

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

ROOM 163, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 974-1491

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

May 3, 1976

Members Present:

Robert Downey, Chairman
George E. Bodle
Catherine G. Burke
Anne Collins
Mario Di Giovanni
Jerry Epstein
Milton G. Gordon
Richard S. Gunther
Leo A. Majich
Jesse L. Robinson
Robert Ruchti
Warren H. Schmidt
Gloria Starr

Members Absent:

Gus Anaya
John D. Byork
Carolyn L. Ellner
Douglas Ferguson
Mary Jane Kidd
George Shellenberger
Larkin Teasley
Bryan Walker

Dr. Robert J. Downey
Chairman

Gustave R. Anaya
George E. Bodle
Catherine Graeffe Burke
John D. Byork
Anne S. Collins
Mario Di Giovanni
Dr. Carolyn L. Ellner
Jerry Epstein
Milton G. Gordon
Richard S. Gunther
Mrs. Mary Jane Kidd
Leo A. Majich
Jesse L. Robinson
Robert Ruchti, II
Dr. Warren H. Schmidt
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Gloria Starr
Larkin Teasley
Bryan Walker

Burke Roche
Executive Secretary
John Campbell
Staff Specialist
Maxlynn Larsen
Commission Secretary

Robert Downey called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He asked Leo Majich, Chairman of the Task force on Management and Finances, to present the task force study "The New York City Crisis and Los Angeles County Government: Organization, Employment and Compensation." A summary of Mr. Majich's presentation follows.

This report represents the first phase of the Management and Finances Study. There will probably be two more parts to this major project. This report is an attempt to inform and to alert the supervisors to the situation in Los Angeles County. It recommends immediate action to get the County moving in the right direction to avoid the difficulties that New York City is now experiencing. The main recommendation is the delegation to the CAO of the responsibility for direct supervision of seven departments - Building Services, Communications, Data Processing, Facilities, Mechanical, Personnel, and Purchasing.

The report highlights several areas of dramatic increases in employment and in the ratio of supervisory to nonsupervisory personnel. The supervisory personnel has doubled and tripled in some departments since 1965. Another problem has been the conflict of interest of the County employees who participate in the bargaining process and benefit from the results.

Another factor is the population shifts which require the County to build and staff new facilities to meet the demand for increased services. The County has done this without decreasing the facilities and staffs of the areas which have lost population.

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The second recommendation is to establish a Compensation Review Committee with responsibility for reviewing the County's compensation recommendations annually to insure that the County's compensation plan is consistent with reasonable standards of personnel practice. The committee should consist of five members - the CAO, Auditor-Controller, and three public members recommended to the Board by the E & E Commission.

The third recommendation would delegate the authority for organizational planning, development, and control to the CAO for the purpose of proposing changes in the organizational structure to improve the management system. The current management structure does not insure effective and efficient use of State and Federal funds to resolve local problems.

The rest of the report points out that there is no one office charged with the responsibility of answering to the Board about the management of Los Angeles County. Unless something is done immediately, the County will definitely end up like New York City.

Robert Downey called for discussion.

Milton Gordon questioned the alarmist tone of the report and the wording that might leave the impression that Los Angeles was in the same position as New York. He said he was concerned it would affect the bond rating of Los Angeles County. He asked if the task force had made a study of bonded indebtedness, how it must be retired, and whether there had been fiscal juggling of the figures similar to New York.

Leo Majich said that this report was the first in a series and was for the purpose of telling the Board that County expenditures are outrunning receipts and, unless immediate steps are taken, is headed in the same direction as New York.

Richard Gunther said that he thought the Preface made it quite clear that the structure, manner of operation, and the legal requirements under which the two cities operate are quite different. Other task force members explained that the report was sounding the alarm and telling the County there was still time to act to avoid the problems of New York City.

George Bodle said that he thought the report was excellent. Obviously the recommendations would not solve all the problems because there will still be a large number of departments reporting to the five supervisors. The organizational chart points up the necessity for an elected chief executive.

Warren Schmidt moved that the report be adopted; Anne Collins seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

After a 15 minute recess for questions from the news media, Dr. Downey reconvened the meeting and asked Anne Collins if she would report on the progress of the study of the commission structure in the Department of Public Social Services. Anne Collins, Chairman of the task force, deferred to Burke Roche.

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Burke Roche reported that the staff has not begun the study of the two conflicting commissions in the DPSS. Now that the first phase of the Management and Finances study has been completed, he could devote some time to the Commissions and Committees Study. A study had been started regarding the conflict and duplication between the Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission and the Mental Health Advisory Board, but he hasn't been able to do anything further on it. It will have to be held in obedience until the DPSS study is completed.

In the absence of Carolyn Ellner, Chairman of the Task Force on Community Relations, Robert Downey reported that he and the task force met with the County Press Corps to get advice and guidance on how the commission could more effectively communicate with the general public and the media. The other members of the task force are: George Bodle, Jerry Epstein, Douglas Ferguson, Milton Gordon and Warren Schmidt.

All members discussed the problem of getting the public more interested in the reports and recommendations of the commission. Leo Majich suggested that the members and the staff attend the meetings of various community organizations and tell them about the work of the commission. Dick Gunther suggested that the commission form a Speakers' Bureau.

Members debated at length with Milton Gordon, who felt that the report had an alarmist ring to it. Dr. Downey summarized by saying the commission feels an obligation to inform the people in the best way it can what is going on.

Jerry Epstein stated that he thought anyone who had any political aspirations should not be a member of the E & E Commission, and if any member does decide to run for any office, he or she should resign from the commission.

Dr. Downey reported that Gus Anaya had missed three consecutive meetings again. He reminded the members that they had voted once before to excuse Mr. Anaya's absences. According to the Administrative Code, a letter must be written to the appointing supervisor informing him that his appointee has missed three consecutive meetings and request that he appoint someone to replace him, unless the commission votes to excuse the absences.

Moved by Jerry Epstein, seconded by Leo Majich and passed, that the letter be written to Supervisor Edelman.

Leo Majich thanked the task force and the staff for the work on the report. He said the other members were: Mario Di Giovanni, Richard Gunther, Mary Jane Kidd, Robert Ruchti, George Shellenberger, Gloria Starr, and Larkin Teasley.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.