

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/500 WEST TEMPLE/LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012/625-3611, Ext. 64605

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, July 21, 1971
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Hall of Administration, Room 739

Members Present:

Robert Mitchell, Chairman
Dr. John Bollens
Davis Brabant
John Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dixon R. Harwin
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P. S. Magruder
Irvin Mazzei
Ferdinand Mendenhall
R. J. Munzer
Robert Olin
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Donelle Smith
Sam M. Soghomonian
Gus A. Walker

Members Absent:

Louis Rogers
William Torrence

Robert Mitchell,
Chairman

Dr. John C. Bollens
Davis Brabant
John D. Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dixon R. Harwin
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P.S. Magruder
Irvin Mazzei
Ferdinand Mendenhall
R.J. Munzer
Robert A. Olin
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Donelle Smith
Sam M. Soghomonian
William Torrence
Gus A. Walker

Burke Roche,
Executive Secretary

Mr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. He asked Dr. Bollens and Mr. Roche to report on the first item on the agenda.

Mr. Roche said that one of Dr. Bollens' students had made an analysis of the vote on the charter amendment which the committee had submitted to the voters last year. The analysis had been made by area, and it was extremely interesting to see which areas had voted in favor of the amendment. With the exception of San Marino, which voted 51% against the amendment, the affluent areas voted in favor of the amendment. There appeared to be no correlation with race. In her conclusions, the student gave the following reasons for the defeat of Proposition B:

- (1) Voter ignorance and apathy despite almost universal support from television, radio, and newspaper editorials.
- (2) Success of distortion and scare tactics used by the opposition.
- (3) Placement of the charter proposal at the bottom of the ballot.
- (4) Lack of support from County bureaucrats who formed the largest interest group in this issue.

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 21, 1971

Page 2

Mr. Roche said the report gave a good deal of information the committee could profit from if or when it proposed another amendment.

Dr. Bollens said he would add to the statement only that there apparently was no correlation between the support or opposition of the individual supervisors and the vote in their respective supervisorial districts. Mr. Roche said there was one other important point. That was that the campaign against the City charter amendment apparently was not a factor in the defeat of Proposition B.

There was some discussion of the report which Mr. Soghomonian summed up by saying that typically the voter when in doubt votes no. He thinks many of the voters were in doubt. He thought that if there had been no other issues on the ballot but Proposition B, it would have passed because the people who go to vote are usually those who are well informed.

Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Roche to report on the second item on the agenda. Mr. Roche said the committee had submitted a question to the County Counsel which Mr. Mazzei had proposed at the last meeting. The County Counsel returned a 17 page opinion on the question of whether a group of citizens could legally bring a class action suit against the State Legislature on the basis that it has discriminated against Los Angeles County in preventing Los Angeles County from consolidating the Marshal's department under the Sheriff as the Legislature has allowed 10 other counties to do. Mr. Roche read the opinion.

"In our opinion no court has jurisdiction to compel the state legislature to enact a statute. A court may hold that the whole or a part of a statute is unconstitutional as being in violation of either the State or United States Constitution but in our extensive research on this question we have been forced to conclude that the existing legislation is constitutional."

Mr. Mitchell said the next item would be a discussion of the report prepared by Mr. Roche on employee relations and salary determination in the County. He said it was appropriate that the committee discuss this at this time and not wait until budget time.

Mr. Roche said that at the last meeting a number of members had expressed great concern about the tremendous budget increase and particularly the \$50 million of salary increases which form a substantial part of this increase. He said Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Magruder, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the committee, had asked him to prepare this report as a background paper for a committee discussion of these issues.

Mr. Roche said Section I was simply an informative section reviewing the establishment of the employee relations function and the adoption of the Employee Relations Ordinance. Section II was another informative section explaining how the Board of Supervisors meets with County management in executive session to determine what their bargaining position will be when

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 21, 1971

Page 3

negotiations begin. He pointed out that this is the most critical time of the bargaining and negotiation period. Section III explained salary increases and the automatic step progression plan.

In answer to questions regarding the automatic step progression plan, Mr. Roche explained that in addition to the bargained increase, many employees may also receive an automatic step increase of 5.5% sometime during the fiscal year. This type of step progression system, going up through all levels to the very top, is common in many governments. He said the experts he had consulted had agreed that the average 6.2% increase given to the County was within wage trends negotiated in private industry.

Mr. Roche was asked if the step progression increase had anything to do with performance. He said no, but if an employee was rated unsatisfactory, he would be discharged.

Mr. Olin asked how many employees out of the County's 71,000 had been discharged so far this year. Mr. Roche said that Civil Service records would have to be searched for this information, and he would obtain this information.

Before concluding the discussion on this section, the members agreed that one of the subjects to be studied would be the moving away from this automatic step progression on some levels and the relating of pay to quality of performance.

Mr. Brabant asked which group of employees received 11% increase on July 1. Mr. Roche answered principally employees in the Sheriff's department, Fire department, and the Department of Beaches.

Mr. Brabant wanted to know on whose recommendation these increases were granted. Mr. Roche said his information was that these increases were agreed to by the Board of Supervisors and County management in their executive sessions - County management being Art Will, Gordon Nesvig and two of Mr. Nesvig's deputy directors. Gordon Nesvig and his staff are responsible principally for the negotiations.

Dr. Bollens asked if the CAO management audit teams were making performance studies. Mr. Roche said the management audit function recommended by this committee had been performing these studies. As a result of these studies the County has eliminated about 2,000 budgeted positions in various departments.

Mr. Roche said the next section of the report dealt with the prevailing wage clause of the County Charter. He said that neither in the Charter nor in the four major court cases - one in the city and three in the County - have there ever been any definition of what the prevailing wage is. He has reviewed all court cases and believes the Board of Supervisors and County management finds the prevailing wage clause a convenient scapegoat if anyone criticizes them for granting excessive salaries. He does not say that it doesn't present some problems in negotiating but feels they tend to be exaggerated. The Board of Supervisors believes it restricts their authority, but the courts have said

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 21, 1971

Page 4

that as long as the Board finds on the basis of reasonable facts that the increases they are giving do meet the requirements of the prevailing wage clause, they will not interfere. It does not prevent the County from abandoning the joint salary survey if it decides to. He said he did not feel that deleting this clause from the charter would solve wage problems. For example, Ventura County does not have such a clause, but it gave a 5.5% increase across the board this year. Orange County gave a similar increase, and it does not have a prevailing wage clause.

Mr. Loud said he thought if you give a responsible man responsibility, he will get some efficiency. He feels the County is working towards improvement under Mr. Will.

On Section V, Mr. Roche said that the negotiation and collective bargaining process this committee recommended is in serious danger. He explained that two of the three commissioners had resigned from the Employee Relations Commission over serious disagreement with County management. However, one of them has now rescinded his resignation. This commission worked long hours getting the representation units established. Up to now the system has worked. It is perhaps surprising that it has worked as well as it has, since it is a pioneering effort. He said the objective of this committee should be to recommend changes in the ordinance that will strengthen this system and establish rules so it is fair to both parties.

The members discussed the inequity of the Employee Relations Ordinance whereby the Employee Relations Commission could require the unions to comply with its findings but lacked the authority to compel the County to do so.

Mr. Mitchell said that completed the discussion of the report. He said he would like to give some thought to the subject before appointing a task force to continue the study.

Mr. Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.