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## **Economy & Efficiency Commission**

# **Meeting Minutes**

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### **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 1998

ROOM 830, KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Abel called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M.

#### **II. ATTENDANCE**

##### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

David A. Abel  
Fred Balderrama  
Richards D. Barger  
Benjamin F. Breslauer  
Gunther W. Buerk  
John Crowley  
David W. Farrar  
Christopher W. Hammond  
Chun Lee  
Tony Lucente  
Roman Padilla  
Robert Philibosian  
Julia E. Sylva

##### **COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED**

Hope J. Boonshaft  
Jonathan Fuhrman  
Michael A. Jimenez  
Carole Ojeda-Kimbrough  
William J. Petak  
Marc A. Seidner  
H. Randall 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 April 8, 1998 Commission Meeting be approved as submitted.**

*Editorial Note: Agenda sections may be taken out of order at the discretion of the chair. Any reordering of sections is reflected in the presentation of these minutes.*

### VII. NEW BUSINESS

#### 1. Approval of Ombudsman Board Letter (Commissioners Breslauer & Buerk)

Chairman Abel asked Mr. Staniforth to comment on the Ombudsman Board Letter. Mr. Staniforth stated that the proposed Board Letter is an effort to follow up on a recommendation previously made by the Grand Jury concerning expanding the services of the Office of the Ombudsman countywide. He asked Commissioner Breslauer to elaborate on this issue. Commissioner Breslauer stated that currently the Ombudsman serves only the Sheriff's Department. In response to the many letters the Grand Jury received from individuals who were unhappy with the way their complaints regarding the county were handled, the Grand Jury recommended that the Ombudsman services be expanded to encompass all County functions. This recommendation was not acted upon by the Board. The EEC's letter would in essence repeat this recommendation.

Commissioner Padilla asked Commissioner Breslauer about the current duties of the Ombudsman and how the recommendation proposes to revise them. Commissioner Breslauer stated that if someone has a complaint against the Sheriff's Department they contact the Office of the Ombudsman, and that office will investigate the complaint on behalf of the citizen. The Grand Jury received more than one hundred complaints from citizens about various functions of county government and it became evident that an Ombudsman could help solve these problems. An example is the performance of the District Attorney's Office in the collection of child support payments. Many complaints were received from individuals whom they incorrectly identified as owing child support. They harassed these people, they garnished their wages, and they continually ignored their complaints.

Commissioner Philibosian stated that although he sees the value in a county-wide Ombudsman five supervisors, with many district offices and large staffs, already exist to serve the public. These district offices are much more accessible to citizens than one office in the Hall of Administration.

Commissioner Barger stated that the staffs of the Supervisors do not have the close relationship with the Sheriff's Department as does the Ombudsman. The Sheriff/Ombudsman relationship will help in investigating many complaints and assisting citizens.

Commissioner Breslauer stated that the Grand Jury envisioned an Office of the Ombudsman that would be accessible to citizens by phone, mail or Internet to resolve grievances.

Quality and Productivity Commissioner Hill stated that if the Board responds to this recommendation, the Ombudsman contact information should be placed in County facilities along with instructions for registering complaints.

**Moved that the Commission approve the Ombudsman Board Letter. Motion seconded.**

Commissioner Farrar stated his support for the motion. The existing system has failed in the county and the city and represents the need for city charter reform. The Supervisors should focus their energy on advocating the interest of the county to the state and federal governments, not by fielding complaints.

Commissioner Buerk stated that although district offices may be able to handle some issues that are associated with the county functions, there are many problems that involve all or multiple districts. An Ombudsman is needed to examine these generic problems. He also stated that part of the EEC's job, evident by the appointment of the former Grand Jury Foreperson, is to follow-up on those recommendations by the Grand Jury that are dormant.

Commissioner Philibosian asked if the EEC recommendation was to expand the current Ombudsman office and if so, by how much and at what cost. Chairman Abel stated that the EEC's Board letter recommends that a plan for an Ombudsman be prepared and submitted by the CAO's office. The EEC is not submitting a plan. It is submitting an idea.

Commissioner Philibosian stated that the Board letter recommends the Ombudsman to prepare the plan in coordination with the CAO's office, but does not suggest who is in charge. He proposed amending the motion and placing the CAO in charge of the plan.

**Moved that the motion be amended as follows:**

1. Direct the , Chief Administrative Office, in consultation with the Office of the Ombudsman, within three months from the approval of these recommendations to prepare and submit to the Board an augmentation plan.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, upon approval of the plan by the Board of Supervisors,.....

**Amendments accepted by the maker of the motion.**

Commissioner Philibosian stated that the letter calls for the Ombudsman to make reports to the Board of Supervisors, a responsibility he feels will take away from the core duties of the Ombudsman. Commissioner Buerk replied that the intention is to have the Ombudsman generate an annual report to inform the Board of progress, not to generate studies and reports on a regular basis.

**Motion, as amended, approved with Commissioner Sylva abstaining.**

## **2. Approval of Joint Project Letter to the Little Hoover Commission**

Chairman Abel stated that this letter follows up on the idea of a joint project for the EEC and Little Hoover Commission as discussed at the April commission meeting.

Moved and Seconded that the Commission approve the Joint Project Letter to the Little Hoover Commission. Motion unanimously approved.

## **VI. PRESENTATION -**

[Peter W. Schaafsma, Assistant State Treasurer Executive Director, Debt and Investment Advisory Commission](#)  
[Topic: Current Issues Facing the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission](#)

[Tom Mauk, City Manager, City of Whittier V.P. West Coast Region, Intl. City/County Managers Association](#)  
[Topic: Management of City Government](#)

## **IV. INTRODUCTION & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Abel informed the Commission that Mary McCloud's last day with the commission is Friday, June 12. He thanked Ms. McCloud for her hard work and wished her luck in her new position.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Debt Collection Project**

There was a task-force meeting a few weeks ago with KPMG during which a preliminary draft of the report was reviewed.

On June 24 there will be a department meeting with selected department staff to review the report's recommendations, and on June 25 there will be a task-force meeting to finalize recommendations and editorial changes to the report. The final draft of the report will be available July 2, 1998.

To accommodate review of the Debt Collection Task Force report, it was agreed that the next Commission meeting would be changed from July 1 to July 8, 1998.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion from the floor, Chairman Abel adjourned the meeting at 11:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted.



**Bruce J. Staniforth**  
**Executive Director**

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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](mailto:eecomm@co.la.ca.us)  
WEB [eec.co.la.ca.us](http://eec.co.la.ca.us)