



Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
MINUTES
Meeting of April 3, 2025

I. Call to Order

Commission Chairperson, Karla Sigmond called the April 3, 2025 Regular Meeting of First 5 Imperial to order at 3:38 p.m. The meeting was held at the First 5 Imperial, Training Center, at 1240 State Street, El Centro, CA.

II. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Barbara Deol

Danila Vargas

Fred Miramontes

Joong Kim

Karla Sigmond

Commissioners Absent:

Yurii Camacho

Rebecca Green

John Hawk

Paula Llanas

Staff:

Julio C. Rodriguez

Fernando Valenzuela

III. Public Comment

Commissioner Sigmond noted that if there was anyone from the public that wished to make a public comment or address anything on the agenda, then that person is given the opportunity to do so. She asked anyone interested to present themselves and to feel free to address the Commission. Ms. Yvette Gracia, the Executive Director for the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council addressed the Commission, and noted that she wanted to thank the Commission for funding the Little Steps Project over a number of years. She stated that this support has made a big difference with the parents they work with, the community in general, and the work supports children 0-5 years of age. She acknowledged the good work of the Commission, and was hopeful that the relationship with the Commission would continue through funding and support from staff.

IV. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 6, 2025, was made by Commissioner Deol, seconded by Commissioner Miramontes, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

V. Consent Calendar Items

The consent calendar items consisted of the monthly financial reports for September 2024 to December 2024. A motion to approve the consent calendar items was made by Commissioner Deol, and seconded by Commissioner Vargas, and having noted no further discussion or public comment the motion carried with all in favor.

VI. Administrative Report (Julio C. Rodriguez, Executive Director)

1. Request to Approve the First 5 Imperial Annual Audit Report of Financial Statements for FY 2023-2024: Commissioner Sigmond asked Mr. Rodriguez for a summary of the Annual Audit Report and any significant information to highlight for the Commission. Mr. Rodriguez noted that

he would provide a review of the report, indicating that Mr. Tubach, CPA retained by the Commission was asked to present the audit, though had a prior conflict, and if requested by the Commission could attend the June 5, 2025 meeting to answer any additional questions. Mr. Rodriguez noted that Mr. Tubach has submitted the Audit Report on Financial Statements to the State Controller's Office, this report was finalized on March 3, 2025. He noted that in Mr. Tubach's opinion the annual audit conducted this year fairly presents the financial condition of the Commission as stated on the first page of the audit report, and then proceeded to highlight information related to revenues and expenses noted in the audit report, and that he would then review the findings stated by Mr. Tubach at the end of the report. He stated that on page 3 there are some financial highlights listed by Mr. Tubach, which indicated that the Commission received \$1,399,995 in revenues collected under the Children and Families Act from tobacco products, and that the Commission disbursed \$1,429,262 in funding to local grants to various agencies, which entail mini and major grants. He also noted that the Net Position of the Commission as of June 30, 2024 is stated as \$6,028,256, representing an increase of \$206,148 from the previous year. He then indicated that on page 10 of the report, Commission members will note the Government-Wide Statement of Activities, which in general reflect what was included in the financial highlights as they related to overall expenses by the Commission, which were expenses that totaled \$1,798,297, and represent a breakdown by Program Costs of \$1,466,338, Evaluation Costs of \$156,185, and Administrative Costs of \$170,368, and shows the change in Net Position from the beginning balance of \$5,822,108, which was adjusted by Mr. Tubach from the previous year by \$30,043, and for which he derives the Net Position for the End-of-Year in the amount of \$6,028,256.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the adjustment was made by Mr. Tubach due to a journal entry that he felt the previous auditor should have made the previous year. He then indicated that on page 12 of the report Commissioners will find the General Fund Balance Sheet which shows Current Assets that total \$6,087,351, Liabilities which include accrued payroll and accounts payable in the amount of \$17,614, and these numbers are what he uses to calculate the total fund balance of the Commission, which is \$6,069,737. These numbers are consistent with the change in Fund Balance. Revenue is broken down into state aid, interest income and miscellaneous revenue versus total expenses for the fiscal year. First 5 Imperial is also required to provide information on administrative, program, and evaluation costs associated with all identified expenses reported on a yearly basis. He indicated that on page 13 of the report Mr. Tubach reiterates the information related to the fund balance and net position, taking into consideration the liabilities for the current building lease and compensated absences. Commission members were then directed to page 14 of the report, and Mr. Rodriguez highlighted the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Change in Fund Balance section. He noted that total revenues were \$1,999,039, of which \$1,812,290 are from a result of Proposition 10 revenue, then there is \$168,154 in interest income, and another \$18,595 from other sources, noted as miscellaneous income. Next he reviewed the breakdown of expenditures by category that he stated totaled \$1,798,297, and a result of this report, Mr. Rodriguez highlights that expenses for administrative costs totaled \$170,368, expenses for program costs totaled \$1,470,744, and expenses identified as evaluation costs were \$156,185. He also notes that program expenses include Program grants to outside agencies, First 5 CA programs (IMPACT Legacy and the Home Visitation Program), Community Outreach and Support awards for agencies that need monies for community events, the School Readiness Initiative that provides other services or used for matching funds, early care and education stipends, and other program services also utilized for matching funds, and support for community outreach and family resource fairs as well. He further stated that there

was a favorable increase in revenues over expenditures by \$200,742, giving the Commission and ending Fund Balance of \$6,069,737 which is composed of the information that is represented on page 14 of the report and is used by the auditor to complete the calculations.

