



Imperial County Children and Families First Commission
MINUTES
Meeting of May 22, 2025

I. Call to Order

This Special Meeting of First 5 Imperial was called to order by Karla Sigmond, Chairperson, 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

Becky Green

John Hawk

Joong Kim

Fred Miramontes

Karla Sigmond

Commissioners Absent:

Yurii Camacho

Danila Vargas

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. There was no public comment from the individuals present.

IV. Adoption of Minutes

A motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 3, 2025, was made by Commissioner Miramontes, seconded by Commissioner Green, 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 January 2025 through March 2025. A motion to approve the consent calendar items was made by Commissioner Green, and seconded by Commissioner Deol, 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. Selection of Proposals for First 5 Imperial General RFP 2025-2028, and Notice of Intent to Make Awards: Commissioner Sigmond introduced the process for selection of General RFP proposals, and asked Mr. Rodriguez to lead the Commission through the review of proposals. He noted that the Commission would issue the Notice of Intent to Make an Award during the meeting, and asked Commission members to turn to page 16 of the packet to note the register of applicants. In addition, he noted that there were two ranking sheets and the General Grant summaries as reference. Then he proceeded to ask Commission members present if there were

any conflicts of interest related to the six proposals that would be discussed. He asked each Commission member individually, and no conflicts of interest were noted by any of the members present.

Then he noted the two ranking sheets related to the Commission member ranking of applications, one highlighted in green that represents the rankings by applicant in order of rank by the amount of funding requested by applicant, and the blue sheet is also in order of rank with the funding that is being recommended for each applicant. He noted that there are copies of the summaries that were provided to Commissioners, and that scoring rubrics were previously sent to Commission members for review. He stated that by looking at the ranking order it is noted that application #1 on the list would not be considered for funding if the Commission intends to go by the rankings presented. He stated that the Commission could either proceed by reviewing applications # 2 through #6 and move to review and discuss each one then to approve of the General RFP applications, or if Commissioners would prefer to go over each one and approve each individual application as the Commission goes along. Commissioner Green made the motion to not consider application #1, Camp Joseph, which was ranked 6 and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. After no discussion on the motion, the Commissioner voted with all members in favor.

Next Commissioner Deol noted that it would be appropriate to review the other applicants by rank. Mr. Rodriguez then referred Commission members to the ranking sheet and noted the applicant that ranked #1 was Project NENES, submitted by the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program. Commissioner Sigmond asked if members had any questions or remarks regarding this application. Commissioner Deol noted that she was looking at the application number on the summary. Commissioner Sigmond noted that this proposal was ranked #1 and is proposal #3 on the summary as clarification for members. Then Commissioner Green asked about the fact that this project had been funded previously though they were asking for computer equipment. Mr. Rodriguez noted that that is a good question, and that the recommendation is to reduce the request. Commissioner Deol asked if they were increasing home visitors, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that they were not, though they may need to update computer equipment that is dated, and that may be the rationale for the request. He noted that they were not funded to purchase any equipment during the previous funding cycle and stated that other reductions were related to reductions in operating supplies, and reproduction costs. Commissioner Deol noted that part of Project NENES was also being funded through the IMPACT Program, and if that affects what was being considered for funding. Mr. Rodriguez answered that the Commission provides funding for the general operation of the program, and that funds from the IMPACT Program are intended to enhance these services through an increase of children served through one home visitor and the major difference is that Commission funds are used to directly support parents involved in the home instruction program, whereas, the portion funded by the IMPACT Program directly targets exempt care providers identified as family, friends and neighbor providers that care for a young child, where are generally individuals caring for a child for which the care may be subsidized through CalWORKS. He noted that HIPPI USA actually changed their curriculum as a result of Project NENES wanting to target these types of providers because of the value that they would serve using a home instruction program with children under their care versus, perhaps, just having the child watch programs on television while under their care. Commissioner Green asked if it would be just one additional home visitor through IMPACT? Of which Mr. Rodriguez noted that she was correct, and that home visitor would target the exempt care providers, which is distinct from what the Project was

asking for. For the benefit of Commission members, he provided a summary of the HIPPY Program, and did highlight that one of the concerns is that they had chosen 12 parents per home visitor, which in the past the number has been 15 parents per home visitor. He noted that as part of the recommendation it would be to increase the number or provide the rationale for the change. Ms. Sigmond then asked for a motion on application #4. Commissioner Deol moved to select application #4, the Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, Project NENES for funding at the recommended amount, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. With no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.

