



MINUTES
June 11, 2015

I. Call to Order

This Regular Meeting of the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Karla Sigmond, Commission Chair. The meeting was held at the CalWorks Office Conference Room which is located at 2895 S. 4th Street in El Centro, California, whereby a quorum was established.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Yurii Camacho
Ray Castillo (walked in after roll call)
Barbara Deol
Becky Green
Robin Hodgkin
Joong Kim (walked in after roll call)
Peggy Price
Karla Sigmond

Staff Present:

Julio C. Rodriguez, Executive Director
Bea Duran, Office Supervisor
Gustavo Galindo, Special Programs Coord.
Christian Hernandez, Financial Analyst
Fernando Valenzuela, Data Analyst

Others:

Jacob Grillot, Esq., Currier & Hudson

Commissioners Absent:

Chief Miguel Colon, Jr.

III. Public Comment

- Chuck Fisher who is a retired educator and currently serves on the El Centro Elementary School Board thanked the Commission for funding the El Centro Elementary School FACT Center. He is also Board President of CASA and expressed his gratitude for funding the SHEANE Project 2 additional years. Special thanks were conveyed to Commissioner Price for supporting and helping CASA coordinate services.
- Monica Miner spoke on the importance of maintaining services to the community through the Family Treehouse, and she is asking the Commission to overturn their decision regarding the CAP Council proposal. Ms. Miner is a parent of a 5 year old; her child has been attending the Family Treehouse since she was 1 year old. She stated that a Parent Advisory Committee was recently formed and they are going through a transition which they believe is achievable for success.
- Heather Singh stated that she is one of the five parents who formed the Family Treehouse's Parent Advisory Committee. The committee will assist parents with fundraising activities, community outreach and hold meetings to discuss ways on improving the programs. Ms. Singh said she is very grateful to have had the benefit of using the Family Treehouse and hopes it stays open so that the community can benefit from it as much as she has.
- Cristina with the Burn Institute of Imperial Valley asked the Commission to re-evaluate and overturn their decision to fund the Burn Institute's Fire and Burn Prevention Program. She stated that the Burn Institute

has had a long-standing relationship with the Commission and she believes they have done a great job meeting their numbers and serving children 0-5. Cristina also mentioned that their organization has received several requests from local organizations, preschools and fire departments to present burn programs or attend their open houses, however, they are not able to commit due to the funding decrease.

- Jesse Zendejas who is a retired fire fighter with the City of Brawley urged the Commission to reconsider and continue to fund the Burn Institute's fire prevention program. He stated that the program is a very useful and critical service that is provided to children in the Imperial County; he also stated that the fire prevention program fills a gap that fire departments can't fill.
- Danny Fernandez, a parent of two, spoke on the importance of maintaining the Family Treehouse open. Mr. Fernandez said that he and his wife moved from San Diego County to the Imperial County to raise their family, and that services like the Family Treehouse are not available elsewhere. He emotionally expressed that the Family Treehouse plants the seed for their children's success later in school. He is asking that the Commission reconsider and fund the Family Treehouse or offer options that'll replace what the Family Treehouse has to offer.
- Sargeant Barra from the Imperial Police Department, a parent participant of the Family Treehouse and on behalf of the Imperial City Manager presented a letter signed by the City Manager in support of the Family Treehouse. He talked about the community of Imperial, its successes and the fact that the City of Imperial was named the second safest city in California. He stated that the Family Treehouse is an icon in their community and is very significant for families living throughout the county. Sgt. Barra also noted that other agencies larger than the Family Treehouse awarded by the Commission have a better chance for accessing other funds and accessing more resources, again because of their size. He reiterated that the Family Treehouse is very important to parents, to the City of Imperial, the County and to his daughter.
- Yvette Garcia, Executive Director for the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council, acknowledged and thanked the Commission for over a decade of funding not only the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council but also the Family Treehouse. She stated that without the Commission's funding and support those services may not have even existed or continued serving at the level they are today. Ms. Garcia asked the Commission to reconsider funding the Family Treehouse's Project E to the point where the program can become sustainable and continue services with support from the community. She also thanked the Commission for funding the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council mini-grant.