Then he directed Commission members to page 18 of the audit report, which are the Notes to the Financial Statements. He proceeded to highlight the section on Committed for Budgeted and Program, Award Grantees, and School Readiness. He stated that the Commission has committed certain funds for the current fiscal year, FY 2024-2025, which are written in the report as \$2,282,292, reflecting the First 5 Imperial FY24-25 Budget, as well as report on funds Assigned for Encumbrances, which were \$461,539, and amounts for contracts or other commitments that would be pending, which totaled \$2,378,081, in addition to those funds that were identified as Unassigned, which totaled \$947,825.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if there were any questions related to the finances or other information at this point before he addresses the findings noted by Mr. Tubach. Commissioner Miramontes asked how long the Commission has been funding programs. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission has been providing funding opportunities at a local level since fiscal year 2000-2001. Commissioner Miramontes asked if Mr. Rodriguez was the Director at that time, and Mr. Rodriguez clarified that there was another Director previously, Johnathan McDaniel. Commissioner Miramontes then asked if the funding for First 5 Imperial is received in one lump sum or on a quarterly basis. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the funding is based on a monthly allocation that is determined by the State Board of Equalizations, and that there is a formula that is used to allocate funding on a monthly basis, though in addition to that there is another amount that is the CECET funds that are allocated quarterly, and then there is also an annual allocation based on Proposition 56, which represents a backfill amount that is due to a \$2.00 per pack tax that was included on cigarettes due to the fiscal effects of that proposition. He indicated that the new tax based on Proposition 56 affected Proposition 10 revenue and therefore there was a provision for backfill based on the projected revenue loss, where he indicated that it was approximately \$400,000 annually, depending on sales. Commissioner Kim noted that the State Board of Equalizations allows merchants to report their taxes either on a monthly report or quarterly report basis. And that some businesses may owe money at the end that they may also have to do an adjustment, which he believes that this may affect the allocation of tobacco tax revenue, because, for example the 4th quarter report may be due in February, and at that time the State may need to make adjustments, and how much was due for that year to have the correct numbers. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that these adjustments may be correct, because the June payments do not come in sometimes until August or September and sometimes there may be two June payments that indicate an adjustment was made by the State Board.

Mr. Rodriguez then stated that on page 26, under the section Independent Auditor's Report, Mr. Tubach notes that during the audit he "did not identify any material weaknesses, or significant deficiencies" related to internal controls, and with respect to obtaining reasonable assurance about compliance and other matters, he states that "results of my tests disclose no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported." Though Mr. Tubach did identify two findings from that previous year that he felt were only partially implemented, which include the 2023 findings listed below as partially implemented. And does state on page 26 that he does "consider the deficiency described in the accompanying Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs as item 2024-01" and therefore, there are two findings that the Commission

