



MINUTES
FIRST 5 RIVERSIDE COUNTY
Commission Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 21, 2026
2:00 PM

First 5 Riverside County
585 Technology Ct
Riverside, California 92507

Commissioners Present: Supervisor Chuck Washington, Jose Campos, Zachary Ginder, Edwin Gomez, and Takashi Wada (Arrived at 2:07 p.m.)

Commissioners Absent: Kimberly Saruwatari, Charity Douglas, Cheryl-Marie Hansberger, and Elizabeth Romero

Administrative Staff Present: Charna Widby, Executive Director; Michael Knight, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director; Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV; Carol Abella, Regional Manager; Larissa Wills, Regional Manager; Charity Webb, Regional Manager; Alicia Corona, Regional Manager; Estella Briseno, Regional Manager; Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist; Victor Lopez, Business Process Analyst II; Steven Hernandez, Administrative Services Analyst II; Michael Avalos, Support Services Technician

Legal Counsel: Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel

- A. Call to Order – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Commission Chair**
1. Pledge of Allegiance – Led by Vice Chair Campos
 2. Roll Call – Conducted by Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV
- B. Public Comments (for items not listed on the agenda) – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair**

Ms. Cathryn Van Der Linden, representing SoCal Water Babies, provided public comment and shared an update on the drowning-prevention partnership with First 5 Riverside County. Her comments included current program data, outcomes, parent education, instructor capacity-building efforts, and future priorities with an emphasis on expanding equitable access, particularly in underserved areas.

A brief discussion with Chair Washington and Ms. Van Der Linden noted the absence of program presence in the Hemet Valley due to access and facility limitations. Potential solutions discussed included school and host-pool partnerships, instructor training support, and coordination with the Fifth District Supervisor’s office and public health staff. Demand continues to exceed available funding.

(Commissioner Wada arrived at 2:07 p.m.)

C. Commission and Advisory Committee Business – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair

1. Recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. and Rob Reiner

Presented by Ms. Widby

- In Remembrance – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- In Remembrance – Rob Reiner

2. Advisory Committee Comments

Ms. Widby provided an update on the meeting held earlier today.

3. Director's Report – Charna Widby, Executive Director; Michael Knight, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director

Presented by Ms. Widby

- Blue Ribbon Recognition
- Jan Peterson Progress
- Quality Counts Innovative Practices Conference (Dr. Gomez provided a call to action)
- FRC Emergency Basic Needs Efforts
- Employee Recognition
- County Employee Recognition (3 of 6 awards in the Human Services Profile)
- F5CA Impact Legacy – Renewal (Final Year)

Supervisor Washington, Chair, congratulated all staff award winners.

4. Public Information Report – Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist

Presented by Mr. Pravica

- (PSRA) Polaris Award
- CFRA Showcase Event at Mead Valley FRC
- State of the County Sponsorship
- F5CA Stronger Starts Tour in Corona – F5RC first local F5 Commission to join F5CA on their tour
- Public Information Partnerships – Countywide and work with RicCoONE

5. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Ginder expressed his confidence in Ms. Widby's first meeting and congratulated the First 5 Team on their awards.

Commissioner Ginder asked whether the Impact Legacy funding with this year's extension was the same amount spread over two years or a block of funding. Ms. Widby responded that it is technically a new block of funding, but reduced from last year.

Commissioner Ginder expressed appreciation for the water safety program, noting it as a strong example of First 5's community collaboration, and requested a more detailed update in the future.

Chair Washington echoed appreciation for the swim program and highlighted the positive impact of partnering with Children's Services and DPSS to engage additional family members.

Ms. Widby noted that the Children's Services Deputy Director, who also serves as Director of the Office of Child Abuse and Prevention, was present. She highlighted ongoing efforts to build on the near-drowning referral process and to pilot FRC wraparound support for families screened out of the child welfare investigation process.

Vice Chair Campos reported that he participated in a rapid improvement event at the Mead Valley Family Resource Center. He applauded the team for organizing the event and stated he looks forward to participating in future events.

6. First 5 Riverside County Commission Annual Chair and Vice Chair Process/Elections
— Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel

Ms. Bell-Valdez provided an overview of the process.

Ms. Widby confirmed Commissioner Chuck Washington has accepted the nomination to serve as Chair for 2026, and Commissioner Jose Campos has accepted the nomination to serve as Vice Chair for 2026.

Commissioner Ginder moved to approve the Chair nomination for Chuck Washington. Commissioner Gomez seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (5) Washington, Campos, Ginder, Gomez, Wada
- **Nays:** 0
- **Abstentions:** None
- **Absent:** (4) Kimberly Saruwatari, Charity Douglas, Cheryl-Marie Hansberger, and Elizabeth Romero

Quorum maintained. Motion carried.

Chair Washington moved to approve the Vice Chair nomination for Jose Campos. Commissioner Gomez seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (5) Washington, Campos, Ginder, Gomez, Wada
- **Nays:** 0
- **Abstentions:** None
- **Absent:** (4) Kimberly Saruwatari, Charity Douglas, Cheryl-Marie Hansberger, and Elizabeth Romero

Quorum maintained. Motion carried.