Next Mr. Rodriguez noted that the following application, ranked #2, the El Centro Elementary School District, the Bridges to Bright Futures Project, would be considered for funding by Commissioners. He provided a summary of the proposal, noting that they would provide case management to up to 100 families with children 0-5 from the school district, though they sometimes offer services to families that are outside of the school district. He further noted that aside from case management services, the second component of the project is to provide developmental screening services using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. He noted that one concern with the proposal is that case managers use an instrument, an Environmental Questionnaire, that was created by the same organization that created the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, though the instrument does not have enough research behind it, and staff feel that the questions in the questionnaire are complicated and very personal questions that in order for case managers to complete the instrument effectively they really need to build the trust of the family and have a strong rapport with the family. Therefore, staff are recommending that case managers complete at least one home visit with parents before conducting the questionnaire, and also another consideration for the Project to indicate the nature of their case management services, such as frequency of contacts, objectives for providing successful services, how referrals will be tracked, etc. He noted that it would be a lost opportunity for families to receive appropriate services if only an Ages and Stages Questionnaire is provided and then the Project notes that services are complete, namely due to the fact that these are "high-need" families they are serving, and case management should be the priority. Commissioner Green agreed that the Ages and Stages Questionnaire should not be the basis of the services. Mr. Rodriguez also noted the importance in how they approach using the Environmental Questionnaire, even given the fact that the application scored very well with the outside RFP evaluation team, and he stated that there was a sense that the school district would submit an application that was distinct from the previous funding cycle as they had re-named the Project, though the scope-of-work was exactly the same as it had previously been. Commissioner Deol asked if the Environmental Screening Tool, if when they use it, are they looking at the household environment, and if they are looking at how safe the home is, such as the types of cleaning supplies, particularly when these items are around children and could pose risks. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the question was very valid, as the ESQ is not clearly addressed, and the problem is that it is more of an assessment tool that contains questions regarding personal information and given the circumstances could be perceived as offensive and without a strong rapport with the family the questionnaire may only serve to alienate the family from services. He noted that questions really focus on issues that may affect behavioral health, such as if there are any issues in the home with domestic violence or if there are family members that may abuse alcohol. He noted that previously they had recommended that case managers not engage families though the use of this tool, and to find an instrument that seems less invasive, indicating that that will be the recommendation again, or if they use the tool that they offer an adequate plan for how it will be implemented. Commissioner Green further noted that the Ages and Stages

