

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

ROOM 163, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 874-1491

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

March 3, 1976

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

Members Present:

Robert Downey, Chairman
George E. Bodle
Catherine G. Burke
Anne Collins
Mario Di Giovanni
Carolyn Ellner
Jerry Epstein
Douglas Ferguson
Milton Gordon
Richard Gunther
Mary Jane Kidd
Leo Majich
Jesse Robinson
Robert Ruchti
Warren Schmidt
George Shellenberger
Gloria Starr
Bryan Walker

Members Absent:

Gus Anaya
John Byork
Larkin Teasley

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 said that copies of the proposed letter to the Board of Supervisors had been distributed, and he asked Gloria Starr to report.

Proposed Letter to the Board of Supervisors on Veterans' Preference Points -
Gloria Starr, member of the Task Force on Management and Finances, reported. This issue was on the Board agenda to be discussed at the public hearing on February 19. She attended the hearing so she would be available to make a statement regarding the study, if the Board requested it. Unfortunately, she had to leave at 3 p.m., and the subject was not taken up until after that time. Mr. Roche was there to speak for the task force, so he would report what took place after she left.

Burke Roche reported that a number of representatives from various veteran organizations spoke against making any change in the present system. After hearing from them, Supervisor Hahn moved that the Board reject any proposal to change the system. The motion was passed 4-1, with Supervisor Edelman voting no. Before the vote, both Supervisor Edelman and Supervisor Schabarum reminded the Board that this issue had been referred to the E & E Commission with the request to get input from the interested community groups and report back. In answer to their question, Mr. Roche reported the status of the study and said

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the commission had expected to bring in the report in March. The two Supervisors suggested deferrment of a decision until the report and recommendations were submitted to them, but their suggestion was not accepted.

The Board action was reported to the task force, and the decision was made to submit a letter to the Board advising it of the task force's concern that a decision was made after hearing only one side of the issue as presented by veterans' organizations. The letter is before the commission for discussion and approval.

Several members very strongly objected to the fact that the Board had requested this study and then had made a decision without waiting for the results. Their opinions were that the letter was too restrained.

Mr. Roche said that it was not a matter of ignoring the study or forgetting about it. The issue is that the Board did not hear from all parties before making its decision. The charge could be made that the hearing was not a fair one.

The members debated at length whether or not the study should be completed. Catherine Burke stated that the matter was not closed, that it would be raised again, probably for the November election. She believes that the study should be completed so the Board can have the best information and judgement the committee can provide on this issue.

Milton Gordon, with the support of Carolyn Ellner and Mary Jane Kidd, was in favor of writing an additional letter raising the question of procedure once a request has been referred to the E & E Commission.

Dr. Downey said that he would rather, if it met with the commission's approval, discuss the matter personally with each Supervisor, and to dispose of the issue of whether or not to complete the study, it could be referred to the Management and Finances Task Force to be included in that study. He pointed out that it was an offshoot of that study originally.

Leo Majich moved that the issue be included in the Management and Finances study and, the subject of the Board's procedure after referring studies to the commission should be discussed with the Supervisors by the Chairman. The motion was seconded by Anne Collins and passed unanimously.

Public Hearing on Proposed Charter Amendments, March 1 - Burke Roche reported. After presentation of the report by the Public Commission on Los Angeles County Government, the Supervisors questioned the Co-Chairman of the Commission, Dean Harold Williams. The principal discussion was on the pros and cons of an elected County Mayor. Supervisors Edelman, Hahn, and Schabarum indicated they would support such a proposal but wanted to see the Charter language before proceeding further. Supervisors Hayes and Ward were in opposition. The Board continued the hearing until next Monday, when it hoped to have the Charter language.

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Mr. Chez made a detailed presentation at the hearing. He strongly advocated an appointed chief executive and argued against an elected County Mayor. Most of the arguments he cited were taken from the pro and con arguments of the E & E Commission report "Chief Executive and Size of the Board of Supervisors." He also quoted the cost figures from that report.

Report of the Public Commission on Los Angeles County Government - Dr. Downey introduced Mr. Edward Hamilton, Executive Director of the Public Commission. Copies of the Public Commission report were distributed to members at the last meeting and Mr. Hamilton was here to answer any questions the members might have regarding the report.