IV. Consent Calendar Items

Commissioners considered approval of the consent calendar agenda items for the meeting of June 11, 2015. Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve the Consent Calendar Items as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

V. Protest/Appeals Hearing for RFP for General Grant FY 2015-2017

Burn Institute: No representative was present to speak on behalf of the appeal submitted by the Burn Institute.

Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council: Yvette Garcia, Executive Director for the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council, addressed her plea to the Commission. She stated that the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council is a well-established, non-profit, agency providing services in the county since 1978. The mission of the CAP Council is to prevent child abuse through public awareness and parent education. For this reason she feels the merging of the Family Treehouse Project is a right fit to educate parents and build public awareness in the community. She explained that the CAP Council has a strong Board of Directors who is very involved in the programs they run. Ms. Garcia spoke on a very personal level about her experience with having a special needs child. Ms. Garcia is urging the Commission to reconsider funding Project E in order to continue providing vital services to the children in Imperial County.

DISCUSSION:

Upon Commissioner request, Jake Grillot, Commission Counsel, summarized the Commission's Protest Proceedings for public knowledge. The decision by the Commission to approve or deny the appeal should be based on the practice and/or policy that was violated or not followed by the Commission during this process. Mr. Grillot stated that there are no other polices that address grounds for protest outside of this practice.

Mr. Rodriguez restated that neither the process nor the RFP practice were in violation. He identified the RFP process as a competitive but fair process. He explained that the letter submitted by the Burn Institute does not state the Commission's violation of any specific regulation, rather the letter expresses an appeal or reconsideration to fund the Fire and Burn Prevention Program based on the fact that the services are needed in the community.

For public information, further discussion was held at this time regarding alternate funding opportunities provided by the Commission. Mr. Rodriguez gave a summary of other Commission grants which included the Community Outreach Support grant, the Professional Development grant and the Mini-Grant.

Supervisor Castillo commented that he attended a conference in Sacramento and part of the discussion was regarding the decline in tobacco tax revenue. Due to competing forces in the tobacco industry from electronic cigarettes they have seen a sharp decrease in revenues for all Commissions statewide. Legislation is trying to correct that by imposing a new tax on e-cigarettes, but until that happens we will continue to see a decline in revenues. Mr. Rodriguez stated that funding to sustain programs will not be able to continue at the same level, and in fact the Commission is pulling funds from its reserves, and operating at a level of deficit funding.

At this time, Mr. Kim made the point that the Commission may have a better opportunity of seeking funds other than just the Prop 10 tobacco tax revenues. He feels the Commission should seek either state or federal grants to support local programs. He further added that he believes the Commission is in a better position to apply for grant funding than some of the smaller local entities. Regarding the mini-grant, Mr. Kim is recommending that the Commission push an early release of the mini-grant in response to funding concerns.

Commissioner Green commented that agencies funded by the Commission need to start in the direction of planning sustainability. Commissioner Deol reiterated that the Commission has always discussed and encouraged the issue of sustainability; Commission revenues will decline to the point where funds will be very limited. The issue of sustainability was further discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Rosie Nava-Bermudez, Director for the Family Treehouse, made the point that the Family Treehouse has raised between \$80-\$90 in grants, public contributions and donations whereas other projects who have been

awarded by the Commission this year and have received funding for over 15 years have exclusively been funded by the Commission and do not sustain themselves any other way.

Having noted no further discussion or public comments, Commissioners proceeded to rule on the Protest/Appeals. No conflicts of interest were disclosed at this time.

Protest/Appeal Ruling – Burn Institute:

Commissioner Green moved that the Commission deny the appeal made from the Burn Institute based on the fact that they did not present sufficient grounds that violated the policy for appeals. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

Protest/Appeal Ruling – Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council:

Commissioner Deol explained that based on all the reasons which were thoroughly discussed beforehand she moved that the Commission deny the appeal presented by the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council based on the fact that there was no violation founded on the protest, and based on the processes that have been practiced by the Commission for more than 15 years. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green who additionally stated that the Family Treehouse is a wonderful program but it does not meet the criteria. The motion carried with 1 – Opposed (R.Castillo).

