
Economy & Efficiency Commission Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 1999
ROOM 830, KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION

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

I. CALL TO ORDER OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

With the presence of a quorum of commissioners Chairman Abel called the Commission meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONER'S ABSENCES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

David A. Abel
Fred Balderrama
Hope J. Boonshaft
Ben Breslauer
Gunther Buerk
John Crowley
David W. Farrar
Jonathan Fuhrman
Michael Jimenez
Chun Lee
Carol Ojeda-Kimbrough
Roman Padilla
Robert Philiposian
H. Randall Stoke
Julia E. Sylva

COMMISSIONERS REQUESTING TO BE EXCUSED

Richard D. Barger
Tony Lucente
William J. Petak
Marc A. Seidner
Tony Tortorice

COMMISSIONERS NOT REQUESTING AN EXCUSE

Chris Hammond

QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION LIAISON

Jaclyn Tilley Hill

It was Moved, Seconded and Adopted: The Commission members noted above be excused.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Chairman Abel and *Commissioner Stoke* each offered a correction to their comments on page two of the March 4, 1999 minutes. After the corrections were noted, it was then Moved, Seconded and Adopted: **The minutes of the March 4, 1999 Commission meeting be approved.**

IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Unincorporated Area Task Force

Commissioner Padilla stated that the Unincorporated Areas Task Force met with the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) new Assistant CAO for Unincorporated Area Services, Ms. Lari Sheehan. Other attendees at that meeting were Sandy Davis, David Janssen, and Commissioner Crowley. *Commissioner Padilla* stated that this office was willing to work with the EEC on an ongoing basis to put together their policy and programmatic office. *Commissioner Crowley* that the CAO would probably examine questions that may arise concerning services to contract cities, i.e. economies of scale illustrated by the possible consolidation of a regional forensic laboratory. *Chairman Abel* suggested that a future meeting could incorporate issues that will be raised by Mr. Olivito in his presentation on the Contract City Association (CCA).

3. Constitutional Revision Task Force

Chairman Abel mentioned that regarding the Constitutional Revision Task Force, the outgrowth of the EEC's work is still progressing through the State. The Speaker of the State Assembly (Antonio Villaraigosa) has appointed a Commission to consider the question which consists of a broad base of city and county representatives throughout California. The next meeting of this Commission is in San Diego on April 28, 1999.

Chairman Abel just appeared on the KNBC television program "Newsmakers" which should air within the next couple of weeks on Sunday morning at 5:30 a.m. There is a dramatic shift in terms of public perception on issues of accountability and responsibility in local government. He mentioned that Joel Fox made some very positive statements concerning the need for home rule and local control, in the form of a revenue source that local governments control.

5. Web Site Development

Mr. Staniforth commented that EEC reports and associated documents are currently being placed onto the EEC web site. He estimated that a significant number of Commission reports should be on the web site by the end of the month.

6. Real Asset Management

Commissioner Farrar reported that the County's Real Estate/Asset Management Task Force had met. The bad news is that the CAO has not yet caught onto the fact that the EEC is concerned about accountability. The good news is that every commissioner at that meeting was quite aggressive on the issue of accountability.

Commissioner Breslauer mentioned that an article in the Los Angeles Times seemed to indicate that the City of Los Angeles has an excellent data-processing system for this function. He wondered if the County should utilize such a similar system. *Commissioner Farrar* responded that the CAO's consultants concluded that the biggest problem in the County's real asset management is the lack of any comprehensive database, which is referred to a geographic information system (GIS). There were between 15 and 18 independent systems in the County none of which would interface with the other. A recommendation was that the County acquire an off-the-shelf product, similar to that of the City, for about \$3 million. The CAO's response was an expressed contentment with the system that currently exists. As a consequence they are making a report in an attempt to justify not moving towards a state-of-the-art GIS.

2. Debt Collection

Commissioner Jimenez informed the Commission that he had planned on meeting with the Auditor-Controller last week, but that meeting was cancelled. What they did provide, in the interim, were some of the reports they have made to the Board of Supervisors. The County fiscal manual is somewhat vague as to when a department is supposed to turn a delinquent debt over to the Tax Collector for write-off, or final collection attempt. That manual is in the process of being updated by the Auditor-Controller and results are expected by the end of this year (1999). They did ask each department to develop ideas on how to improve the County fiscal manual. In addition, the Auditor-Controller is putting new Request for Proposal guidelines together.

Commissioner Jimenez stated that the Debt Task Force is waiting for a report on what the debt is for this year. The figures that the EEC had in its report (for 1996) were from the closed books of the County. He anticipates that the Debt Task Force will know what the numbers are for 1998 once it meets with the Auditor-Controller. He stated that he would like the Auditor-Controller's office to prepare (for the EEC) a recommendation-by-recommendation response to the Commission's report. It seems as though they have taken up the issues the EEC recommended be addressed in the first 90 days, but action on the more difficult recommendations (such as determination of debt write-off) is yet to come.

Chairman Abel asked if it would be helpful to have the Auditor-Controller, or a CAO representative, address the EEC on the status of these responses. *Commissioner Jimenez* responded in the affirmative, but that he would like to wait to find out when the CAO will be providing the debt numbers first. *Chairman Abel* also asked about the status of the Probation Department's experiment. *Commissioner Jimenez* responded that there is no update on this program.