Mr. Hamilton summarized the recommendations in the report. He said that they are now working with the staffs of the three Supervisors who favor the proposal of the elected County Mayor to write the actual Charter language. He said that it was clear there were a lot of questions to be answered in the Charter language, which did not belong in the report. He hopes sometime later this week a draft will be submitted; the County Counsel will consider it for legality, then it will be up to the Board to bring it to a vote. March 26 is the deadline for getting anything on the June ballot. They don't have complete agreement at this time, he said, and he is not at liberty to tell where it may come out.

Mr. Hamilton then answered questions from the members, going into detail and calling attention to various sections of the report.

Dr. Downey thanked Mr. Hamilton for taking the time to attend the meeting and for giving the members an overall view.

Management and Finances Study - Leo Majich, Chairman of the Task Force gave a brief progress report as follows. Some interesting material has been developed by the staff regarding lack of organizational control and the dramatic increase in supervisory personnel in some departments. The County has been in an uptrend in adding employees and adding expenses. The task force expects to have a comprehensive report ready by the next meeting.

Public Hearing on Other Proposed Charter Amendments - Burke Roche reported. The afternoon session on March 1 was for the purpose of taking up the proposals on the removal of the prevailing wage clause, extension of authority to contract for services from private contractors, removal of department heads and chief deputies from Civil Service status, and change in the procedures for filling vacancies in County elective offices. He consulted with Robert Downey, and they agreed that, if the Board asked for a statement from the commission, Mr. Roche would be prepared to make one. He also contacted a number of commission members in an effort to determine if it would be worth their while to come down to the hearing when there was a possibility they would wait all day and never be asked to comment.

On the deletion of the prevailing wage clause, the unions gave their usual argument against the deletion. Supervisor Schabarum asked Gordon Nesvig to make a statement, and he made a very good one. He said that if the County

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system is to operate as a bilateral system, you have to get rid of these artificial boundaries. Supervisor Schabarum is either not aware of or has forgotten that the E & E Commission has taken a position on this issue. It recommended in 1973 that it be deleted.

On the contracting for services amendment, the unions are very opposed to this and campaigned very vigorously in 1974 for its defeat. In an E & E Commission report to the Board in 1972, the commission pointed out that it was in agreement with the idea, but it had not studied the subject. It will be covered in the forthcoming report on Management and Finances. The E & E Commission was also not asked to make a statement on this issue.

On the removing of department heads and chief deputies from Civil Service, the statement was made that the E & E Commission had made a similar proposal. The difference between the proposals is that the E & E Commission (EEC) proposal had safeguards against arbitrary dismissal. The proposal before the Board wipes out all protection. The officials can be selected by any method and discharged at any time. The EEC sent a letter to the Supervisors telling them that we could not support the present proposal unless safeguards are added to insure that County officials would be selected on the basis of merit and would be disciplined or removed only for proper cause.

On filling vacancies in County elective offices, The commission's report and recommendations have been made available to the Board. The Board continued discussion of all the proposals until next Monday at 10 a.m.

Jerry Epstein brought up the subject of commission policy on members speaking in public regarding their opinions on subjects of public interest. He asked for a clarification.

Dr. Downey said that, as stipulated in the commission's policies and procedures, any member asked to speak at a public meeting or for the news media should first coordinate it with the chairman. If the commission has taken a position on the subject, the member has a right to state that position. If his views are different from the position taken by the commission, he must make it clear he is speaking as an individual, not as a member of the EEC.

Members discussed the need to make the public more aware of the commission reports. Mr. Roche advised them that the regular mailing list included the news media, libraries, colleges, taxpayer organizations, community organizations - such as the League of Women Voters, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Mr. Majich suggested that a ten minute speaking engagement could convey more information, since most people received so much material to read they couldn't possibly cover it. He thought it would be more effective for the members to attend and speak at the meetings of the community organizations.

Mr. Roche asked what action the commission wished to take in respect to the questions raised in the staff summary of the Public Commission report.

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Dr. Downey said that the commission did vote several weeks ago in favor of the elected chief executive. This was done independently and not as an endorsement of the Public Commission report. Until the need arises or until the commission is asked to express its opinion, he said that he feels it should be left alone.

Mr. Gordon strongly disagreed and said that the commission's silence could be interpreted as opposition. Richard Gunther, George Bodle, and Catherine Burke agreed, and Catherine Burke suggested that the commission meet again on the 17th or the 24th.

Dr. Downey set Wednesday, March 24, as the date for the special meeting to discuss the Public Commission report and the issues involved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.