



MINUTES  
June 5, 2014

**I. Call to Order**

This meeting of the Imperial County Children and Families First Commission was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Mrs. Sigmond, Commission Chair. The meeting was held at Conference Room C/D of the County Administration Building which is located at 940 W. Main Street in El Centro, California.

**II. Roll Call**

Commissioners Present

Yurii Camacho

Supervisor Ray Castillo

Barbara Deol

Becky Green

Robin Hodgkin

Joong Kim

Peggy Price

Karla Sigmond

Commissioners Absent

Chief Miguel Colon, Jr.

**III. Public Comment**

Ms. Wendy Prewett, Project Coordinator for Project Nenes, extended an invitation to Commissioners for the 2014 HIPPY Graduation which will take place on June 17, 2014 at Kennedy Middle School in El Centro.

**IV. Consent Calendar Items**

Commissioners considered approval of the consent calendar agenda items for the meeting of June 5, 2014. Commissioner Deol moved to approve the consent calendar items as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

**V. Administrative Report (Julio C. Rodriguez, Executive Director)**

- 1. Community Development Mini-Grant, Step 2, Review of Applicants:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that 6 mini-grant applications were received in response to Step 2 of the Community Development Mini-Grant FY 2014-15 process. He notified Commissioners that an invitation to complete Step 2 of the process was sent to 8 projects that were selected by the Commission during the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Commission meeting, however, he noted that 2 of the projects did not submit their application. Representatives from both agencies, Calexico Unified School District and the San Pasqual Valley School District contacted him after the deadline submittal date to request an exception for late submittal of their mini-grant applications. Commissioners reiterated their position to adhering to deadlines and are not in favor of changing the application criteria and policy.

Only one conflict of interest was identified; Supervisor Castillo declared a conflict in connection with the Imperial County Free Library application. No further conflicts of interest were established at this time regarding project applications.

At this time, Commissioners reviewed the Community Development Mini-Grant applications that were submitted and proceeded to make the following recommendations.

- 1) Alliance for Progressive Parenting: Commissioners acknowledged the project's proposal to provide a resource that is needed and the relevance of addressing an education component for parents sharing custody of their children. However, concerns were expressed regarding the manner in which the sessions will be offered and how measures will be identified, in addition to having a clear evaluation plan. Another concern with this project was the relationship with the fiscal agent, and costs that were identified for a Marriage and Family Therapist, attorney fees and the fiscal agent. Commissioner Deol moved not to fund the mini-grant project submitted by Alliance for Progressive Parenting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. The motion passed with 6 in favor, 0 abstained, and 1 against (J.Kim). Commissioner Hodgkin stated that she would have supported this project if they were seeking funding for capacity-building and organizational structure. Commissioner Green agreed that the project should first establish itself, would be advisable if they took the initial year for planning purposes and structuring before reaching out to families.
- 2) Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Imperial County: The project is proposing to hire a new Case Manager to support services to children in outlying areas, particularly Salton Sea and Winterhaven. Commission will ask the project to ensure and prioritize that the Case Manager serves the 0-5 population. Some concern was raised regarding the sustainability of this project. Commissioner Hodgkin moved to fund the mini-grant project submitted by Court Appointed Special Advocates of Imperial County in the amount of \$23,361. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.
- 3) Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Council: This project is a continuation of services the organization is already providing; discussion was held regarding the issue of supplantation and the parenting curriculum. The CAP Council is proposing to utilize the Little Steps/Giant Steps parenting curriculum as it has done in the past. The Project is recommended for funding with budget reductions to indirect costs and stipends (3,050). Commissioner Hodgkin moved to fund the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council with the recommended budget reductions, and the stipulation that the project incorporate an acceptable evaluation tool. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Mr. Rodriguez was instructed to work with the project in order to establish assessment tools for the effectiveness of the classes, and to explore the option of whether the project should move to incorporating a specific 0-5 parenting curriculum. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

Commissioners talked about the issue of recommending that projects that are funded by the Commission adopt a specific 0-5 parenting curriculum for their use in future projects. Further discussion lead into the possibility of proposing a new funding initiative to support organizations in their capacity-building, training, fiscal responsibilities, and incorporating effective evaluation tools to measure success. Commissioners expressed that this would greatly benefit "new" projects and encourage the submittal of new proposals from organizations to the Commission.