Questionnaire may also not be serving the purpose, and that it was intended to be a parent centered assessment for identifying delays in learning and used for further evaluation. She noted that it is being used too much and not really covering what needs to be covered. Mr. Rodriguez noted that case managers do use that instrument to refer children for additional services, particularly if there is a delay in learning, in addition to the fact that the Project falls under the Special Education Program for the school district and therefore many times they are able to get additional services for children in a seamless manner. Commissioner Deol noted that she would like case managers to note what the home environment is like and work to assess the needs of families they serve, and that they should focus on more targeted case management and that they really did not provide enough information on that. Commissioner Sigmond noted that it would be very important for case managers to draft a plan on how they are going to serve families and the process for making referrals and following up with those referrals to ensure families are benefiting from these services. Mr. Rodriguez noted that previously the Commission had required case managers to conduct at least one home visit, and though it was difficult for case managers at first, there was some value in that type of service, and that it would be recommended for this to be required again for this Project. He stated that not offering intensive and targeted case management services would be a missed opportunity for the school district, as these children in a matter of a year or so would be entering their school system, and therefore would benefit from appropriate and meaningful services, and if the families are better off then the school district should be better off as well. Commissioner Sigmond agreed that a meaningful plan and home visits were important and would support families that are in need. Commissioner Green noted that these services would be good, and particularly so for children and are being raised without other children around them. Commissioner Deol noted that it should not be a problem supporting funding for the proposal, though that they do need to adopt another evaluation tool, receive adequate training or talk to social services about what types of protocols they are using for case management. Commissioner Green noted that perhaps WestEd would provide some type of training or the Behavioral Health Department. She noted that WestEd was heading up the new programs for the state related to behavioral health, and therefore it may be a good resource for them. Then Commissioner Deol made a motion to fund the El Centro Elementary School for the recommended amount and to incorporate the recommendations that were noted with respect to their case management component, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. Without any further discussion the motion carried with all in favor.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the next application, which was ranked #3, and also noted as application #6 in the summary, is the Pioneers Memorial Health Care District application. He provided a summary of the proposal and noted that it was being recommended for funding. He stated that the application was clear and is composed of two major components. The first is to purchase 6 panda beds for the neonatal intensive care unit for the purpose of supporting newborns that need support after birth, particularly life-saving support, and to the point where the hospital would not have to transport such children outside of the area for these types of services. In addition, the second component would be to provide training for neonatal staff members on the proper use of the panda beds. He noted that the services were appropriate and that the budget was very appropriate as it was only asking for funds to purchase the equipment and additional training. He said that the proposal had indicated that the hospital estimates serving 371 children per year. Commissioner Deol noted that they probably looked at the percentages of neonates that were born over a period of time and estimated the number and they should have a good grasp on that. Mr. Rodriguez further noted that it was not clear if this

was a one-year Project, or for a three-year Project, and that would have to be something that is clarified before any contractual obligations are determined, and there was no breakdown on what the panda beds would cost. He stated that the RFP Evaluation Team noted this issue as well. He indicated that this could be a meaningful Project, and information provided to the Commission would have to be identified, which could be as simple as how many neonates benefited from the panda beds and how many families benefitted from the fact that these services were provided locally. Commissioner Miramontes asked if the panda beds were specially designed for serving these children. Commissioner Deol explained how the panda beds worked and how they could effectively support the hospital and families with neonates. Commissioner Green made a motion to provide funding to application ranked #3, for Pioneers Memorial Health Care District, with the recommendations noted in the summary, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Deol. Commissioner Sigmond ask for any discussion, where Commissioner Deol noted that she would like to add that the hospital ensure that the labor and delivery nurses also be trained in the use of the panda beds, as the training is a requirement for the NICU nurses, though the concern is if there is not a NICU nurse available, then it would be important to ensure that other nursing staff can step in and understand the purpose of using the panda bed. Also, she noted that it would be important to understand the relation between SCRIPPS and UCSD with the local hospitals, because Pioneers had a relationship with SCRIPPS and El Centro Regional with UCSD. This would be important to see what their role is with respect to providing services to neonates, because UCSD was the number one place for training NICU nurses. Commission Miramontes noted that the relationship should still be there. Commissioner Deol noted that perhaps these entities could provide the training, and that is something that the hospital should address. Mr. Rodriguez noted that those items will be added to the recommendations and include them in the contract, in addition to the term of the proposal, because there will be funds for the coming years that may be used to support training. Commissioner Green agreed that it will be important to support training for labor and delivery nurses as well, and that it will be critical to assess what is available to fund training and if there are in kind or other means to provide these services. Commissioner Sigmond asked if there were any other comments, of which Commissioner Deol noted how important it would be for there to be other staff that are trained because if NICU staff are out, then we would not want other staff standing around wondering what to do, as in these cases it is important to know what to do and act. Commissioner Kim noted that there many people at our hospitals that are being sent out of the area for services, particularly to San Diego. That it would be important to offer more and more services here locally and therefore helping the community. Commissioner Deol noted that that is the intent of the proposal to be able to support our local community. With no further discussion, Commission members all voted in favor of the motion to fund the recommended amount with recommendations noted.