will need to address that were the result of what Mr. Tubach indicates were findings that were partially implemented from the FY 2022-2023 audit. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it was interesting that he says there are no material weaknesses, though this may be as a result of previous years' findings, that, again, he notes that they were partially implemented. Mr. Rodriguez stated that there is one finding identified as a material weakness, which he indicated as being on page 31 of the audit report. He stated that Finding #2024-01: Implement Cash and Other Balance Sheet Accounts Held by County Reconciliation Procedures, which is in reference to the finding from the audit report from FY 22-23 noted as Finding #2023-02, and which is also addressed on page 34, and noted as being partially implemented at the bottom of that page. Mr. Rodriguez noted the Recommendation for the Commission related to this finding, which states "We recommend that the Commission implement internal controls to ensure all balance sheet accounts held by the County are reconciled to QuickBooks on a monthly basis." Mr. Rodriguez explained that what occurred is that the County provides the Commission with the general ledger on a monthly basis, and traditionally entries would be reconciled by hand due to the way the county provides the reports, as the Commission does not necessarily know when checks actually clear through the County account, as with the US Bank payroll account, where those statements do reflect checks that have been cleared by the bank and are reconciled in QuickBooks, whereas with the County ledger this is not the case. The Commission does not really know when or if the checks have been processed as paid, unless after 6 months the County informs the Commission of a check that has not been cashed, of which a Statutory Cancellation is then processed. Commissioner Deol agreed that the County does work that way. Mr. Rodriguez then indicated that the Office Supervisor would do the County reconciliation by hand, and therefore when we contracted with Allied Business Services for accounting, as a result of staff reductions, the accountant continued to process accounts payable in the same manner, though did enter reconciliations for the US Bank account. This would explain why Mr. Tubach notes that the findings were only partially implemented. Mr. Tubach met with our accountants and noted that they would have to use the County Ledger that is provided on a monthly basis as the method for reconciling the QuickBooks entries in order to ensure that the two accounts are reconciled, and then if there were a Statutory Cancellation the accountant would make a journal entry for that cancellation. Mr. Rodriguez noted this condition is the basis for both findings, of which he states that on the next page, 32, we have the second finding, which is Finding #2024-02: Implement Cash and Other Balance Sheet Accounts Held by County Reconciliation Procedures, which is also in reference to the finding from the previous audit report noted as Finding #2023-04, Implement Payroll Cash Reconciliation Procedures, and that Mr. Tubach also identifies as partially implemented. He noted that the two findings are essentially the same findings, just that the first is based on a material weakness and the second is based on state compliance. He then referred to the findings from the previous year's audit report. He noted that the first finding states "implemented" on the bottom, and the second finding states "partially implemented" which is the same with the third and fourth findings from the previous year. Those that were partially implemented. He also states that perhaps the confusion is based on the fact that it does state that management does not accurately reconcile cash balances reported in the accounting record to the payroll cash balances on the related bank accounts, and therefore we were mistakenly only reconciling the bank account for payroll, and really now Mr. Tubach notes that the County Ledger will be viewed as a bank account as well, since we don't get a statement that notes which checks have cleared through the County.

Mr. Rodriguez confirms that Commission staff have worked with Mr. Tubach and Allied Business, the accountants entering First 5 Imperial's revenue and expense information, to correct this

process, namely due to the method that will be implemented to ensure the County of Imperial's General Ledger information is entered into the First 5 Imperial QuickBooks account and move to reconcile transactions based on the report on a monthly basis. Furthermore, Mr. Rodriguez states that in the next item on the agenda the Commission will discuss and may move to approve the change in the plan for the implementation of procedures on internal controls.

Commission Chairperson Sigmond asked if there were any questions related to the audit report. Commissioner Deol noted that on page 38 of the report under her name, where it says "RB" it should say "RN" and that she is no longer with California Health and Wellness, and that now she is a Professor of Nursing at Arizona Western College, and noted that it may not make a difference, though she wants to know if this could be changed. In addition Commissioner Sigmond noted that she was no longer with the El Centro Elementary School District, as she is retired, though Mr. Rodriguez noted that she is a Trustee for the Imperial Valley Community College District and that change would be made as well. Ms. Sigmond asked Commissioners if there were any other questions. Noting nothing additional regarding the annual audit report, and therefore she asked for a motion to approve the First 5 Imperial Annual Audit Report for FY 2023-2024. A motion to approve of the annual audit report for FY 2023-2024 was made by Commissioner Miramontes and seconded by Commissioner Deol. With no further discussion or public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

2. Request to Approve Changes to First 5 Imperial Plan on Implementation of Procedures on Internal Controls: Commissioner Sigmond asked Mr. Rodriguez to introduce changes to the Plan on Implementation of Procedures on Internal Controls. Mr. Rodriguez stated that next document represents the plan that addressed the partially implemented findings from FY 2022-2023, though as a result of two of those findings that were noted in this year's audit report, FY 2023-2024, and therefore to fully implement, there is a change that is being added to the procedure to specifically follow the recommendations in the audit made by Mr. Tubach that the County general ledger revenue and expense information is reconciled into the Commission's QuickBooks account on a monthly basis. He reiterated that this was the plan that was implemented, and approved of by the Commission, during the previous year, and that Commissioners will note that the procedure is listed on page 65 of the Commission packet, and that the actual change to the procedure is written on the second page of the document. He stated that Commissioners will observe the language that is highlighted in a red font for the first bullet of Procedure 02: Cash Held By County Reconciliation, where he then reads the following, "Responsible staff and/or accounting personnel will reconcile the County of Imperial Auditor's Department general ledger revenue and expense details for the Children and Families First Commission account balance sheets on a monthly basis and enter reconciliation information into the Commission's QuickBooks account. In addition, payroll and other revenue or expense information from the Commission's US Bank account's monthly bank statements will also be reconciled and entered into the Commission's QuickBooks account." He notes that the language is specific and identified the QuickBooks account, though if the Commission should change the software program, the change to the procedure will also be addressed in a Commission meeting. He states that the language does work to address the auditor's concerns related to reconciling the County of Imperial Auditor's Department general ledger to the Commission's bank account. Commissioner Deol noted that the procedure looks good and that the Commission does not have to worry as it identifies specifically what is needed. Commissioner Sigmond agrees, and Mr. Rodriguez further noted that even though there was no issue with the US Bank payroll account being reconciled, he did note that it was important to specify that language as well in order to

cover all aspects of the accounts that need to be reconciled, as he reiterated that the changes include that “payroll and other revenue or expense information from the Commission’s US Bank account’s monthly bank statements will also be reconciled and entered into the Commission’s QuickBooks account.” He stated that this additional language will make the process clear for anyone working on the Commission’s accounts, and that the procedure does not just say “reconcile bank accounts.”