VI. Request For Proposals for General Grant FY 2015-2017 Final Award Announcement

Commissioners formally approved general grant recipients for FY 2015-2017 based on the previously approved Notice of Intent to Award and the Protest/Appeals by organizations presented.

- 1) Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve funding to the City of Brawley, Brawley Public Library LAMBS Project in the amount of \$194,854. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.
- 2) Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve funding to the CASA of Imperial County SHEANE Project in the amount of \$81,725. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Camacho. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

Chairperson Sigmond stepped out of the meeting room at this time; Commissioner Deol preceded the meeting.

- 3) Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve funding to the El Centro Elementary School District FACT Center Project in the amount of \$118,828. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with 1 – Abstention (K.Sigmond).

Chairperson Sigmond re-joined the meeting in progress.

- 4) Commissioner Kim moved that the Commission approve funding to the El Centro Regional Medical Center Child Asthma Project in the amount of \$157,337. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

- 5) Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve funding to the El Centro Regional Medical Center Healthy Beginnings Bridges Project in the amount of \$68,371. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.
- 6) Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve funding to the Imperial County Office of Education State Preschool and Early Head Start Project in the amount of \$114,896. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.
- 7) Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve funding to the Imperial County Office of Education Special Education and Early Intervention Inclusion Project in the amount of \$115,640. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Hodgkin stepped out of the meeting room at this time.

- 8) Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve funding to the Imperial County Public Health's First Five Healthy Children Project in the amount of \$229,348. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with 1 – Abstention (R.Hodgkin).

Commissioner Hodgkin re-joined the meeting in progress.

- 9) Commissioner Kim moved that the Commission approve funding to the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program Nenes Project in the amount of \$182,211. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Deol stepped out of the meeting room at this time.

- 10) Commissioner Green moved that the Commission approve funding to the March of Dimes Foundation Healthy Babies Are Worth the Wait Project in the amount of \$74,972. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kim. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with 1 – Abstention (B.Deol).

Commissioner Deol re-joined the meeting in progress.

- 11) Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve funding to the Neighborhood House of Calexico Early Literacy Project in the amount of \$159,170. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Camacho. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.
- 12) Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve funding to the San Diego State University Together We're Better Project in the amount of \$73,283. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Price. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

VII. Administrative Report

- a. Request to Approve Agreement for Services for Independent Contractor FY 2015-16: A request to approve the Agreement that will be used with major grants and mini-grants was reviewed. Mr. Rodriguez highlighted changes to the Agreement and explained that the same Agreement will be used for both major grants and mini-grants, with minor differences. The agreement that will be used for major grants includes a sustainability component, and the mini-grant contract identifies a three-payment schedule versus a 5 payment schedule for major grants. Mr. Grillot summarized additional changes incorporated into the Agreement which included making sure the Agreement was clear and consistent in referencing to its attachments; incorporating a double-indemnification clause; changes in the arbitration section; and, referencing the Commission as a public entity separate from the County thereby taking out the references to County and County employees.

Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve the Agreement for Services for Independent Contractor FY 2015-16 with the referenced amendments. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

- b. Request to Approve ICCFFC Strategic Plan without Changes: Mr. Rodriguez stated that no changes were being recommended to the Commission's Strategic Plan at this time, and he is requesting approval of the plan in order to comply with the Children and Families Act mandate. He further explained that the Commission made recommendations and changes to the Strategic Plan the previous year, in addition to the fact that a new funding cycle had just been awarded. Commissioners will discuss appointment of an advisory committee to review/update the Strategic Plan at a later time.

Commissioner Green moved that the Commission approve the ICCFFC Strategic Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

- c. Request to Approve Budget FY 2015-2016: Mr. Hernandez, Financial Analyst, presented the FY 2015-2016 Budget to the Commission. Mr. Rodriguez added that he is currently re-contracting with Roger Tubach for auditing services. Mr. Tubach has audited the Commission's financial statements over the last three (3) years, and his contract will be extended an additional year. The line category for audit costs may change pending approval of the contract. Prior to the end of the upcoming fiscal year, Commissioners will want to consider either extending the contract for audit services with Mr. Tubach or seeking other bids.

Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission's Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Camacho. Mr. Kim recommended that it would be a good idea to conduct a bidding process in order to keep costs down and for transparency purposes. Noting no public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

- d. Request to Approve Administrative Costs Report FY 2015-2016: As per the Children and Families Act all County Commissions are required to identify their administrative costs and further obtain Commission approval. Based on the Commission's adopted administrative costs policy, administrative costs will not exceed 15 percent. Mr. Hernandez provided a summary of the administrative costs for fiscal year 2015-2016 and stated that in line with the budget, administrative costs are at 12.62 percent thus not exceeding the approved amount. He further added that administrative costs are reported at the beginning of the fiscal

year and again at the end of the fiscal year. At the end of the fiscal year a new line item category is included which identifies encumbrances.

Commissioner Deol moved that the Commission approve the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission's Administrative Costs FY 2015-2016. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin. Noting no further discussion or public comments, the motion carried with all in favor.

- e. Budget Revision Request – Imperial County Free Library: A request for a budget revision from the Imperial County Free Library for the Daycare Literacy Preschool Outreach mini-grant to move \$6,000 from salary savings in order to purchase books and materials for the program was made by Connie Barrington, County Librarian. She further explained that due to less staff expenses, they are requesting approval to purchase more bags with books to continue to be used throughout the various transitional kinder programs, preschool centers and family day care providers. The work is being done in collaboration with the Camarena Library; Calexico seems to have the highest need for these services. Mrs. Barrington also mentioned that Camarena staff and herself have put in a lot of extra time that is not reflected on the budget for this project; as well as purchasing additional books that have been covered with other budgets.

Commissioner Hodgkin moved that the Commission approve the Imperial County Free Library's Budget Revision Request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Camacho.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Green stated that if the grantees are not using their funds in the category which they were originally intended for, then she feels that those funds should revert back into the account so that it may allow funding for additional projects.

Commissioner Hodgkin stated that if the request is outside of the scope of work of the project she would not approve. In this case, however, she feels that the human costs and the contribution to the actual community and the children is more tangible.

Commissioner Camacho commented that the Commission is always looking and being careful on how the funds are spent, whether it is for actual services or whether it is for administrative purposes. Because the request is to purchase supplies rather than being spent on staffing, she feels it is within the scope of what the project is trying to accomplish.

Vote: The motion carried with 1 – Abstention (R.Castillo) and 1 – Opposed (B.Green).

- f. First 5 Impact: First 5 California recently earmarked \$190 million in funding to support the First 5 Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) initiative. Mr. Rodriguez said that First 5 California is putting together the RFA for this program and no details are available yet. He mentioned that the funding formula is based on children 0-5 living in poverty, the total number of licensed childcare facilities, and they are taking into consideration a minimum allocation. It is a base layer funding, which may indicate increases as the program progresses. Mr. Rodriguez added that the Commission's Funding Advisory Committee had developed a collaborative project, and he is hoping that funds from the First 5 Impact initiative can be used toward this collaborative. A Regional meeting is scheduled tomorrow in Los Angeles of which he plans to attend in order to learn more about the program.

- g. Grantee 3rd Quarter Progress Reports FY 2014-2015: Mr. Rodriguez provided a summary of the Grantees 3rd Quarter Progress for FY 2014-2015. 14 programs are currently funded, and they have expensed 69 percent of their budgets. Further summary was provided, and attached documents were referenced to.

VIII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Sigmond thanked staff for helping with the RFP process. She congratulated organizations who were awarded for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Kim mentioned that organizations will need the Commission's assistance with funding and he is recommending that the mini-grants be made available as soon as is possible. He is also recommending that the Commission look at the nature of the entity in order to help them with funding; the Commission should respond to the community's request for services as much as possible. He feels Commission staff has the capacity to bring in funding from other levels.

IX. Adjournment

A motion adjourning the Commission meeting was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Camacho. Having noted no further comments and by unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:01 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2015.