Chairman Abel asked if it would be useful for the Debt Task Force to make a follow-up presentation to the EEC. *Commissioner Jimenez* again answered that it would be best to wait until the follow-up meeting with the CAO. He mentioned that the County is now defining "debt" differently. Thus, the figures may have changed or been calculated differently to reflect the change in definition.

Commissioner Farrar stated that he agreed with Commissioner Padilla's comment concerning the apparent effectiveness of the Franchise Tax Board's model for debt collection which could be the basis for reevaluating debt management in the County.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion of the recommendation to establish a committee to follow-up on Grand Jury recommendations

Commissioner Breslauer mentioned that he met with Chairman Abel and Quality and Productivity Commissioner Hill on the Grand Jury Implementation Committee. The set of proposed recommendations was itemized in a recently-distributed memorandum to all EEC Commissioners.

Commissioner Fuhrman commented that he is aware that in the past, one of the issues that County Supervisors had with the Grand Jury is their legislative requirement for secrecy. *Commissioner Breslauer* responded that it would be technically correct to assume that the same dilemma exists for the current Grand Jury, but mentioned that there is pending legislation to change this requirement. *Commissioner Philibosian* commented that the EEC does not really need to speak with Grand Jury members because it has their report. If the EEC agrees with the report, it can utilize it, if it disagrees, it should not take up the issue. *Commissioner Breslauer* agreed, but added that, in spite of the legal restrictions, he believes that in some cases, dealing with the Chair of the Grand Jury Committee who made a recommendation could be very useful if the EEC wanted to follow-up on a particular recommendation. *Commissioner Fuhrman* added that he would certainly like the EEC to support (or recommend that the County support) the pending legislative revision.

Commissioner Padilla stated that the CAO makes a report to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) every year in response to the Grand Jury recommendations. He wondered how EEC recommendations are to be coordinated with the CAO's Grand Jury response? *Commissioner Breslauer* clarified the process of Grand Jury recommendations. He explained that recommendations are made for a County agency, i.e. the Sheriff's Department. That department, under the law, has 60 days in which to respond to the recommendations. These responses are typically sent to the Grand Jury and to the CAO. The BOS must respond to the recommendations within 90 days. Typically, they incorporate the agency's responses with a cover letter.

Chairman Abel concluded that the job that has been done by the Grand Jury Implementation Committee allows the EEC the freedom to be independent of any other actions. *Commissioner Farrar* emphasized the need for follow-up on Grand Jury reports and recommendations without superceding the authority of the Grand Jury or the CAO. The EEC should not necessarily be concerned with taking on all of the Grand Jury recommendations, but should employ a cost-benefit approach in addressing those issues which the EEC identifies as being the most critical to the continued

efficiency of County operations.

Commissioner Breslauer moved the following:

That the EEC establish a Grand Jury Implementation Committee. This will be a standing committee (as distinguished from a Task Force) chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the EEC. Members of the committee will be appointed by the chair of the EEC and will include the Grand Jury appointee.

The duties and responsibilities of the Committee will be to:

Review the Final Report of the Grand Jury and the county response.

- Research the actions implemented and departmental reasons for recommendations which were not implemented.
- Review public documents and departmental information pertaining to the accepted recommendations.
- Report findings and recommendations to the EEC for further action and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The outgoing foreman of the Grand Jury shall be invited to make a presentation at the September meeting of the EEC each year. This presentation will include the highlights of the Grand Jury civil recommendations contained in their annual Report. Arrangements should be made to distribute a copy of the Final Report to each EEC Commissioner prior to the September meeting.

The Committee may select any of the Grand Jury recommendations for review, but is not obligated to review any or all of them. The Committee will thus report to the EEC, which will decide: (a) which of the Grand Jury recommendations are appropriate for EEC follow-up, and (b) Committee and/or Task Force assignments to facilitate such follow-up.

The motion was seconded and adopted unanimously.

2. *Chairman Abel* announced his appointment of Commissioner Breslauer to the position of Vice-Chair for the remainder of his term on the EEC. He then appointed Commissioners Philibosian and Sylva to the newly formed Grand Jury Implementation Committee. *Vice-Chair Breslauer* stated that the Committee, in order to assure an effective transition, recommended that the Vice-Chair and the Grand Jury representative be members of the committee.

VI. PRESENTATION (a)

[Mr. Rodney Cooper, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.](#)

[Topic: Financing of Parks and Recreation Activities](#)

Mr. Cooper made comments to the Commission concerning the scope and direction of the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation as it pertains to the needs and direction of Los Angeles County government.

PRESENTATION (b)

[Mr. Sam Olivito, Executive Director, California Contract Cities Association](#)

[Topic: Contract Cities Always Reinventing Government](#)

Mr. Olivito made comments to the Commission concerning the scope and direction of the California Contract Cities Association as it pertains to the needs and direction of Los Angeles County government.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion from the floor, *Chairman Abel* adjourned the meeting at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted.



Bruce J. Staniforth
Executive Director

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