Mr. Rodriguez then moved to introduce the application ranked #4, which was application #2 in the summary, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Imperial County. He provided a summary of the application, and noted that it did not score as well as previously with the RFP Evaluation Team, and he noted that the Project had included an objective for a Family Literacy component, though the component was confused with early care and education. Commissioner Miramontes asked for clarification, and Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Family Literacy Component was added as part of the narrative for the Project Description. He noted that there were a number of objectives, one for case management of child cases in the foster care system, another where they would provide a family literacy component, the third one would be to ensure children 3-5 years of age are enrolled in preschools, and the fourth objective is to provide developmental

screenings and make the appropriate health or educational referrals. He noted that the Project is being recommended for funding at the amount requested by the agency, though the agency will be required to clear up the basis of the family literacy component, as the information in the scope-of-work is based on early care and education services, and is not a family literacy component. Therefore, the agency will need to provide a plan for providing family literacy services to children in the foster care system. Commissioner Sigmond noted that they would also have to indicate which curriculum they would be using, and Commissioner Green stated that that was what she also wanted to know, and if the services they are providing, if they would be going through a licensed program or are they trying to offer these services themselves. Mr. Rodriguez noted that that it may be the case that they are offering them because of the increase in funding, though the addition of the family literacy piece may have been a mistake in the way that it was written, as objectives 2 and 3 were literally identical in their scope-of-work as early care and education programs, though the objectives by themselves are very different. Commissioner Green noted that this will need to be clear up, and that she would want to ensure that people are trained and know what they are doing as they would not help families if they were not doing it correctly. Mr. Alex Cardenas, the Executive Director for Court Appointed Special Advocates of Imperial County, asked to address the Commission. He noted that the agency is not providing a literacy component, that the agency has MOUs and operational agreements for services, and that their goal is to ensure that the experts are providing services, and apologized if the objective was confusing. He noted that their services are advocacy and that they did increase their duties, and the important thing is to ensure that children have equitable access to those services so that they can increase their literacy and have early care and education. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the question for the Commission to clear up the difference between early care and education and family literacy, which are two different types of services. Mr. Cardenas noted that a Coordinator will work to ensure that children participate in either the center-based or home-based programs, where their position is to help the child access these services, either through early education or family literacy that is provided through one of their identified partners. Commissioner Green asked if the Project would be trying to take the place of the Bridge Program that is being eliminated. Mr. Cardenas noted that their role is to advocate and ensure that children and families have services. Commissioner Green noted that it will be important to ensure these children are in a licensed program. Mr. Rodriguez noted that family literacy would be a distinct component, and what Mr. Cardenas is talking about is early care and education through some type of preschool service, and he asked him to clarify how they are proposing for that to work. Mr. Cardenas stated that it is possible that they had convoluted the idea of family literacy with the home-based preschool programs offered by Volunteers of America and the County Office of Education, and that the mistake is that they were calling that a family literacy program. Commissioner Green noted that he was talking about home-based care though the objective was family literacy, and Commissioner Deol asked if the Project would be doing home-based evaluations and if there is a need then would they refer families. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the problem was that that type of service is very different from family literacy, which is what is in the proposal. Mr. Cardenas noted that they did not want their volunteers to be acting like literacy experts, because they are not, that they would be working with their partner agencies. Commissioner Green stated that perhaps the Project should change the family literacy piece to a home-based piece. Though Mr. Rodriguez noted that the issue is that in the proposal it seemed as if the family literacy piece were a new component, because previously the agency did include that early care and education piece, which is not a new service, and in addition to that the agency is requesting more funding that it had done so for the previous cycle, which would make sense with including a new service, like

