

Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Called to Order: 1:01 pm

Members: Chair, Dr. Faris Sabbah, Sandy Brown, Jennifer Herrera, Heidy Kellison, Monica Martinez, Kimberly Petersen, Sheree Storm

1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

- Members Present: Dr. Faris Sabbah, Sandy Brown, Monica Martinez, Kimberly Petersen, Sheree Storm, Jennifer Herrera
- Members Absent: Heidy Kellison
- Quorum Established with 6 Members

2. Commission Member Remote Attendance Approval – Action Item

- No requests for remote attendance.

3. Review and Adopt Agenda – Action Item

- No changes submitted
- Motion to adopt agenda - M/S/P (U): Commissioners Petersen/Storm

4. Consent Agenda – Action Item

- A. Approve Commission June 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes
- B. Accept Financial Report for the period ending June 2025
- C. Accept First5 Santa Cruz County Grant Application Tracker, 09/15/2025
- D. Accept FY 25/26 First5 Santa Cruz County Contracts Executed Under Executive Director Authority, 09/15/2025
- E. Accept FY 25/26 First5 Santa Cruz County Sponsorships report, 09/15/2025
- Motion to approve consent agenda items - M/S/P(U): Commissioners Brown/Petersen

5. Community Oral Communications

- No Contributions

6. Commissioner Oral Communications

- Commissioner Storm: New Penny Lane clinic opened on August 18th serving pediatric patients – expecting to serve around 3,000 a year. In the first few weeks already had 200 patients. In addition to having space at the new clinic, we also have space in the Commercial Way clinic, so if you know of any children trying to get in, we have space.
- Commissioner Petersen: The county is preparing for the next round of its strategic plan, there's a survey that can be done online, just three quick questions, Commissioner Petersen to share with Director Brody and he can share out.
- Commissioner Herrera: Another update on health centers, Watsonville center has been approved to provide emergency access to kids. Also, the youth crisis center's ribbon cutting tomorrow, September 17th at 10 am, there will be a tour and some speakers. This is evidence of improved advocacy to get to the point of having ribbon cuttings. It will be at 5300 Soquel Avenue. Special Thanks to Commissioner Martinez's help to get the funding approved.

7. Welcome New Commissioners – Information Item

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- Commissioner Martinez presented a personal introduction.
- Commissioner Kellison absent from meeting, Director Brody provided brief introduction on their behalf
- Chair Sabbah notifies Commission that Dr. Raelene Walker, has resigned their position as part of the First 5 Commission, due to relocation, Chair recognizes their wonderful leadership.

8. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Update – Information Item

- Director Brody presented on the new Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Initiative which provides high quality books in Spanish and English for free for children in their homes and is a great way to foster early development.

Questions and Comments from Commissioners:

- Commissioner Storm: Is the fulfillment done at a national level?
- Response from Director Brody: Yes, the 50% match is great for our community, but also the infrastructure and support from the national office.
- Commissioner Martinez: What is the process to enroll new?
- Christine Sieburg: They can fill in forms online, or print it out and mail it into us, they're also incorporated into our Newborn Enrollment packet provided by our Newborn Enrollment Coordinating Team. Families can not only enroll their newborn, but also for any other children under the age of 5, we can fill in that form for them as well. Also, we have a social media campaign with enrollment information, and we have some samples of enrollment flyers with QR codes that they can use to enroll right away and get their books.
- Commissioner Herrera: Are the books bilingual?
- Director Brody: Yes, they can go through the whole enrollment process in either English or Spanish, and then can choose either English or Spanish books.
- Commissioner Herrera: When the data comes back, can we see how many people are choosing English vs. Spanish?
- Director Brody: Yes, we already have the information, it's 15% Spanish so far.
- Commissioner Brown: In terms of getting the communication out, we as commissioners could publish in our newsletters.
- Director Brody: What could we do on our end to help facilitate that?
- Commissioner Brown: If you could provide us with the flyer with the QR code, and just some sample text as well.
- Director Brody: We can do that, maybe we can get a notification in the County-wide newsletter as well, there has been some interest.
- Chair Sabbah: I could help support via the COE newsletter as well.

9. Communications Plan Update – Information Item

Program and Communications Officer Christine Sieburg summarized the updated communications plan and called for any feedback.

Questions and Comments from the Commissioners:

- Chair Sabbah: Can we promote sustainability more here? Maybe add something along those lines under "supporting advocacy", to facilitate opportunities to diversify funding streams potentially. Any other thoughts from the Commission?

