
Economy & Efficiency Commission Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1995
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 West Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012

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

Chairperson Gunther Buerk called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

II. ATTENDANCE

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gunther Buerk
David Farrar
Jaclyn Tilley Hill
Chun Lee
Roman Padilla
William Petak
Julia Sylva
Randy Stockwell
H. Randall Stoke
Tony Tortorice
Betty Trotter

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

Richard Barger
John FitzRandolph
Louise Frankel
Jonathan Fuhrman
Robert Philibosian

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Fred Balderrama
John Crowley
Carole Ojeda-Kimbrough
Albert Vera

Moved, Seconded, and Approved: The Commission members noted above be excused.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Chairperson Buerk asked for any amendments, corrections or objections to the proposed Minutes from the July 5, 1995 Commission meeting.

Moved, Seconded and Approved: The minutes of the July 5, 1995 Commission Meeting be approved.

IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Staniforth distributed the Board's motions indicating the actions the Board took regarding the ISD report and the recommendations of the CAO. The Board agreed with most of the recommendations, however, although the Commission recommended that the Leasing stay with ISD, the Board decided to move this function to the CAO. The Commission recommended that the Chief Information Officer report to the CAO, while data processing remain with ISD. The Commission strongly objected to placing data processing functions under the Auditor/Controller's office since having operational responsibilities in this office could corrupt the audit and control functions. The Board deferred a decision on the issue of the ITS transfer until the 29th of August. Chairperson Buerk asked that Mr. Staniforth send a letter to the Board explaining why the recommendations concerning ISD were made.

Moved, seconded and approved: That a letter explaining the Commission's recommendation on the replacement of the CIO function be sent to the Board.

Due to other commitments, Commissioner Betty Trotter is unable to continue as EEC liaison to the Quality and Productivity Commission. Commissioner Jaclyn Hill accepted the position. Chairperson Buerk asked that Mr. Staniforth notify Commissioner Jack Green, the Chair of the Quality and Productivity Commission, of the change.

Mr. Staniforth made the announcement that Mary McCloud's position is currently being filled by Sondra Stiles.

In addition, Mr. Staniforth reported that the current Grand Jury Chair has indicated that he does not want to occupy the position on the E&E Commission that he would normally occupy. Based upon an opinion of County Counsel, Commissioner Hill will remain as a Grand Jury Chairperson until replaced by next year's Grand Jury Chair.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Department of Health Services-Reengineering

Task Force Chairperson Tortorice said he had nothing to report. Mr. Staniforth reported that he had spoken to Fred Brousseau, the consultant who is preparing the Health Services Reengineering Report. Mr. Brousseau has stated that a revised draft will be submitted shortly. Commissioner Buerk asked Commissioner Tortorice to discuss the timing on the project and how it fits in with other actions being taken at the Department of Health Services. Commissioner Tortorice said that while the original objective for the report was January 1995, additional reviews of the consultant submitted a draft report have pushed the timeline significantly.

Moved, seconded and approved: That a letter be sent to Harvy Rose expressing the Commission's concern over the time being taken to complete this report.

B. Unincorporated Area Services

Task Force Chairperson Padilla said that after the Task Force members receive the draft report they will review it for policy considerations. Commissioner Padilla reported that it is his objective that the Commission receive a draft report for Commission consideration by the November meeting.

C. Real Property Management

Task Force Chairperson Farrar reported that there have been delays similar to those encountered by the Department of Health Services Report. The consultant has not been as timely as was expected. This has been due, in part, to the level of analysis required to review properties. He stated that effort will be made to complete the project within the next month.

Mr. Staniforth explained that although the consultants split the project, he feels there should be someone to bring it together in a coherent presentation. Upon completion of the draft, Mr. Staniforth will submit it to the Task Force for approval. Chairperson Buerk brought up the issue of how to better manage the consultants to get better work. He asked Mr. Staniforth to review actions to be taken with regard to the existing and new consulting contracts. In addition he wanted to review how much work the staff is required to do in order to control the work of the consultants.