Mr. Rodriguez further noted that on the bottom, under the Timeline section, highlighted in red, is the change to 2025, noting that the change will be made by April 30th, 2025, though staff and accountants have already been following the procedure. He indicated that before noting full implementation, the change to the procedure should be approved of by the Commission, particularly if there are any other recommendations that would be made before approval. Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was a motion to approve of the changes to the plan in order to address the recommendations of the audit report. Commissioner Miramontes moved to approve the changes to the Plan on Implementation of Procedures on Internal Controls, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Commissioner Sigmond asked if there were any further questions or discussion, and noting no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.

3. Request to Approve Community Development Mini-Grant Statements of Interest to Apply for FY 2025-2026: Commissioner Sigmond introduced the Community Development Mini-Grant Statements of Interest to Apply for FY 2025-2026 and asked Mr. Rodriguez for a summary of the requests submitted under Step 1. Mr. Rodriguez directed Commission members to the Mini-Grant Statements on page 84 of the meeting packet, where they would find the Mini-Grant Register of applicants, and each individual Statement of Interest to Apply. He noted that all Commission members had received copies of mini-grant applications previously. He indicated that there were six Step 1 Community Development Statement of Interest to Apply forms under consideration, and before discussions begin, he asked Commissioners present if there were any declared conflicts of interest to state. No conflicts of interest were noted by Commissioners present. He asked Commission members if they would like to review the applicants one-by-one, where Commissioner Sigmond noted that Commissioners have had time to review the applications before them and felt that if any Commissioner wanted to discuss a particular application then they could go from there. The other Commission members agreed. Ms. Sigmond then noted that they could begin by addressing any concerns for applicants that they felt should not be invited to apply for Step 2 of the process, this way the Commission can move forward, since the Commission is familiar with the applicants. Commissioner Miramontes felt that it would be a good idea to go down each applicant individually and decide then. Commissioner Sigmond agreed, and noted that the first applicant was the Burn Institute, and if Commissioners were Ok with inviting them to apply.

Then she asked if there were any concerns with inviting the second applicant, the City of El Centro. Commissions noted no concerns. Next she asked about the Imperial County Child Abuse Prevention Council, and then the Imperial County Office of Education. Commissioners agreed that they should be invited as well. Then she asked if there were any concerns with inviting the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program to apply. None were noted. And finally, she asked about the Pioneers Memorial Health District’s application, and there were no concerns with inviting this agency to apply that were expressed by Commissioners. Commissioner Sigmond then asked if there were any issues with these applicants and if they had all met the

deadline. Mr. Rodriguez noted that they had all met the deadline and that at this point there were no real problems with inviting all of the applicants to submit a complete mini-grant application under Step 2 of the process. He stated that the Commission had allocated \$150,000 for FY 2025-2026 mini-grants and that the current applicants were asking for \$161,500. He made the recommendation at this time to invite all of the applicants under consideration on to Step 2 of the process, as there were really no issues with any of the Statements of Interest to Apply and that theoretically each one may be considered a viable applicant. He asked if any Commissioners had any questions regarding these applicants.