- Director Brody: If you want to review the language, you can let me know any thoughts later.
- Commissioner Herrera: Would healthcare organizations be considered under the “community agencies”, or is that a secondary audience? CBOs and public agencies aren’t necessarily healthcare sector, but is the healthcare sector included in the CBO tags?
- Director Brody: Initially, I thought of the healthcare services in the “public agencies” bucket, but we can make it more explicit.
- Commissioner Martinez: I try to be conscious about this when creating communications - I don’t put anything on social media that can’t be accessed elsewhere because I don’t want to drive people to Facebook necessarily because it can be such a toxic environment right now. You don’t want to drive people only to social media, but also drive people to positive community spaces, whether it’s at their schools or in community spaces, which is not social media.
- Chair Sabbah: Also, we should have an ROI mindset, because some of these things are very time consuming, so I want to encourage you all to be thoughtful about what is the most impactful way of reaching our community?

10. Year-End Financial Update – Information Item

Director Brody provided an update on the financial position of First 5 Santa Cruz County as of June 30, 2025. Summary: First 5 did not exceed budgeted expenses, but we are running a deficit in this fiscal year. We are facing a decrease in Prop 10 funding every year. A couple multi-year grants expired this year but with the option for no-cost extension in some cases. We had a challenge on the revenue side. Central California has not all been realized, so we still have more activities and funding under this. We just set a long-term financial plan, a budget, a 5-year plan, an agency-level budget, summarized revenue and uses for 5 years, and we agreed to a floor in our fund balance, ¼ or 3 months of operating budget. My goal is just to be transparent with the commission about our funds. Any Questions or Comments about the data provided?

Questions and Comments from the Commissioners:

- Commissioner Martinez: Is it a timing issue for some of the grants or a true reduction in the grant size?
- Director Brody: For Kaiser, we no longer have multiple year commitments, but there will be opportunities to ask again.
- Commissioner Martinez: But it is a general reduction for Kaiser and Dominican?
- Director Brody: With Dominican, it’s more of an unknown, I sense that there is less capacity there now.
- Commissioner Martinez: With Prop 10, you took an estimate, do you have best and worse-case scenario projections for each fiscal year?
- Director Brody: At the state level, they don’t provide us with that information. When they look at the aggregate information, First5 California has done midline, worst case scenario etc. We have to see how to translate that to the County level, which we’re working on with our First 5 Association.
- Commissioner Storm: I see the financial plan approved in June and then now you’ve taken some measures, and you’re proposing 5-year budget moving forward?
- Director Brody: No, I will bring a full revision in January that will take into account rapid changes, I just took the existing budget and looked at our beginning fund balance, if all remains equal, this is what it might look like over the next 5 years.

- Chair Sabbah: When the executive group looked at this, if the projections hold for the next 5 years, we'll get back into the positive in the future.

11. Current Investment Assessments and Timeline – Information Item

Director Brody provided a review of the plan and timeline to review First 5 Santa Cruz County investments.

- Director Brody: We modeled removing 3 significant programs in whole and taking 10-12% reduction in the following years. We are giving ourselves as much time as possible, but we will likely have to consider even more reductions. We will continue to monitor expenses this year. We also will be presenting our reports to help provide the commissioners with as much information possible, and to be as accurate as possible in January when that revision comes. What criteria should we be asking ourselves and our programs? We identified 6 criteria, scale and reach, impact, sustainability, competencies, equity, innovation/adaptability. Also based on some of your feedback, we included innovation and adaptability to the degree that we can consider something like that. We thought we'd factor that into some sort of ranking. Any questions or comments on these criteria?

Questions and Comments from the Commissioners:

- Commissioner Martinez: Just make sure to communicate early and often with partners, it's not a lot of time to make programmatic changes by June 1st.
- Commissioner Brown: Could we raise community funds for Dolly Parton's program for example? Everyone loves Dolly Parton, we don't normally fundraise in this way, but there probably would be folks who would give if we could reach them in some way.
- Director Brody: We will continue to be very clear with our partners. We've applied to Santa Cruz Gives, we are ready to accept donations for this very fundraise-able program, we've looked into Community Foundations and the Chamber.

12. Contract Authorizations – Action Item

Vendor	Priority Area	Program	Amount
Pajaro Valley Unified School District	Early Care & Education	Quality Counts – Quality Improvement Grants	\$35,378
Encompass Community Services – Early Head Start	Early Care & Education	Quality Counts – Quality Improvement Grants	\$20,216

- Motion to approve these contract authorizations - M/S/P(U): Commissioner Brown/Commissioner Storm

13. Adjourn –

- Motion to Adjourn- 2:19 pm M/S/P(U) Commissioner Petersen/Commissioner Herrera