- 4) Imperial County Free Library: The Imperial County Free Library will be working in partnership with the Camarena Memorial Library to address literacy for children receiving care in childcare homes and centers located throughout the cities of Calexico, Calipatria, Heber, Holtville, Niland, Seeley and Westmorland. The libraries are well-established and have the capacity to start services, and they have

a good rapport within the communities. Commissioner Hodgkin moved to fund the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial County Free Library, full amount. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol and having noted no further discussion the motion carried with 6 in favor, and 1 abstention (R.Castillo).

- 5) Imperial County Office of Education: Commissioners talked about the fact that this project is seeking funds for capacity-building in preparation for Transitional Kindergarten, and expressed their support for this endeavor. The project is proposing to fund substitute teachers so that teachers may in turn attend trainings as part of the Transitional Kindergarten mandate. Commissioner Deol moved to fully fund the mini-grant project submitted by Imperial County Office of Education provided that assurances and certifications are in place for funding. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Concerns were raised regarding the issue of supplantation of funds. Clarification is needed as to the intent of the money allocated for transitional kindergarten; school districts are receiving funds in preparation for the transition, but are the school districts providing time for training. The question was also raised as to whether the school districts have discretionary funds available to cover the expenses for substitute teachers. Mr. Rodriguez was instructed to contact the representatives to inquire further into the issue of supplantation. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present.
- 6) Imperial Valley Food Bank: Commissioners expressed their support for the Imperial Valley Food Bank and the vital role it plays in the community. This project intends to distribute healthy food items to targeted families, and to implement an educational nutrition program through nutrition festivals. Commissioner Castillo moved to fully fund the mini-grant project submitted by the Imperial Valley Food Bank; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Commissioners expressed their concern with the fact that the project does not address the issue of how it plans to collect the data, and whether the agency has guidelines relating to the type of foods they will distribute are in place. They also had concerns with the number of activities they are proposing to establish with each family, whether the goals are too broad. Safeguards will need to be in place so that supplantation is not an issue. Commissioners agreed to have Mr. Rodriguez meet with Imperial Valley Food Bank representatives to ensure that an adequate plan is in place which will address the concerns that were discussed. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that pending negotiations with the projects a total of \$105,571 was just awarded for Community Development Mini-Grants FY 2014-2015. The Commission had initially budgeted \$150,000 for this process. Based on the Commission's discussion about supporting capacity-building for local projects Mr. Rodriguez is asking whether the Commission would like to reserve the remaining balance for such projects either through distribution of funds through a mini-grant initiative or through the Community Outreach Application process. It was the general consensus of the Commission to establish a reserve of the remaining funds in order to support the local agencies through a capacity-building grant, and direction was given to Mr. Rodriguez to bring back a plan for discussion.

2. Request to Approve Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor FY 2014-15: Mr. Rodriguez provided a summary of the agreement proposed to serve as the contract between the Commission and the agencies that were just approved for mini-grant funding. Commissioner Deol moved to approve the Agreements for Services of Independent Contractors FY 2014-15 binding the Commission with funded agencies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Green, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

3. **Request to Approve Contractor/Grantee Budgets for FY 2014-2015:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that new contracts are needed for the 14 major RFP grantees for the 2014-2015 funding cycle; agencies will be entering the second year of a 2-year RFP application. Budgets for each of the 14 grantees were included in the packet and briefly reviewed. Commissioner Hodgkin moved to approve the Agreements for Services of Independent Contractors FY 2014-15, Year 2, binding the Commission with major grant funded agencies. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol, and approved unanimously by the members present.
  
4. **Request to Approve ICCFFC Commission Budget FY 2014-2015:** Mr. Rodriguez presented the Commission's proposed new fiscal year budget. The following points were noted:
  - ✓ The budget represents general management expenses, special grants such as the Community Outreach Support, the Mini-grants, and the RFP major grants; it includes the early childcare education stipend grant, a breakdown of the school readiness program budget, and a breakdown of the Child Signature Program.
  - ✓ Total Budget expenses for 2014-2015 are \$2,893,618.
  - ✓ The Child Signature Program is funded by First 5 California through an award of \$105,000 per year.
  - ✓ Expenses under the County Overhead category have increased significantly for the new fiscal year.
  - ✓ Worker's comp will also increase this year in comparison to the previous fiscal year due to the change in status of independent employees versus employees of the Commission.
  - ✓ The Commission will also now be subject to tax liabilities at about 12%.
  - ✓ One of the accounts that will be decreased is the one set aside for SCALAR; this account is related to the First 5 Southern California Association evaluation and research expenses.

