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Economy & Efficiency Commission Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2000
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 COMMISSION MEETING

With the presence of a quorum of commissioners Chairman Philiposian called the Commission meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF COMMISSIONER'S ABSENCES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

David A. Abel
Hope J. Boonshaft
John Crowley
David W. Farrar
Jaclyn Tilley Hill
Michael Jimenez
Jeanne L. Kennedy
Chun Lee
Tony Lucente
Royal F. Oakes
Roman Padilla
William J. Petak
Robert H. Philiposian
H. Randall Stoke
Julia E. Sylva
G. Thomas Thompson
Tony Tortorice

COMMISSIONERS REQUESTING TO BE EXCUSED

Johnathan Fuhrman
Marc A. Seidner

COMMISSIONERS NOT REQUESTING AN EXCUSE

Fred Balderrama

It was Moved, Seconded, and Adopted: The Commission members requesting an excuse, be excused.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Philibosian asked if there were any corrections or amendments to the minutes. Hearing none, the following motion was Moved, Seconded and Adopted: The minutes of the February 3, 2000 Commission meeting be approved.

IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Phioibosian stated that there will be a presentation to the past chairman that will be delayed pending the arrival of Supervisor Yaroslavsky.

Chairman Philibosian said that he wanted to announce the acceptance of Commissioner Crowley to be liaison to the Local Government Services Commission. He added that Commissioner Sylva has accepted the position of liaison to the Quality and Productivity Commission.

Chairman Philibosian remarked that after the presentation to Commissioner Able, Supervisor Yaroslavsky would administer the Oath of Office to the commissioners.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chairman Philibosian said that as part of the Executive Director's report he would like Mr. Staniforth to describe how the Commission is funded.

Mr. Staniforth stated that he had three items he would like to discuss. The first was the new name plates. These would be cared for by staff until such time as a Commissioner leaves the Commission. Upon departure the name plates would be presented to the Commissioner in partial recognition of their service.

Mr. Staniforth said that the second item was the budget issue and how the Commission is funded. He stated that in 1992, when he became Executive Director, there was a budget of approximately \$400,000. He said that in 1993-94 the County experienced a severe Fiscal crisis and the Executive Office asked the Commission to relinquish their line item status. In the agreement the Executive Office agreed to pay all the Commission's expenses including staff salaries, supplies and small amounts for project work. Mr. Staniforth said that for larger project items it was necessary to go to the Board of Supervisors and ask for funding. Mr. Staniforth asked the Commission if there were any questions regarding the funding.

Commissioner Thompson said that it disturbed him that there was no clear budget and he felt that this detracts from the independence of the Commission. Commissioner Crowley stated that he had heard of money being made available by non-governmental sources. Mr. Staniforth replied that he recalled that in the late 80's there was a foundation formed for that purpose but that it did not continue. Commissioner Crowley asked if the Commission had ever made any grant applications. Mr. Staniforth replied no, but we were looking into the possibility of doing so. Mr. Staniforth added that the Sloan Foundation was planing on issuing grants and that he has requested additional information.

Commissioner Hill said that any time you have to ask, for money, it limits the organizations ability to move forward. Mr. Staniforth agreed with Commissioner Hill, but said that the Board had never turned the Commission down when it had asked for support on its projects. He also said that there were other options that were being looked into.

Mr. Staniforth stated that the last item he wished to discuss was the newly created brochure that was sent to the Commissioners for comment. After a short discussion and editorial comments the Commission accepted the brochure with amendments.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Unincorporated Area

Commissioner Crowley commented that as a direct product of the effort of this Task Force and the Commission, the Chief Administrative Officer has created an Office of Unincorporated Area Services. He added that Ms. Lari Sheehan, the person who was recruited to head this office, has been diverted from these duties due to the pressures created by the year 2000 census. Commissioner Crowley stated that there were a number of issues that warranted her attention. He

would encourage the continuance of the Task Force.

Commissioner Padilla stated after meeting with other members of the Task Force it was concluded that the economies of scale issues should be looked into.

Chairman Philibosian interjected that the Commission had no rule that each of the districts was to be represented in a Task force, but noted that the Third District had no representation on the Unincorporated Area Task Force. He asked if anyone from the Third District wanted to be on this Task Force to let him know.