family literacy. Mr. Cardenas noted that they were working on expanding access to children in the home-based program, of which they had mistakenly referred to as family literacy. Mr. Rodriguez noted that it was not clear that that would be the case, because that service was addressed in the previous funding cycle, though the proposal under review clearly includes a new component for family literacy, of which he noted that the proposal had changes and felt that it would be a good addition to the services they are already offering. He asked Mr. Cardenas what was the rationale for that change. Mr. Cardenas noted that that was not the intention. Commissioner Sigmond noted that it would be great to have the component, and Commissioner Green indicated that she actually liked the fact that they were going to implement a family literacy component. The individual that supported writing the proposal, present at the meeting but did not state her name, commented that the idea was to connect families with family literacy experts, and issue referrals and also learn what staff would need to become appropriate in that area. Mr. Rodriguez noted that there seems to be some clarification lacking on the fact that the intention was to implement family literacy, and indicated that the appropriate agencies for these services at this time were the local libraries, and that perhaps they would need to have partnerships with the local libraries to initiate these services appropriately. She, the other representative from CASA, then indicated that the agency will also be establishing a type of mobile library where they would then provide family literacy through the service. Commissioner Green asked if there was a breakdown for this funding, of which it sounds like something the agency wants to build that they do not have. Mr. Rodriguez noted that in the proposal budget there was an increase in staff time, and the assumption was that this increase would account for the family literacy piece, because this item is new, where the other services remain the same. Mr. Cardenas clarified that the additional staff time was related to administrative surveillance in the court hearings, noting that they appear in over a thousand hearings every year, and that they need additional staff time to address the questions asked by the presiding judge. Commissioner Green noted that she understood what he was saying, though in this case, the proposal is asking for grant monies for services that are not there, and telling the Commission that this is what they really need, which is not explained in the proposal. She asked if there is a way we can hold the application and provide time for Mr. Cardenas to clarify the scope-of-services with a clear breakdown. Commissioner Deol noted that it may be funded but not at this time as there needs to be some clarification, and would be willing to provide Mr. Cardenas with time to provide a breakdown, as it sounds as if he needs additional staff time to do other things, and not what was included in the proposal. Mr. Rodriguez indicated that the problem is that these services the agency was already offering, in addition to the fact that the case load was projected to be the same, 40 to 60 new children, though it made sense to increase staffing for the purpose of implementing a new service, like family literacy. Therefore, the Commission can approve of the proposal with the intent of clearing up the new services and/or staff time. Commissioner Green noted that she did not feel comfortable approving of the proposal without clarification, because components are missing, and that in order to agree to fund we need to know that is being requested. Commissioner Deol agreed, and Commissioner Sigmond noted that at this time the Commission would not be able to decide because of all of the questions. Commissioner Green made a motion to set application #2, for the Court Appointed Special Advocates of Imperial County, aside until more information can be included to clear up the concerns with the proposal. Commissioner Deol seconded the motion, and with no further discussion the motion passed with all in favor.

Then Mr. Rodriguez proceeded to introduce the final application for consideration, which was ranked #5 and listed as #5 on the summary report, the Neighborhood House Infant and Toddler