Commissioner Deol noted that she had a question regarding the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program's application, of which she understood that what they were asking for was to increase the number of children by adding 12 to the number they are already serving through the HIPPY Program. She noted that if there would be a problem considering then for additional children considering that the Commission is already funding the other program, and this would only increase the amount by more. She indicated that she just wanted to verify if it would be an issue to fund the mini-grant also, considering that they are already receiving monies through one of the larger grants. Mr. Rodriguez noted that this was the case that they are asking for 12, and are in fact increasing the number of children for the grant that they already have with the Commission. These funds will be used to augment the services that they already offer. He noted that this is something for the Commission to consider, and that when reviewing the final applications that would be one of the important considerations. He said that at this point it is to really work toward who the Commission will fund, which programs does the Commission want to consider as it goes through the second step. She agreed that that is important, and that if the application is better than others it should be considered. Mr. Rodriguez confirmed that it would be a decision that the Commission will make, and that it will at this point only be entertaining the idea of enhancing the program. The final decision will be made during the June 2025 regular meeting of the Commission, and Commissioners may decide at that point not to fund it, again depending on what is before the Commission for consideration. He noted that the HIPPY Program is a good program that essentially incorporates 30 weeks of home instruction, and that on our end, if it is funded, we would be looking to increase the total from 12 to 15 children. Commissioner Deol noted that it would be fine to invite IVORP for the next phase and see what comes before the Commission. Commissioner Sigmond agreed, and Mr. Rodriguez added that ultimately Commissioners will make the decision based on what applicants propose, on the merit of their applications, and also Commissioners can prioritize new applicants. Commissioner Sigmond noted that the HIPPY Program is one of the best programs that is funded by the Commission, and that it has been funding it for a while. Mr. Rodriguez also noted that it is a strong home visitation component, and that lately there has been much more emphasis state-wide on home visitation programs. The Public Health Department has indicated that it wants to increase home visitations, and with the MediCal Managed Care Plans there is also a great emphasis on home visitation. He said that the HIPPY Program is a model program, namely due to the 30 weeks of home instruction, and that they do a great job of implementing it locally, so much so, that they have a waiting list of participants. He noted that years ago, the School Readiness Program wanted to implement a HIPPY Program, though because of the complexity and the idea of 30 weeks of home visitations that it may be too difficult to implement. Then IVORP decided to apply for the program, and the individual that implemented it, Ms. Wendy Prewitt, did a great job with the program. Commissioner Sigmond stated that this is also one of the projects that the Commission always highlights and it has also been highlighted the State's annual report. Mr. Rodriguez also noted that when the California

Department of Health Services was looking at implementation of their Home Visitation Program they had asked Ms. Prewitt to provide a presentation on the HIPPY Program. Also, staff noted that when Ms. Prewitt left the program, the individual that took over had no problems implementing it, as it was a seamless transition, and does a very good job. Thus, he noted, it is a good model, and the training IVROP staff receive from HIPPY USA is meaningful, but again, funding this project ultimately will depend on the priorities of the Commission, though stated that the Commission will ask for them to increase the number by 15 if the application moves forward. Commissioner Sigmond noted that it is a successful program and has impacted a significant number of families now, and Commissioner Deol agreed. Then Commissioner Sigmond asked members if there were any other questions or comments regarding the mini-grant applicants. With no further questions, she then asked for a motion to approve of the inviting the six applicants that submitted a Statement of Interest to Apply on to Step 2 of the process. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Miramontes and seconded by Commissioner Deol. With no further discussion or public comment, the motion carried with all in favor.

4. Request to Approve Community Development Mini-Grant Guidelines FY 2025-2026, Step 2: Ms. Sigmond introduced the next item on the agenda, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that included in the meeting packet, on page 91, Commissioners would find the Community Development Mini-Grant, Step 2, Guidelines for fiscal year 2025-2026. He noted that the only changes that were being recommended by staff to the guidelines that were used for the previous year were two: 1) updating dates and times, in addition to the timeline, and 2) the location where the mini-grant is submitted. He noted that as for the delivery location, the recommendation is based on the fact that the Imperial County Purchasing department is undergoing construction, and therefore it would be best at this time to receive the mini-grant application at the Commission offices in order to ensure that there are no issues with the application submission process. The construction is still ongoing and it is not clear when the Purchasing Department location will be open, though they are receiving mail and conducting business as usual, though the location is the issue. Commissioner Deol noted that that was the same decision that was made with the large grant application, and felt that it would be the best thing to do at this point. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the deadline to submit the application is May 7, 2025, and would then be delivered on, or before that date, by 4:00 pm. Also, he noted that on the timetable in the draft application in the Commission packet the mini-grant application says FY 2024-2025, and that the correct fiscal year should be FY 2025-2026, and therefore this has been corrected on the application, and go back and review the application to ensure that any pertinent changes will be made before the mini-grant application is posted on the website, along with the applicants that were approved for Step 2 of the process. Commissioner Deol asked if there were any issues with the deadline, and if there were any applicants that missed the deadline. Mr. Rodriguez noted that there were no issues with the mini-grant application, though there were some issues major grant applications, and would provide an update of this shortly.

Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was any further discussion, and with none noted, she then asked for a motion to approve of the Community Development Mini-Grant Step 2 Guidelines. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Deol and seconded by Commissioner Kim; with no further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

5. Request to Approve to Engage in Memorandum of Understanding with Managed Care Plans operating in Imperial County: Commissioner Sigmond noted that the next item was the Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, with Managed Care Plans. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the meeting packet contains the MOU that has been negotiated with Managed Care Plans working in Imperial County. He stated that three meetings were held to discuss the MOU, of which the first meeting was with the representatives from the subcontractor for the Community Health Plan of Imperial Valley, which was Health Net Community Solutions. The second meeting was with representatives from Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc., and the third meeting was a joint meeting between the two Managed Care Plans and the Commission. He noted that both health plans were interested in engaging in a joint MOU, as they are interested in collaborating and working together, and really moving to simplify the process. Therefore, the MOU that is included is the draft of what has been negotiated, and the main this for the Commission is what the MOU requires of the Commission. He noted that the California Department of Healthcare Services essentially is working to address is an increase in quality of services and other services related to MediCal Managed Care Plan members or clients, and the department is requiring Managed Care Plans to engage in MOUs with a number of different entities, of which First 5s are one of those entities. He noted that the Managed Care Plans are required to attempt to engage in an MOU with First 5s, though we are not required to have to actually engage in these services if the proposed services are not what the Commission feels it has the capacity to do.

