
Economy & Efficiency Commission

Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 1998

ROOM 830, KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION

THE COMMISSION MEETING AS A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Commissioner Abel suggested that beginning the February Commission Meeting, that the meetings begin at 10:00 A.M. rather than the previous 9:30.

Since a quorum of the Commissioners were not yet present, the Chairman began the Commission meeting in the capacity of a Committee of the Whole. Commissioner Abel suggested taking a report out of agenda order and requested that Commissioner Jimenez report on the status of the Debt Collection Project.

With the existence of a quorum Commissioner Abel called the meeting to order.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Abel called the meeting to order at 10.A.M.

II. ATTENDANCE

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

David A. Abel
Fred Balderrama
John Crowley
Jonathan Fuhrman
Christopher W. Hammond
Chun Lee
Tony Lucente
Michael A. Jimenez
Roman Padilla
William J. Petak
Robert Philibosian
Julia E. Sylva

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

Richard D. Barger
Gunther Buerk
Benjamin F. Breslauer
David W. Farrar

Carole Ojeda-Kimbrough
Marc A. Seidner
Randall H. Stoke
Tony Tortorice

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

None

Moved, Seconded and Approved: The Commission members noted above be excused.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Moved, Seconded and Approved: The minutes of the December 3, 1997 Commission Meeting be approved as submitted.

IV. INTRODUCTION & ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

V. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Commissioner Philibosian, reporting for the members of the Nominating Committee, stated that the Committee was nominating Commissioner Abel for consideration to a second term as the Chairman. Lacking further nominations from the floor, Commissioner Abel was reelected to the office of Chairman by acclamation. Upon his election, Commissioner Abel announced that Commissioner Farrar requested that he not be considered for the position of Vice-Chair for the upcoming year. As a result of this request Commissioner Abel appointed Commissioner Fuhrman to the position of Vice-Chair of the Commission.

VI. PROJECT REPORTS

1. Debt Collection Project

Task Force Chair Jimenez reported that he is in the process of submitting a request for additional funding from the Board of Supervisors. Coordination is underway with himself and Supervisor Yaroslavsky's office, represented at the meeting by Mr. Richard Popper. Commissioner Jimenez reminded the

Commission of the scope and magnitude of the problem that could involve years and years of work to understand the systems involved in this process. He reported that at this time efforts have shown how the system operates and how much of the revenue is not collectable.

Commissioner Jimenez stated that Commissioner Petak and Kenneth Pride had made efforts to expand the participation on the project on a pro bono basis. There are now seven or eight companies that desire to participate. Commissioner Breslauer has also volunteered to participate as a member of this task force.

Mr. Richard Popper, representing Supervisor Yaroslavsky, reported to the Commission on the intent of the Supervisor's request to understand and make recommendations on this topic. He felt that the major problem was that there is little coordination between departments on debt collection. The Supervisor's Office is working on finding additional funding for the project. He also mentioned that departmental buy-in is important in this project. Action on this issue is anticipated within the next 2-3 weeks.

Commissioner Jimenez reported that we should know within the next few weeks on the status of this project, if funding does not become available then the task force and the consultants will begin closing out the project. Commissioner Petak stated that part of the problem is the labeling of "debt" to that which is uncollectible, e.g. indigents using county medical services. Some departments use "uncollectible debt" as projected revenue which helps them to justify their expense budget, raising some integrity questions.

Commissioner Abel asked Mr. Popper where his office would like to see the focus on areas of opportunity. Mr. Popper stated that departments that deal with crime, etc. have little means of finding the money to be paid back to the County. Collections in these areas will be difficult, but as a result of the size of the problem in these departments a little improvement will yield large results. The Supervisors Office would like to see that focus placed on departments that deal with people capable of paying off their debts, e.g. Treasurer-Tax Collector, DA Child Collections, Courts. If these departments can share their records collections can be improved by improved tracking. Some of the debt referred to

previously has to be tracked due to Federal or State billing purposes. Commissioner Petak responded that the Supervisors should be made aware of the payment status of the reported debt and the use of this debt to justify an expense budget. This raises an integrity question. Also the level of debt justifies maintaining positions within a department.