Project. He provided a summary of the report specifically noting that the request was to create 11 new infant/toddler slots for a new early care and education site at the Neighborhood House of Calexico that would serve “high-need” children 0-2 years of age. The Project would include capacity building and professional development opportunities for childcare staff, in addition to supporting pathways for higher education. He noted that they have a 560 square foot area in their facilities available for the site. Commissioner Green noted that they had indicated that they currently do not have a license to operate an infant and toddler center. Mr. Rodriguez affirmed that they do not, and had indicated that there is an application in process for licensing, and asked Mr. Ricardo Ortega, the representative from the neighborhood house if he wanted to provide an update on the status of the licensing application. Mr. Ortega noted that the application was in process and that they had communicated with the consultant for the State on the matter, and that the State needs to confirm that they have an area equipped for serving infants/toddlers and that that was the process the Neighborhood House of Calexico was trying to complete. Mr. Rodriguez asked him to confirm that the State will not license the agency until the site is set up and ready to serve children. Mr. Ortega confirmed that that is what he understood from the consultant. Mr. Rodriguez noted that that was one of the concerns, namely how would the Commission be ready to provide any funding if the childcare site was not ready for operations. Commissioner Green noted that this would be an issue, and still, it would not be a guarantee on licensing. Mr. Rodriguez noted that there were two recommendations contingent to moving forward with a funding award and subsequent contract, which would entail addressing the issue regarding the licensing of the site. At that point Commissioner Green asked if the agency had applied for state funding, noting that there are start up funds that may be available. Mr. Ortega noted that they had not applied and were not aware of the startup funding. He noted that they can do the startup, that they would need to purchase the equipment, set it up and that licensing would review the application within thirty days of notifying them that the site was ready. Commissioner Deol asked for clarification on the request for the Commission to provide the funds to purchase equipment to support the startup process. Mr. Ortega noted that that was correct but noted that he understood that it may not be possible, though they have everything lined up but need the money to purchase the equipment necessary to set up the childcare site. Mr. Rodriguez noted that perhaps another option would be to include in the contract that only funds necessary for the purchase of equipment in order to meet licensing requirements would be authorized, and that no other funds can be spent until licensing by the state has been issued and staff have been hired to provide childcare services for infants and toddlers. Commissioner Green noted that they could apply for funds with the state for equipment for the startup, and that these funds would cover everything. She stated that through the Department of Social Services an agency can apply for the contract and that part of the process is obtaining startup monies to set up the site prior to licensing being issued. Mr. Ortega noted that he was not aware, and that the consultant had indicated that if he had a contract and was ready to start then licensing would review the site. Commissioner Green noted that there was a process, and that the state would provide funds for the startup to set up the site and that then they could move forward with an actual contract. She noted that the state had sent out a bulletin with this information as they were looking for new programs related to general childcare. She particularly highlighted that these were not state preschool programs but general childcare which are very different in scope and that children 0-2 years of age fall under general childcare. She noted that these were CCCR funds, and Mr. Ortega stated that he was on their list for any funds that may be available for that and that he has not received anything. Commissioner Green noted that they had put out a request the previous year and may be doing so again this year. Mr. Ortega noted that the state consultant had recommended that they

move forward with setting up the site and that they would review it within 30 days once they notified them that the site was set up. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the important part of the recommendation is to have the license prior to funding in order to have the preschool ready to be up and running. Then he stated that the second recommendation is for the Commission to only fund the Project for the duration of the three-year funding cycle, which would provide the agency with ample time to pursue a state contract for general childcare. Commissioner Green reiterated that Mr. Ortega understand that the contract would be with the Department of Social Services for general childcare and not a state preschool program which are two distinct programs with different departments that run them. She also noted that there is a concern to fund an agency to go from scratch to start a new program instead of funding an agency that has a plan that has begun and help them to enhance that program. She then referred to funding that had previously been provided to the My Magic Castle Preschool in Niland for a bus to transport children, and how that project had been something new and that it could not be sustained. She noted that there would be a concern to fund a program that does not exist at the moment, like My Magic Castle. Mr. Rodriguez noted that the big advantage is the Neighborhood House has been providing regular preschool services for over 40 years in the Calexico. Commissioner Green stated that she understood that, though infant/toddler care is a differed matter. Commissioner Sigmond asked what the Commission could do to support the Neighborhood House to move forward with this project. Commissioner Green noted that the agency should communicate the matter to the state, and need to ensure that they understand the issues related to running a general childcare program, form equipment, type of care, training for providers and liability related to care for these children, and the obligations and insurance are very different. Mr. Ortega stated that he understood that, and that is why they are starting with a small site. Commissioner Green noted that 11 slots for infant care is a lot, and Mr. Rodriguez agreed because of the one to three ratio that would require four staff members. Mr. Ortega noted that if they could start the services then they could keep moving forward with more children because there is a need in the community. Commission members agreed and did not dispute the need for these services, and Commissioner Green added that it is important to do this the right way. Commissioner Deol noted that they understand that there is a need, though that the agency should talk with the representative from the state to see what is needed to ensure they can move forward with the project. Commissioner Green added that they needed to show that they have a plan and that they can fulfill all that is required to run an infant program, and that teachers do not require just an AA degree, but an AA degree plus. Mr. Ortega noted that they already have the qualified staff, and the space, and that all they needed was the Commission's help to get the site ready for care. Mr. Kim noted that perhaps the Commission could approve of the application though not fund until they have the license. Commissioner Sigmond noted that they could hold off on the decision like they did with the CASA application, and she noted that the agency needs more guidance on how to start this, then the Commission Deol noted that once they are ready the Commission can support. Though Commissioner Green noted that she had an issue with doing a startup project. Mr. Ortega indicated that if the Commission does not want to do startup, then why was that not addressed in the RFP. Commissioner Deol noted that she understood his point, though that what the Commission wants him to do is tap into the funds that may be available from the state to move forward with licensing, and get the equipment and once the site is ready then the Commission can support the Neighborhood House. Mr. Kim noted that the contract would not begin until July, and that there was time for them to get something going. Commissioner Sigmond noted that the Neighborhood House needs to get the license to be able to serve infants and toddlers first. Mr. Kim noted that the Commission can approve the application today and they can forward with