He stated that under the MOU, there were a couple of things First 5 Imperial will need do, which is to work to identify the individuals that will be representing the Commission. One is the Person Responsible for the MOU, which is the Director for the Commission, and the other is the First 5 Liaison, which has been identified as the Special Programs Coordinator, which at this time is Gustavo Galindo. The First 5 Person Responsible would be the individual that represents the Commission, whereas the First 5 Liaison would be the individual that is doing the day-to-day implementation of the elements of the MOU. He noted that the Managed Care Plans also have to designate two similar individuals to oversee the role of Responsible Person and MCP Liaison. He indicated that the Commission will be meeting quarterly with both health plans, and that these meetings at this point will be held on an online platform. He noted that the work identified in the MOU is in development, and that both the Commission and the MCPs will work to iron out components of the MOU as the process moves forward, once the MOU is signed by all three parties. Therefore, he noted that the overall objective of the MOU is a coordination of services between the Managed Care Plans and First 5 Imperial. The Managed Care Plan will also provide training on their services and the MOU, which we understand will include our grantees, which in the MOU are referred to as providers. In addition our projects may further help to identify families that may qualify for MediCal Managed Care services, and/or help coordinate services for the families that are served by grantees that already are enrolled in MediCal services. Also, he said, that Managed Care Plans may refer their members that qualify for distinct services to our funded program, or offer other referral services. For example they may have someone that is interested in home instruction and therefore will be referred to the HIPPIY Program through IVROP, or if the family may need a referral for parenting classes, they would be referred to the Child Abuse Prevention Council for those services. He noted that those would be things that the liaison would work to help coordinate, also, if programs are at capacity, the Commission will need to notify the Managed Care Plan liaison of the matter so that they don't over-refer families for services. In addition to this there may be other meetings that Commission staff are involved in, where they are invited by the Managed Care Plan to attend, such as community meetings or events, and likewise if there are events hosted by the Commission or

grantees we will work to invite the Manage Care Plan to attend, such as our Family Resource Fairs where they may come out and provide materials or resources to families. He stated that even though MediCal funding is a big concern right now, it will be important for the Commission to move forward and work to provide additional services to families that are eligible, particularly for families that are at need or are "high-risk" and may qualify for services. He also noted that one of the services that will be highly promoted is Enhanced Care Management, which are generally trainings or information sessions for families. There are already a few Enhanced Care Managers working in the county, of which the one from Volunteers of America attends our community events. He stressed that it may be important to establish this relationship with the Manage Care Plans as it may prove beneficial to families, or if there is a training provided to childcare providers as a result of this, then more partners are aware of what is out there and it would enhance care coordination. He then indicated that the MOU is year-to-year and may be terminated upon that time, and that staff were recommending for the Commission to move forward with the MOU, and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Sigmond asked if there was a motion to approve for the Commission to engage in the MOU with the Managed Care Plans. A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Deol and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. Commissioner Sigmond noted that there was a motion, and asked if there were any other questions or discussion over the revision. With no further discussion noted, the motion carried with all in favor.

6. Update on First 5 Imperial Request for Proposal General Grant Guidelines FY 2025-2028: Mr. Rodriguez proceeded to provide an update of the Request for Proposal General Grant process. He noted that on March 31, 2025 was the deadline to submit the RFP grant application for consideration, and that there were two agencies that failed to meet one of the deadlines and therefore were not eligible for consideration. He said that one of these applicants was the Imperial County Office of Education and the other was the Imperial County Free Library. Therefore the Commission would not be able to consider either of these two applicants, and only received six applicants for consideration instead of eight. He also noted that one other agency was not able to apply because they did not have an annual audit report to submit, which is one of the requirements for consideration, and another, the Burn Institute decided to submit a mini-grant instead of the major grant. He noted that other agencies had inquired about the application.