Commissioner Hill recommended looking at those projects that worked well and using what worked well as a model for future projects. Commissioner Tortorice mentioned that consultants are hired to investigate an issue, but it is not until the project is underway that the scope of a problem is normally established. Commissioner Petak said consultant contracts should either be cost reimbursable or on a fixed price basis and that the Commissioners should have a better idea of the scope when contracting with a consultant. Commissioner Buerk asked Mr. Staniforth to come up with some guidelines for projects for the next Commission meeting and he also requested a revised time line on every project. Commissioner William Waddell, liaison from the Quality and Productivity Commission, mentioned that the Commission may want to consider Senate Bill 1545 which would relax the requirements for the sale of county property even though 90% of it is encumbered.

Commissioner Farrar thought the Commission should focus on what kind of consultant is required for the completion of a project, either someone who would do the work of gathering the information or someone that might function in a more advisory capacity. In reply to Commissioner Padilla 's comments about the Supervisor Molina's time constraints on the project, Commissioner Farrar said that while there were opportunities for significant savings in the area of asset management, none would provide quick or early savings in helping to solve the current budget crisis. Chairperson Buerk asked Commissioner Farrar to draft a letter to the Board requesting an extension on the time for completing this project.

D. Jury Management

Task Force Chairperson Trotter said that while the Commission and other organizations have excellent ideas for improvements in jury management, there are no funds currently available to address the problem. She mentioned a listing of groups, associations, organizations, etc., which could conceivably donate help on implementing these recommendations. Chairperson Buerk brought up the possibility of charging litigants for juries in civil trials. Apparently this is already being done in some courts. Commissioner Trotter attended a meeting where the dominant issues were non-unanimous jury verdicts and the problem of multiple service, i.e., an individual serving on jury duty four, five, or six times. The "one day - one trial" system has been used successfully in San Mateo County, but the Superior Court has not recommended its implementation.

Commissioner Tortorice mentioned the economic loss to businesses of providing jurors. He suggested allowing firms to pay a fee rather than providing the employee. Fees could then be used in improving the jury management system. Commissioner Hill expressed concern over the County layoff situation on the jury system since County employees represent a large percentage of jurors. Commissioner Trotter said there was currently a proposal to make juror payment mandatory as it is done in Massachusetts.

E. Natural History Museum

Task Force Chairperson Trotter reported that because the report has not yet been taken up by the Board, she will wait until sometime after August 29th to request a reply. Chairperson Buerk asked Mr. Staniforth if there was a contact with Supervisor Molina's office they could speak to in order to find out if there were any problems. He also asked Commissioner Padilla to speak to Supervisor Molina or one of her deputies about the report.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Report on the Consolidation of the Department of Health Services Human Resources Function within the Department of Human Resources.

Mr. Staniforth spoke about the project which involves the transfer of 31 of 34 positions from Health Services Human Resources to the Department of Human Resources. Included in the draft Commission report is an alternative proposal from Health Services. Provided the recommendations are adopted, Health Services would have 60 days to come up with a plan not only for the 34 positions at issue, but for all 300 Human Resources positions within DHS. He said there were essentially six basic assumptions under which the document was prepared which are identified in the report. The document also states that it is not particularly appropriate to take an organization that is anticipated to be inefficient and transfer it intact to another department. It is important is to look at efficiency prior to such a transfer.

Mr. Staniforth also mentioned the letter from Mr. Robert Gates, Director of DHS, in which he concurs with the Commission's recommendations, with the exception that DHS would like 90 days rather than 60 in which to conduct the review. The original concept involved the 34 positions within DHS, but was expanded to include all positions

within DHS. There may be opportunities for a total restructuring of the Human Resources function within DHS; the elimination of positions due to duplication or other reasons, and, the transfer of positions from DHS to DHR.

A number of the Commissioners questioned the figure of 41.29% fringe benefits, thinking it too high. Mr. Staniforth said that the figure was given to him by DHR and that he did not have the time or resources to investigate the figure or verify its accuracy. While the Commission feels that the subject should be investigated further, it also recognized that it does not have the resources or the time available to do so at this time.