Commissioner Deol moved to approve the ICCFFC Commission Budget FY 2014-2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castillo, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

5. **Request to Approve Administrative Costs Report FY 2014-2015:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that all County Commissions are required to adopt policies that set the amount allocated by individual Commissions for administrative costs, our administrative costs rate is set at no more than 15% of the total operating budget. Administrative costs proposed for fiscal year 2014-2015 reflect 11.07% of the total budget allocated for the year which excludes any prior year encumbrances. Commissioner Deol moved to approve the Commission's Administrative Costs Report FY 2014-2015 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.
  
6. **Request to Approve ICCFFC Strategic Plan for FY 2013-2014:** Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Strategic Plan is being presented to the Commission for approval as is with no changes and data will be updated during FY 2014-2015 to reflect the most current information available. Copies of the ICCFFC Strategic Plan FY 2013-2014 were made available to the public and input was sought. Commissioner Deol provided a brief summary of the discussion which was held through a meeting of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee which included Commissioner Kim, Commissioner Hodgkin and herself. The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee talked about supporting capacity-building for local organizations, and would like to explore this in the near future. Commissioner Green moved to approve the ICCFFC Strategic Plan FY 2013-2014. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

7. **Request to Approve Arbitration Covenant, Exhibit B:** Mr. Rodriguez explained that the Arbitration Covenant is being provided to the Commission because it needs to be updated and because this document serves as an attachment to the new employee contracts which were just recently approved of by the Commission. He further explained that the document was reviewed by legal counsel, updates to the Arbitration Covenant are mostly due to the California evidence codes section changes. Commissioner Green moved to approve the Arbitration Covenant as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol, and having noted no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.
8. **Request to Approve Budget Revision/Scope of Work Changes:** Two requests from major RFP grantee budget revisions that exceed 10% of the project's operating budget were presented to the Commission for review and approval. Grantees are aware that budget changes that require approval from the Commission must be submitted up to 30 days prior to the end of the contract year. The requests were submitted on May 30, 2014.

El Centro Regional Medical Center's Bridges for Newborns and Families Project is requesting to re-categorize funds from the Salary and Fringe account (decrease) to various categories due to a significant savings in salary. After further review and discussion, Commission consented to changes to increase the Operating Supplies, Equipment and Supplies categories, but did not approve changes into the Indirect Costs category. Commission is asking Mr. Rodriguez to clarify whether travel costs will be expensed during this fiscal year; cannot carry over to new contract. A motion was made by Commissioner Deol and it was seconded by Commissioner Hodgkin to approve the budget request excluding the Indirect Costs expense category made by the El Centro Regional Medical Center Bridges for Newborns and Families Project to move funds from the Salary and Fringe expense category to Operating Supplies and Equipment and Supplies expense categories; the Travel and Training expense category to be approved pending further review and consent given from the Commission Director. Having noted no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

The Neighborhood House of Calexico's Childrens' Literacy Project is requesting to move funds (decrease) from the Operating Supplies expense category in addition to the Liability Insurance expense category to increase funds under the Travel and Training expense category. Staff is having to work with families in the communities of Brawley and Seeley, thus increasing their mileage intake. Staff will be needing to cover mileage reimbursements under the Travel category. A motion was made by Commissioner Hodgkin and it was seconded by Commissioner Green to approve the budget request as is submitted by the Neighborhood House of Calexico's Childrens' Literacy Project. Having noted no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

9. **Grantee Third Quarter Progress Report FY 2013-2014:** Mr. Rodriguez provided a summary of the major RFP Grantees' 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Projects as well as a summary of the Mini-Grant Projects, the report was included in the Commission packet. He briefly reported that through the end of the third quarter, 14 major grantees reported having expensed 64% of their respective budgets; 6 mini-grant projects also reported having expensed 60% of their respective budgets. Projects offered direct services to approximately 12,498 participants through the end of the third quarter. Other support and services were provided to children, parents, families and providers through community strengthening events as well as through provider capacity building activities. Data totals for populations served from the major grants and the mini-grants show that close to 8,000 children 0-5 received services during this period. Mr. Rodriguez reminded

Commissioners that the mini-grant contract by the Imperial County Office of Education's Resource Network Project was recently terminated.

**VI. Commissioner Comments**

The Strategic Plan Advisory Committee will be setting a new meeting date once the elections are done; notices will be sent via email to all Commissioners.

**VII. Adjournment**

Commissioner Hodgkin moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Commissioner Deol, and approved by a unanimous vote of the members present. Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm. Next meeting is scheduled on September 11, 2014.