

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

February 18, 1976

Members Present:

Robert Downey, Chairman
Gustave Anaya
George E. Bodle
Catherine Burke
John Byork
Anne Collins
Mario Di Giovanni
Carolyn Ellner
Jerry Epstein
Douglas Ferguson
Milton Gordon
Richard Gunther
Jesse Robinson
Gloria Starr
Larkin Teasley

Members Absent:

Mary Jane Kidd
Leo Majich
Robert Ruchti
Warren Schmidt
George Shellenberger
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

Dr. Downey called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. He announced that the special meeting had been called to discuss the charter proposals which would be considered by the Board of Supervisors tomorrow. The Public Commission on Los Angeles County Government is also on the agenda for presentation of its report to the Board. Unfortunately, copies of the Public Commission report were not available in time to be mailed to the members before today's meeting, so the staff has prepared a summary of the major issues.

Copies of the Public Commission report, the staff summary, and Supervisor Hahn's news release on his proposal for an elected Chief Executive were distributed.

Mr. Roche said that the staff summary did not attempt to offer arguments pro or con on the elected Chief Executive but pointed out some of the questions raised by the proposal. He asked if the commission wished to discuss and vote on the concept of the elected Chief Executive. If they voted against the concept, then the details of the proposal would be academic.

Members who were not on the E & E Commission when the previous studies were made asked Burke Roche to give a summary of the arguments for a Chief Executive which were included in the 1970 and 1974 reports.

Mr. Roche said that the present structure has the advantage that once the Supervisors agree on an issue, they can act quickly. They can make a decision as the Legislature and act quickly as a Chief Executive. Also, there is no possibility of a stalemate, as there could be between two separate and equal branches of government. Also the five Supervisors provide a form of check and balance.

E & E COMMISSION MINUTES

February 18, 1976

Page 2

In discussing the need for a change in the present structure, the previous reports pointed out the difficulty of having five different Supervisors with five different priorities and five different views and interests functioning as a Chief Executive.

Mr. Roche said that, in his opinion, the strongest point made in the Public Commission report was in pointing out that the Board is so overburdened as the Legislature and the Chief Executive that it fails to develop a consistent policy of planning, organization, and control of the County. As a consequence, the Board emphasizes the role of the Chief Executive in the areas it considers important and tends to ignore the role of policy making and the role of the Legislature.

At the conclusion of the previous studies, the E & E Commission members were unanimous in their belief that the County needed a strong Chief Executive. They were divided on whether that executive should be appointed or elected. The present Charter proposal allows for three options: 1) keep the present structure, 2) favor the concept of the elected chief executive, or 3) modify the proposal.

After some discussion of the options, George Bodle moved that the members endorse the principle of the elected Chief Executive without giving consideration to the details or adoption of the report; seconded by Gus Anaya. Several members spoke in favor of the concept of the elected Chief Executive, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Roche returned to the staff summary on the Public Commission report and summarized the five issues selected by the staff.

1. Executive Power - There is an indication in the report that department heads and chief deputies will not be under civil service. There is no mention of procedures to insure an unbiased, open competitive selection process or of safeguards against arbitrary dismissal. If this is true, the Chief Executive has the power to politicize the entire top echelon of County managers.
2. Administrative Deputy - There is no authority given to the Administrative Deputy except that which the Chief Executive delegates to him.
3. Negotiating Procedures - The Legislature not only approves collective bargaining contracts negotiated by the Chief Executive, but participates actively in the negotiating process. This joint participation could prolong negotiations and bring on any number of stalemates and deadlocks. County unions would be forced to lobby the Legislature and campaign in the media to attain their ends.
4. Filling Vacancies in Elective Offices - The recommendation requires that the elective positions be filled by special elections to be held a minimum of 45 days and a maximum of 60 days following the vacancy. The E & E Commission report on this subject quoted the statement of the Registrar-Recorder that any election requires a minimum lead time of three months. Thus, the time requirement in

E & E COMMISSION MINUTES.

February 18, 1976

Page 3

the Public Commission recommendation would be difficult, if not impossible, to satisfy. The E & E Commission report concluded that the high cost of special elections and the delays that would occur before the office could be filled would make special elections an unsatisfactory way to fill vacancies.

5. Auditor-Controller - The recommendation places the present functions of the Auditor-Controller under the Legislature, which gives the Legislature control of all financial management and information functions. The result would be to remove from the Chief Executive two of the strongest tools of management - financial reporting and independent auditing. The staff summary agreed that the Legislature should have an independent auditor to evaluate the management and performance of the Chief Executive, but this function is much different from any now performed by the Auditor-Controller.

Catherine Burke moved that the commission not support the Public Commission's recommendation on filling vacant elective offices; seconded by Anne Collins.

Robert Downey said that one of the proposals to be considered at the Board meeting the next day is the one on filling vacant elective offices. Robert Ruchti was the chairman of the task force which conducted the E & E Commission study on that subject, and he intended to reiterate the conclusions reached by the task force at the meeting tomorrow.

Catherine Burke and Anne Collins withdrew the motion and the second.

In answer to requests from the members, Mr. Roche listed some of the differences between Supervisor Hahn's proposal and the Public Commission's proposal for the elected Chief Executive. Supervisor Hahn's proposal makes both the appointments and dismissals subject to ratification of the Legislature. The Public Commission's proposal makes only the appointments of the Chief Executive subject to ratification by the Legislature. Supervisor Hahn leaves the County officials under civil service; the Public Commission indicates that they will be removed. Supervisor Hahn leaves the CAO with much the same function as he has now, except he would be reporting directly to the Chief Executive. The Public Commission provides for appointment of an Administrative Deputy.

The second staff report, "Charter Proposals for 1976," was distributed to the members for their information and is attached.

George Shellenberger had a conflict of meeting dates and could not be present at today's meeting. He asked Mr. Roche to convey his feelings to the members regarding the proposal for the elected Chief Executive. He feels very strongly that the Chief Executive issue should be considered separately from the size of Board. Mr. Roche added that the E & E Commission report in 1974 said essentially the same thing - decide first on the Chief Executive before taking up the size of the Board. The two issues are too complex to be considered at the same time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:08 a.m.