Commissioner Stockwell felt that the Commission will be adopting a fairly strong rejection of DHR's recommendations and proposals. He asked Mr. Staniforth whether this was because he felt DRR should focus on policy and oversight rather than line positions. Mr. Staniforth replied that it is important to consider whether the positions are being transferred without knowing if they continue to provide services efficiently.

Chairperson Buerk repeated the Commission's belief that the County should reduce the number of commissions and departments, and that all policy-making functions should report to the CAO rather than the Board, since the Board loses effective oversight as the number of reporting departments increase. He felt that the Department of Human Resources should have remained a part of the CAO's office. In addition, he felt that it would be a further deviation from the Commission's policies to move operational functions from Health Services to Human Resources. The recommendations from the Commission conclude that only policy-making positions should be moved and duplicate positions should be eliminated.

Moved, seconded and approved: To amend footnote on page 5 that the rate used in the report was given to the Commission and may deserve further consideration, which is beyond the scope of this report.

Commissioner Tortorice stated that if the overhead percentage is accurate the Board needs to address this issue. If it is not, DHR needs to be more circumspect about the numbers it chooses to publish as the overhead rate. Chairperson Buerk said that while it is an important issue to keep in mind, it should be addressed in a separate review. Commissioner Padilla brought up the fact that the DHR was created by the Board because of its frustration that there was not enough control over personnel policies and issues.

Chairperson Buerk made a point to acknowledge and thank Mr. Staniforth for his work on both the ISD report, as well as the DHS/DHR report.

Moved, seconded and approved: That the report on the Consolidation of the Department of Health Services Human Resources function within the Department of Human Resources be approved and forwarded to the Board.

B. Letter sent to Commissioners regarding the Compensation Paid to Advisory and Regulatory Commissions.

Mr. Staniforth reported that in response to Commissioner Philibosian request at the last Commission meeting that Mr. Staniforth prepare a status report listing the current County commissions and the amounts paid to commissioners. The list was prepared, with the help of Commissioner Ojeda-Kimbrough, using upon information obtained from the Executive Office. No analysis was done on the list to verify its accuracy. The first chart presented to the Commission by Mr. Staniforth focused on the advisory commissions and listed the maximum amount possible, excluding travel and mileage compensation. Those commissions considered regulatory in nature and not at the discretion of the Board were listed on a separate chart. A third chart was discussed which listed those commissions with either no compensation or unknown compensation.

Commissioner Petak wanted to know if special districts were included on the list. Mr. Staniforth said they were included but were not investigated individually. Commissioner Petak mentioned that the Local Government Services Commission is currently investigating special districts and wondered if it would be appropriate to join with the Economy and Efficiency Commission to do so.

Chairperson Buerk said there were two issues involved: the total costs of the commissions and committees and, the actual pay that commissioners receive. He said that the cost issue was previously addressed in a report which recommended that a Sunset review be done regularly on each commission. Commissioner Lee mentioned the DPSS Commission whose members saved their compensation, donated it to a scholarship fund at the end of the year. Commissioner Hill pointed out the differences between those commissions which meet infrequently and those that meet as much as several times a week. The latter have all the characteristics of a job and ought to offer some compensation.

Chairperson Buerk noted the different categories of commissions; some exist by statute and are not just advisory, but operational commissions. He proposed a recommendation to the Board to not pay the members of those commissions which are solely advisory and have no statutory functions. Commissioner Padilla emphasized the need to differentiate between support staff and the commissioners themselves. Chairperson Buerk replied that this issue is also covered in

the Sunset review. He recognized that the numbers in the submitted document are not accurate as to actual costs, but are maximum extrapolations based on certain assumptions. Chairperson Buerk directed staff to prepare a letter to the Board recommending that advisory commissions be treated equally, in that they should not be paid to provide this public service.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.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 [E-Mail eecomm@co.la.ca.us](mailto:EEComm@co.la.ca.us)
WEB eec.co.la.ca.us