showed that F5M pays the County Auditor at a far greater rate than any other Commission. Out of 8, three Commissions do not have fees; three pay \$2,500 or less; Del Norte pays a \$17,000 flat fee (ED Fetherston will find out what services are covered by this fee), and F5M pays \$41,900. F5M has stopped most services, but still conducts inter-agency transfers and keeps a minimum balance.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Flaherty suggested that F5M should propose to pay back no more than a bank would charge (for actual transactions, and even that is questionable, because the County is not a bank and other counties have no fees).

Commissioner Anderson reiterated that he believes that payment for the Auditor's fees is a misuse of public funds that are intended for children. The County supported 2 IT positions off these funds and the Auditor's fees seem arbitrary.

Jenna Flesch reported that the last payment that the County received was at the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year when the Auditor pulled \$15,858 out of the account without consent.

In 2018, F5M used the County to issue checks. It was not until around fall 2019 that F5M switched to only using the County to transfer money rather than issuing checks. Commissioner Anderson pointed out that would have been done sooner but when the Commission made the request, the Auditor refused.

Commissioner Anderson informed the Commission that according to AB 783, Mendocino County has ultimate authority, even though the Auditor is independently elected. Commissioner Anderson supports proposing a per-check fee and if F5M continues to meet resistance, then the issue should be brought before the Board of Supervisors (BOS). Commissioner Tichinin agreed that the BOS should be kept in the loop, regardless, and specifically addressed if the proposed resolution is not accepted by the Auditor.

Commissioner Tichinin asked if quarterly transfers would be sustainable for F5M fiscal programs can sustain if they conduct only quarterly transfers?

- ED Fetherston, Business Manager Jenna Flesch, and the F5 independent auditor will review the feasibility of doing monthly versus quarterly transfers.

**Next Steps and Intended Outcomes:** The Commission provided input and direction in this discussion to clarify next steps.

- ED Fetherston will modify the proposal based on traditional bank fees and minimum balance requirements for past transactions of checks issued for 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020. This proposed amount should be deducted from the \$15,858 which was taken from the F5M account by the Auditor in 2017. The impacts of quarterly transfers will be considered and used to decide the model moving forward. The revised proposal will be submitted for review and approval at the May Commission meeting.
- ED Fetherston will find out what services were covered under Del Norte's payment of \$17,000.

***Motion to proceed with suggested next steps.***

***Motion: Anderson, Second: Applegate***  
***Yes: Tichinin, Anderson, Applegate, Baumker, Flaherty, Haschak, and Renteria***  
***No: none***  
***Absent: Miller***  
***Motion Passed.***

**ITEM 7 SNAPSHOT OF DRAFT 2021-2022 BUDGET (ACTION)**

ED Fetherston apologized for not sending out the printed spreadsheets and assured the Commission future spreadsheets will be printed and distributed prior to the meetings. The budget snapshot is informational, and the final will be reviewed and approved at the May meeting.

**Salary Increases** – ED Fetherston held a meeting with staff to discuss the budget and salary schedule increase that was approved by the Commission in 2016 (for FY 2017, 2019, 2021, and 2023). The salary increase (13%, a \$90,000 increase) had been planned to bring the lowest salary (Office Assistant, Schedule A) up to \$15.00/hr. in 2022 to be competitive. By 2023, the position would be compensated at \$19.00/hr. F5M has not hired anyone at the entry level for years, and typically brings staff in as a Program or Administrative Assistant or above, so the reason for the salary shift is no longer relevant. In the staff meeting, the fiscal impacts of a 13% increase were discussed, and staff agreed that the increase is not sustainable and should be changed to a 6% across-the-board salary increase, with total budgeting at 10.6% to allow for merit increases after systems and processes for merit increases are redefined. At these newly proposed rates, salaries would remain competitive and allow for merit increases. Future COLA increases would occur annually, as needed. Additionally, the current hiring qualifiers are unclear and need to be rewritten to be more descriptive and equitable. Adopting a 6% rather than 13% will allow F5M maintain the same budget of 2020-2021 with the following difference: not maintaining an AmeriCorps contract; reducing the Ford Street contract (from \$20,000 to \$10,000 because they have Medi-Cal services now); increasing staff salaries 6% (holding 4.4% for merit increases); and having the Small County Augmentation Grant.

The Commissioners shared their feelings about the proposed change to the staff salary schedule.

- When budget is adopted, the Commission may pass a motion at the annual meeting to approve the new budget with the increase for salaries.
- Staff was given an opportunity to speak to this proposition.
  - ED Fetherston will have a packet for review and approval at the May board meeting that will include the proposed salary schedule (6% increase of frozen salary schedule; 10.4% total to allow for merit), policy manual, rubric for merit increases, specific qualifiers, and COLA increases.
  - Commissioner Flaherty suggested that moving forward, budgets should not be planned out as far, as this experience has shown.
  - ED Fetherston will revisit staff celebrations and recognitions and bring ideas to the Commission in a future meeting. Staff was thanked for their candor and directness in discussing this topic.

***No action was taken on this agenda item.***

**ITEM 8 COMMISSIONER REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, QUORUM CHECK AND ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

- *Commissioner Anderson:* A grant-funded therapist has been hired full-time at Care-For-Her. Primary focus is pregnancy, postnatal care, and women's health.
- *Commissioner Renteria:* It is becoming difficult to fill vaccinations slots. To date, 6,700 have been administered at MCC since early January. The focus will shift to campaigns to encourage vaccinations. MCC is applying for a grant to expand the Medication Assisted Treatment grant to double the size of the current program within 5 years to help families overcome addiction. MCC will also be setting up a school-based clinic for family planning, primary care, and behavioral health on the John Dietrich Center (within walking distance of 4 schools, including Alternative Education).
- *Commissioner Tichinin:* Expressed the Commission's support of and appreciation of staff.

***Quorum check for next meeting:***

**Hold May 21, 2021.**

- *Julie will send a Doodle Poll to Commissioners to solidify dates for May and June meetings.*

**Executive Committee Meeting: May 10, 2021**

*COMMISSIONER TICHININ ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:22 P.M.*