He stated that the applications that were submitted are going through a compliance review, and that the Commission has contracted with evaluators to review the applications. The Commission office had previously signed contracts for evaluators, in addition to forwarding a checklist of preliminary documents for review, in addition to the pertinent documents. These included a Strategic Plan, the RFP, a time sheet, a W-9 for processing payments, and contact information of who they are paired with. Mr. Rodriguez noted that he meets with each evaluator individually to go over the process and documents and ensure that the evaluator understands how the process works, in addition to what the Commission is looking for. He highlighted that the Commission has identified two priorities that have a designation of "Special Consideration" and he noted that he ensures that evaluators understand that the "Special Consideration" plays into the Commission making a final decision on funding applications, and that evaluators understand that the process does not entail that they have to score applications based on meeting the "Special Consideration" and therefore should not weight into their scores, though the important consideration for them is to make sure that if they are addressing one of these two "Special

Considerations” that they score the application based on that they feel that it is a good project or if they feel that they are overstressing on the services only to meet one of the priorities. He further indicated that he did advise evaluators that the Commission does want proposals to address one, and only one, of these “Special Consideration” if they do include it in their application, again, namely, to keep individual agencies from doing more and being too ambitious in their scope-of-work. He indicated that one thing the Commission does not want is for proposers to include more than they may have the capacity to deliver, and then complain to the Commission because they could not deliver when they did include the services in their scope-of-work. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that if they have a service in their scope of work they need to address it, as the Commission is not telling them what to include. Commission members agreed that this is important. Therefore evaluators will only be working to ensure that applicants address services properly and that these services are not unreasonable and that they are something the Commission can agree to.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that staff will be getting the packets ready for Commission members, and sending them out to them, including rubrics and the register of applications. He stated that he would check in via email to see if Commission members want hard copies of the RFPs or emails or both, depending on the preference. He said that evaluators are scheduled to complete their review by April 29, 2025, and once their scoring is complete, those rubrics will be forwarded to Commission members. He also stated that staff will provide the half-page summary of RFP applications, which is the practice that has always been used to facilitate the evaluation process for Commission members. He noted that Commissioners should contact him if they should need anything or have any questions regarding the applications, and reminded them that on May 22, 2025 a Special Meeting of the Commission will be held specifically for review of RFP applicants for the preliminary notice of intent to make an award. He also reminded Commissioners that the mini-grant applications will not be reviewed by the Commission until the regular meeting on June 5, 2025, so that review will not conflict with the general RFP review.

Commissioner Sigmond asked how many applications we have for consideration, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that there were six that were submitted. She asked when would have been the highest number of applications. He noted that during the previous cycle there were eight, though the highest would have been as many as eighteen. Commissioner Sigmond stated that the Commission needs to look at that, and see how we can attract more applicants. Mr. Rodriguez noted that they did include more advertisements in local newspapers and adds on Facebook. Commissioner Sigmond noted that once we are done with this process the Commission will need to really focus on what we need to do to get more agencies to apply, and why is it that it is only the same agencies that are applying. Mr. Rodriguez agreed, and that it would be important for the Commission to work out a new strategy, as there was more advertising for the process this time around, and that from talking to the Commission’s media contractor, next time we may consider Instagram, Youtube or another social media platform. Commissioner Sigmond felt that it would be important to highlight a specific program, and let the community know what the Commission is about, then it may help. Commissioner Vargas asked if we had a meeting with the applicants this time around. Mr. Rodriguez clarified if she meant the Proposer’s Workshop, of which she affirmed. He noted that there were eleven agencies. She asked if we had heard from other agencies to see if there were any issues with respect to them applying for a grant. The only thing that he noted was a couple of agencies that stated that they do not have an agency audit, and there was one applicant that submitted an application without an audit report and the cover page was handwritten, though the

requirement on the RFP application is to submit the application typewritten, but at least they did put forth the effort to submit an application for consideration. Commissioner Kim stated that he felt one of the problems was that the people in the community do not know how to write the application, that it may seem too complicated. Commissioner Deol and Commissioner Sigmond agreed. He restated that they may have a good idea by don't have the skills necessary to submit an application, in addition to the audit. He also noted that when people see that they need an audit they may feel overwhelmed because they may feel they are being investigated for spending. He suggested that perhaps the next time we have a presentation maybe we can work with another entity, because we cannot train people on how to write the grant, or have a grant writing workshop for the people that are interested. Commissioner Sigmond agreed, and Mr. Rodriguez said that that is something that the Commission has done in the past, and have used the Public Health Department's Training Center for that. Commission members agreed that that may also be a good idea. Commissioner Kim noted that Commissioner Sigmond felt that people are not aware of the grant, though he indicated that people are looking for money but it is just that they do not know how to submit an application.