the license. Commissioner Green noted that if he takes the time and follows the steps necessary the agency can show that they are serious about doing an infant/toddler childcare center. She noted that there are a lot of steps that need to be completed first. Commissioner Sigmond asked Commissioner Green, for the benefit of the new Commissioner, John Hawk, to state who she was. She then introduced herself as the Director of the Child Development Department at the Imperial Valley College and that she oversees the state preschool and infant/toddler center there, in addition to the Southern California Representative for early care and education as well as having worked with the California Department on Credentialing for teacher certification. Then Commissioner Sigmond asked how the Commission would move forward and how it would support this request. She noted that because there were more steps to consider then the Commission should provide more time. Commissioners Deol and Green agreed. Commissioner Green noted that if Mr. Ortega needed help, then he should go out to her office at the college so she could guide him. Mr. Ortega thanked her and noted that he would follow up with an appointment to see her. Commissioner Deol asked him to show the Commission that he is going through the steps necessary to start the program up. Commissioner Sigmond noted that the Commission just wants to serve children and that going through the process will be important. Commissioner Deol then made the motion to hold the application to give time for the Neighborhood House to move forward with the process and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Green. The motion passed with all in favor.

Mr. Rodriguez noted that the Notice of Intent to Make an Award would be posted, and would note the two awards previously discussed for the Court Appointed Special Advocates and the Neighborhood House of Calexico would be identified as pending on that notice. He reminded the Commission that members will meet again on June 5th, 2025, to make the final award and would address any protests that may arise due to the General Request for Proposal Application FY 20225-2028 process. He clarified that if agencies noted as pending wanted to protest the decision they can do that during the protest period and that this would be addressed on June 5th. Once the Final Award Notice has been issued the process will be complete, regardless of the issues related to any awards that may be pending.

VII. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Sigmond asked if there were any Commissioner comments at this time. Mr. Rodriguez recognized the new Commissioner, Supervisor John Hawk, who was attending the meeting and appreciated his participation given the complexity of reviewing the RFPs up for funding. Commissioners welcomed Supervisor Hawk to the Commission.

Commissioner Green announced that beginning next fall several courses will be changed to 8-week schedules, and by the spring semester of next year all courses will be on an 8-week schedule, and classes will be offered on a schedule that requires 3 hour online and 3 hours in person, which will be a hybrid-model of instruction. She further noted that they will be looking at new state requirements for meeting practicum coursework for ECE students, which consists of 300 hours of 0-3 work and 300 hours 3–5-year-olds and school age for a total of 600 hours of practicum. Commissioner Sigmond thanked Commissioner Green for offering an open house event for their programs at the college, and thanked Mr. Rodriguez and Dr. Galindo for attending the event, noting that it was a good event to showcase the work the college does for ECE students and children.

Then Commissioner Deol asked Commissioners to talk a little bit about themselves as an introduction to Supervisor Hawk to the Commission. All Commissioners present introduced themselves and stated their role in the Community and how this work is related to their role with the Commission.

VIII. Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Commissioner Deol motioned to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Miramontes. The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm. With all in favor.