D. **Presentation/Information Items – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair** (A copy of all Presentation/Information Items and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Evaluation Report, "A Weight Off Our Shoulders", "Pandemic Payments to Early Educators in Riverside County" Anna Powell, and Wanzi Muruvi, Associate Directors, Research & Policy Center for the Study of Child Employment, Associate Director, University of California, Berkeley — Carol Abella, Regional Manager

Ms. Muruvi and Ms. Powell provided highlights on the evaluation report.

Chair Washington asked for the total Board allocation. Ms. Perez noted the Board of Supervisors approved \$23 million in ARPA funds.

Commissioner Gomez commended Ms. Powell and Ms. Muruvi for their detailed report and asked whether it could be published online to share protocols and best practices. Ms. Widby noted that legislative briefings are planned, and the state ECE Budget Coalition will help amplify messages. Ms. Powell and Ms. Muruvi are available to participate in virtual meetings as needed.

Commissioner Wada asked whether a return on investment could be projected if the funds had not been available. Ms. Powell noted that statewide projections might be available.

2. 2027-2030 First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan Update — Charna Widby, Executive Director

Ms. Widby highlighted the process and design intended to maximize the Advisory Committee's role in advising the Commission.

E. **Consent Items – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair** (A copy of all Consent Items and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Commission and Advisory Committee Finance Workshop October 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes
2. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Regular Commission October 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes
3. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Strategic Plan Workshop December 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes
4. **26-01:** Approve Termination of **CONTRACT NO. CF25103** with American Academy of Pediatrics, District IX, Chapter 2 for Reach Out and Read - Inland Empire (ROR-IE) Effective December 31, 2025
5. **26-02:** Approve 2026/2027 First 5 Riverside County Finance Subcommittee Members
6. **26-03:** Approve Second Amendment with Sidekick Solutions LLC for Technical Assistance from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026 (**CONTRACT NO. CF25129**) [**\$186,626 - PROP 10 FUNDS**]
7. **26-04:** Approve Fourth Amendment with Poder Consulting Group, LLC, for Professional Services from February 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026 (**CONTRACT NO CF25118**) [**\$115,000 - PROP 10 FUNDS**]

Vice Chair Campos moved to approve consent items 1-7 as presented. Commissioner Ginder seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (5) Washington, Campos, Ginder, Gomez, and Wada
- **Nayes:** 0
- **Abstentions:** None
- **Absent:** (4) Kimberly Saruwatari, Charity Douglas, Cheryl-Marie Hansberger, and Elizabeth Romero

Quorum maintained. Motion carried.

- F. **Presentation/Action Item/Public Hearing – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair** (A copy of all Presentation/Action Items/Public Hearings and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)
1. Conduct a Public Hearing of First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Pursuant to the California Children and Families Act, Health and Safety Code Section 130140, and Ordinance 784, and Adopt First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission Current 2023-2026 Strategic Plan - Charna Widby, Executive Director
 - a. **Public Hearing:** First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan 2023-2026 — Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments, the public hearing was closed.
 - b. **26-05:** Review and Adopt First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan 2023-2026 — Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair

Commissioner Gomez moved to approve presentation/action item/public hearing 26-05 as presented. Commissioner Ginder seconded the motion.

- **Ayes:** (5) Washington, Campos, Ginder, Gomez, and Wada
- **Nayes:** 0
- **Abstentions:** None
- **Absent:** (4) Kimberly Saruwatari, Charity Douglas, Cheryl-Marie Hansberger, and Elizabeth Romero

Quorum maintained. Motion carried.

- G. **Presentation/Action Item – Supervisor Chuck Washington, Chair** (A copy of all Presentation/Action Item and attachments can be viewed at www.rccfc.org and at the Commission Business Office)
1. **26-06:** Approve and Adopt the Revised Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Annual Budget and Vendor List of First 5 Riverside County Children & Families Commission — Patricia Perez, Deputy Director, and Hui Serafina Wang, Principal Accountant
- Ms. Perez presented the FY 2025/26 Revised Budget, summarizing key updates to revenues and expenditures, including timing-related entries for previously approved projects and minor reclassifications.*
- Vice Chair Campos moved to approve presentation/action item 26-06 as presented. Commissioner Gomez seconded the motion.*
- **Ayes:** (5) Washington, Campos, Ginder, Gomez, and Wada
 - **Nayes:** 0
 - **Abstentions:** None
 - **Absent:** (4) Kimberly Saruwatari, Elizabeth Romero, Charity Douglas, and Cheryl-Marie Hansberger
- Quorum maintained. Motion carried.**

H. **Future Agenda Items:**

1. First 5 Riverside County 2026 Policy Priorities
2. First 5 Riverside County 2026 Communications Plan
3. First 5 California Annual Report Review and Public Hearing
4. 2027-2030 First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan Update

- I. **Adjournment:** Adjournment at 3:17 p.m. to the next Regular Meeting of the Riverside County Children and Families Commission to be held on March 11, 2026, beginning at 2:00 p.m. at:
First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission Office
585 Technology Court — Conference Room A
Riverside, CA 92507

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Lynn M. Stephens, Executive Assistant IV.

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