Mr. Rodriguez also noted that there may be some agencies that are hesitant to apply because they may feel that the Commission is going to fund the programs that it has always funded. Commissioner Deol agreed, and noted that it seems as if we always do. Mr. Rodriguez stated that this is something that the Commission would want to consider. Commissioner Vargas noted that she would like to check on a time line on the number of people that have applied in the past, and that perhaps the issue may be a PR thing, and that we should go out and say that we are interested in funding new programs, that the message should state that the existing ones are great by that we want to welcome new programs or organizations to target. Commissioner Kim noted that PR is ok, but we should really ask the Community what they need and then go from there and provide several different options, and should provide consultants to help them write the grants. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that it may be PR issue and provide trainings. Mr. Rodriguez also agreed with Commissioner Kim, noting that the application that was received that is missing some information is from a new applicant, and may not have that grant writing experience. Commissioner Deol noted that it is difficult to write a grant, and that when she wrote the grant it was not easy. Commissioner Sigmond noted that this is something that can be brought back to the Commission once the process is over, and Commissioner Vargas agreed, also noting that with the information the Commission may have a better idea how to proceed for the next cycle. She agreed that the Community may not have the capacity, where there is a training even if it is online where they can be guided. Commissioner Sigmond noted that including a grant writing piece and could partner with another organization on this, in addition to the PR piece. Commissioner Deol noted that that would be a good idea as the Commission looks forward to a new round of RFPs. Commissioner Sigmond thanked Commissioners for the input and noted the Commission would move forward with this and asked Mr. Rodriguez if there was anything else.

7. Other First 5 Updates: Mr. Rodriguez noted that he had some updates related to First 5. He noted that the first one was related to the First 5 IMPACT Legacy Program, where he noted that that as a result of First 5 California increasing the annual allocation by allowing for First 5 Commissions to carryover unspent funds from the previous years, the IMPACT Legacy Program's budget was increased by \$32,185.64 for FY 2024-2025, and the have been incorporated into the budget and that the Commission was waiting for the County of Imperial Auditor's Department to finalized the process. He noted that due to decreases in tobacco revenue First 5 California

had indicated that they would reduce the FY 2025-2026 allocation for IMPACT Legacy by 10% which will also entail submitting a new budget in the amount of \$259,209.05 to the Region 9 Hub for inclusion in the regional application. He noted that he did not understand why First 5 California did not just authorize the carryover funds for the coming fiscal year budget instead of increasing it now and then reducing the next year by 10%. He said that in anticipation of the reduction staff is already working on the new budget in order to be ready for the coming year.

He noted that the second update is related to dues increases by the First 5 Association, of which the Association provided services to a network of 58 County First 5s. For these services the Association charges a fee. Commissioner Deol noted that she almost fell back when she saw how much they are increasing dues, and Commissioner Sigmond agreed. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it is a steep increase, where he indicated that for this fiscal year the dues charged by the Association were \$4,925.00, and for the next fiscal year dues increase significantly to \$12,637.00. Commissioner Miramontes inquired who these dues go to. Mr. Rodriguez noted that they are for the First 5 Association, the Association of 58 County Commissions. He noted that they do work for the Commission, provide services, have a presence in Sacramento and advocate on our behalf at the state level. Commissioner Miramontes asked if they were lobbyists, where Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Association may have lobbyists but in essence they provide a variety of services to First 5s, that it is made up of 58 First 5s and has a Board, and 501C(3) and (4) status, so they charge each of the members a fee. The fee is based primarily on live births. He noted that the issue is that our dues are going up considerably, as note on the chart provide in the packet. Commissioners agreed that the increases were high. Commissioner Deol asked why the increase for some counties was not as high, and noted that one County's dues had actually dropped. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it is based on the formula and what the contribution was from the previous year, and that the larger counties have a cap on their dues, as their pay would be much higher without the cap, though the value added from the Association's services may not match those higher amounts. Commissioner Sigmond felt that the increase was too much, and Commissioner Miramontes and Deol agreed. She then asked if there was something the Commission could do about it, and Commissioner Miramontes asked if we need to be part of the Association, and how it is different from First 5 California, and why First 5 California does not pay that fee. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that it was getting expensive, and Commissioner Miramontes asked if it was worth it to be in the Association, and if the service we get are worth such an increase. Mr. Rodriguez noted that he would follow up with the Executive Director of the Association.

He then provided an update on the Kits for New Parents, noting the First 5 California has reauthorized the Kit for New Parents which is valuable information for parents on a variety of issues related to child health and wellbeing. The State Commission has a new contractor, and has updated the process through which First 5 Commissions order Kits for New Parents. First 5 Commissions are the local source for First 5 Kits for New Parents, and therefore we will be using their new guidelines for ordering the Kits. Commissioner Sigmond asked if the Kits would be different. Mr. Rodriguez noted that they have not heard of any changes as of yet, though a new vendor may make recommendation for changes to the kits. Commissioner Kim asked if First 5 Imperial was paying for this. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Commission receives these at no cost to families in the County and are paid for by First 5 California. Commissioner Kim noted that some of these kits may end up for sale in other places or cross the board. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the kits distributed by the Commission are provided to families that reside in the County by community partners or grantees.

VII. Commissioner Comments

No Commissioner comments were noted.

VIII. Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Commissioner Miramontes motioned to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 pm. With all in favor.