

First 5 Tuolumne County Commission  
Minutes of Meeting 1:15 p.m., August 10, 2011  
Tuolumne County Health Department – Conference Room  
20111 Cedar Road North, Sonora, CA 95370

The meeting was called to order at 1:20 p.m. by Chairperson Ashton, and attendees were welcomed.

Commissioners Present: Ashton, Alford, Bass, Peterson

Commissioners Absent: Denney, Kearns, Sells

Ex-Officio Members Present: Thompson, Williams

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Seegers

Staff Present: Kruse

Members of the Public Present:

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner Ashton reminded the Commission of conflict of interest issues.

Action Items

1. Action on the approval of minutes for June 8, 2011

Motion: to accept the minutes for June 8, 2011

Moved: Commissioner Bass

Seconded: Commissioner Peterson

There was no further discussion.

Motion carried: 4 ayes (Ashton, Alford, Bass, Peterson), Commissioners Denney, Kearns and Sells being absent from the vote.

Discussion Items, Reports, and Information Items

2. Nomination of Officers.

The following nominations were made:

For Chair: Cori Ashton (nomination by Commissioner Bass)

For Vice-Chair: Patricia Denney (nomination by Commissioner Ashton)

For Treasurer: Jan Kearns (nomination by Commissioner Ashton)

3. A-TCAA interest in contracting for services

Sheila Kruse reviewed the request from A-TCAA, and the recommendations of the county council. She responded to questions from the Commission. Evelyn Thompson asked why it would be a

perceived conflict of interest for the Executive Director to contract directly with agencies, but not a conflict to contract through the Commission. The Commission discussed that the transparency issue would be addressed in the latter. Commissioner Ashton asked how a contract for services would impact existing contracts. Sheila Kruse noted that the county counsel clarified that no work could be done in connection with contracts that the Commission was already funding. It should not affect any future contracts, due to the transparency issue. The policy would have to allow for other entities to participate. Commissioner Bass expressed concern that the process seemed too contrived, and that it might leave the Commission open to criticism by those not familiar with the entire situation. Marcia Williams and Evelyn Thompson noted that the transparency and accountability would serve as protective factors in that regard. Sheila Kruse left the room to allow for further Commission discussion.

The Commissioners agreed that they were in overall support, because they thought that the process would be of benefit to the community. However, they wanted to make sure the process was looked at carefully, with concerns addressed proactively. They directed Sheila Kruse to bring back draft materials for consideration, including policies and draft contracts. They instructed that these materials should include assurances that administrative fees would cover any Commission costs, that there would be a clear criteria for accepting projects, and that there be clarity around the Executive Director's role for the Commission work and for fee-based work.

4. Financial Report for June 2011.

Sheila Kruse noted that the audit was nearing completion and had gone well. She reviewed the June financial report, noting that revenues came in higher than anticipated, with funds coming in over budget. Although revenues, statewide, dropped 1.9%, local revenues were higher than the previous year due to birth rate fluctuations. Expenditures were under budget, but most of that difference is already committed in contracts and carry-over to the next fiscal year.

5. Reports from Executive Director, Commissioners and Ex-Officios

Sheila Kruse

- Noted that she had provided all Commissioners with a copy of the public records response to *California Watch* as per a request from Evelyn Thompson at the last meeting.
- Reported on a meeting with Margie Bulkin and Joe Silva at the Tuolumne County Supt. Schools office that morning regarding the SELF program. The purpose of the meeting was to orient Ms. Bulkin to the program, and the RFA requirements, in order to ensure that any proposed changes to the budget and service strategy remained true to the vision of the Commission. She discussed the likelihood that the MHS-A-PEI funding might be available to address some of the needs for behavioral health consultation, along with salary savings. She reported that Joe Silva had expressed his appreciation to the Commission for their flexibility in allowing the program to address needed staffing issues for the program.

- Reported that AB99, the legislation that sweeps First 5 dollars, is still in law, although First 5 funds were not used to balance the California State budget. County lawsuits are pending, with hearings to occur in August. She is assuming Tuolumne is still exempt, regardless of the outcome of the lawsuits.

#### Marcia Williams

- Reported that the A-TCAA Solsbyville Head Start Center recently received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. She noted that this was quite an honor, as the process was rigorous and took a number of years (first initiated by Linda Botts). The center received a score of 96 out of a possible 100 points.
- A-TCAA is on track to open the Bluebell site in August. The project has received tremendous support, including a recent grant from Sonora Area Foundation for \$37 thousand dollars, which requires a match.
- On August 17<sup>th</sup>, all the other Head Start centers will open for the school year.

#### Evelyn Thompson

- Noted that Solsbyville Head Start was the only accredited child care center in Tuolumne County, and that it was quite an honor.
- Reported that ICES had a busy summer, with a number of parenting classes presented, including a number of shorter workshops presented in conjunction with Columbia College. Although sign-ups for infant massage classes are high, parents do not then follow through, and it seems that the reality of getting out the door with a baby may be a barrier, especially in the evening. ICES will continue to look at the best approach for this popular class.
- ICES had to lay off staff in Mariposa, and cut back in Tuolumne, but the budget cuts were not as drastic as anticipated. There may be further revenue declines, and the agency will adjust as needed.

#### Commissioner Bass:

- The Area 12 on Aging will be recruiting shortly for leadership positions. Contact Pauline White for information.
- Greg Applegate is moving to Idaho. He will continue working with the Sonora Area Foundation until December, primarily through telecommuting. It is likely that the Sonora Area Foundation will be recruiting again shortly for an Executive Director. Mick Grimes is helping with the transition.
- Due to the retirement of Kathleen Rustrum, a county position may be advertised in September, most likely through internal recruitment.

Marcia Williams reported that a UC Extension 4H Youth Development position in Tuolumne County is also opening.

Susan Peterson reported on the time she was spending with her many former foster children this summer.

Commissioner Ashton reported on one of the alternative strategies that the Child Welfare Services was implementing -- a locally designed, grass-roots "Hands and Hooves" program. Kids who have experienced abuse are paired up with abused horses at the ReHorse Rescue Ranch. Social Workers bring the kids out every Thursday night, from 5-8 pm, to spend time with the horses and with community volunteers, including youth volunteers. Kids have learned about horseshoeing, harnessing and respectful approach, learned from a dentist and veterinarian, and have each adopted one horse to connect with. They are journaling as they learn. The kids are really responding to the opportunity. A pre- and post-testing will measure changes in well being. There is a plan that, following the sessions at the Ranch, the kids will go to a different ranch to have an opportunity to mount and ride horses.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2011, at 1:15 pm.