Commissioner Padilla asked if the collections effort was being influenced by the position of the individuals or companies that owe money to the County. Commissioner Abel responded that he felt that this question was beyond the responsibilities of this task force. Commissioner Fuhrman asked if there any potential legal problems on placing liens on secured property. Mr. Popper responded that if a lien exists additional debt should be tacked on to that lien. He was not aware of other problems in other areas of debt collection. Commissioner Abel felt that as a result of the retirement of the Treasurer Tax Collector that the scope and nature of this project was open.

2. Web Page Development

Commissioner Lucente reported on the Web Site selection of Bear Advertising, which has done some previous worked with the County. Some preliminary designs have been proposed for the new Web Site. Completion of the draft for the new Web Site should be made by the February Commission Meeting. The approach is simplified, but highly interactive and easy to use. Commissioner Abel suggested that Commissioners review and update their biographies, as many more people will be looking at them when the web site is on line. Information is being reviewed now. Members were invited to submit suggestions on any additional links they feel necessary & appropriate.

3. Constitutional Revision Commission

Commissioner Abel requested that Mr. Staniforth report on the status of the Constitutional Revision Report. Mr. Staniforth stated that he has been working with the CAO's consultant on developing a draft report. An initial draft report has been submitted to Commissioner Abel and Mr. Janssen, the CAO, for review. The next stage of this process is to have Commissioner Abel, David Janssen, Jim Smyth, the consultant hired by the CAO, and anyone necessary from Mr. Janssen's staff to review this approach. This approach will then be sent to the task force for their review. There has been little time to receive any input from the participants. Any corrections will be based upon these comments.

Commissioner Abel reported that he is involved in a foundation effort called the Metro-Form Project (www.democracynet.org/metro). This project is currently cataloguing all the efforts going on in California related to state/local fiscal relations. It is currently anticipated that the Commission's web site will link to this site to provide for any overlapping and provide better interaction on these issues. There is growing interest around the LA basin about the impact of the current structure as it relates to government accountability. Although there is a lot of interest in this area, it is still has a long way to go.

At this point in the meeting, Commissioner Abel asked Commissioner Hammond to co-chair the Asset Management Task Force. Commissioner Able also confirmed that Commissioner Lucente is his representative to the Executive Oversight Group of the County's Combined Real Asset Management effort.

4. Unincorporated Area

Commissioner Padilla asked if this report had been raised with David Janssen. Commissioner Abel stated that it had been raised. He also suggested that the chair of LAFCO (Mayor of Huntington Park) attend a meeting to discuss succession as it is growing in significance. Commissioner Crowley pointed out that the report had recommended further examination of contracts. We have not yet received a response from the CAO. Commissioner Padilla offered to draft letter to the CAO for the Chairman requesting a response.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Civil Service Review

Commissioner Fuhrman, who had originally raised this topic, suggested that it be tabled until the Commission can consider the areas of interest that it wants to pursue during the upcoming year.

2. Areas of Interest for the Commission in 1998

Commissioner Abel asked the Commissioners to consider areas of interest for the Commission to explore during the upcoming year. The following items were raised

1. County Policies.
2. Reduction of duplication of efforts between County and City.
3. Coordinate with other jurisdictions in the management of assets.
4. Formalize strategy on follow-ups of our reports.
5. Jury Service review considering actions that have been taken since our report.
6. Review of the Courts operational efficiency.
7. Follow-up on the status of Welfare Reform with DPSS. (It was suggested that the Commission receive n update briefing from DPSS at the next meeting.)

VIII. PRESENTATION -

[Cristopher Gates, CEO/President](#)

[Topic: Evaluation of Local Governance Structure in the 21st Century](#)

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

X. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion from the floor, Chairman Abel adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.



Bruce J. Staniforth
Executive Director

[Go to January, 1998 Agenda](#)

[Return to February, 1998 Agenda](#)



Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 163, 500 West Temple St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone (213) 974-1491 FAX (213) 620-1437 EMail_eecomm@co.la.ca.us
WEB eec.co.la.ca.us