2. Debt Collection

Commissioner Jimenez stated that following the Commission meeting the Debt Collection Task Force would be meeting to review the matrix of all the recommendations that were in the original report. He said that this meeting would enable the Task Force to determine whether or not the departments have complied with the recommendations and would then forward a report to the full Commission.

Chairman Philibosian noted here that there was no Second District representation on the Debt Collection Task Force and asked if someone from that district would like to volunteer to let him know.

Commissioner Abel asked Commissioner Jimenez if there was a determination about the \$1B that the Task Force had been looking into. Commissioner Jimenez replied that much of this money involved Health Care and was determined to be un-collectable.

Commissioner Abel wanted to know if there was any progress in the attempt to collect the un-collectable funds over the past year since the report. Commissioner Jimenez answered that there is no annual report. He added that there has been some resistance from the Auditor Controllers office to issue current information.

Chairman Philibosian wanted to know if the basis for the resistance was known. Commissioner Jimenez said that, according to the Auditor Controller, each department must make an annual report to the Board as to what their outstanding debts are. He said that this was not done on a collective basis, but rather on an individual department basis. Because of this, the Auditor Controller feels that the Board has all the information it needs and that if they reported all the data in one report it would not be consistent.

Commissioner Hill wanted to know if there had not been a change in the reporting mechanism. She added that a lot of that debt is not collectable because of the Federal Government's mandates that the County have services available to the indigent population. Commissioner Jimenez stated that it was essential for the County to qualify and collect from the Federal Government for health care services even though the County's expenditure is greater than the money received from the Federal Government. He said that having said that it was difficult to understand why these debts could not be reported as having been written off.

Commissioner Petak asked if the Auditor Controller was still carrying billings, which are not collectable by social welfare services, as debt. Commissioner Jimenez said that by policy they are.

3. Constitutional Revision

Commissioner Abel stated that the Task Force had been reporting on the progress of its successor, The Speakers Commission on State and Local Government Finance. The Speakers Commission concluded it's fourteenth and last meeting last week and will issue it's report within forty-five days to the Legislature. Implementations of some of the Commissions recommendations are already apparent. A joint Senate and Assembly Committee has already been created, three Senators have already been named and the Assembly is in the process of selecting it's three members. This committee will take up the Speakers Commission recommendations as well as those from the State Controller, the Hertzberg Commission on Local Governance for the Twenty-First Century, and the results of Senator Piece's hearings. All of these recommendations center around local governance and finance. He added that he would produce and share with the Commission the final report of the Speakers Commission which mentions the Commission's work as a predecessor to the work of the Speakers Commission.

4. Strategic Direction Task Force

No Report

5. Web Page Development

Vice Chair Lucente said that as previously reported all the reports of this Commission are scheduled to be placed on the

Web Site. He said that unfortunately the vendor that was retained to do that has not fulfilled the assignment and has resigned the responsibility. Currently the Executive Director is working on the project while seeking some outside assistance to help. He added that he had advised the Chairman that the Task Force could be sunseted and move the activity to administration and site maintenance.

Chairman Philibosian with thanks to the Chair, said the Web Page Development Task Force will sunset. The responsibility will move to staff for administration and maintenance.

6. Real Asset Management

Commissioner Farrar said that he would like to make a brief report on behalf of the Real Asset Management Task Force. He advocated that the members of the Task Force and the Chairman of the Commission meet to discuss the future direction of the Task Force. He then shared a Daily News Editorial on Accountability in government he wished entered into the record as the Real Asset Management Task Force's report. He added that after five years of working to try to improve the County real estate management system he concluded, approximately six months ago, that it was not a real estate issue, but an issue of the accountability of senior managers to the Supervisors and to the citizens.

Chairman Philibosian interjected that our speaker had arrived and that it would be appropriate for her to begin her presentation at this time.

VI. PRESENTATION (a)

[Ms. Lari Sheehan, Assistant Administrative Officer, Los Angeles County](#)
[Topic: County Services to Unincorporated Areas](#)

Commissioner Padilla introduced Ms. Sheehan relating her past associations and experience in the area of services to unincorporated areas. He added that her cooperation with the Unincorporated Area Task Force was most helpful.

Ms. Sheehan discussed the establishment of her office including its staffing and mission. She also cited and explained several of the projects that the office had undertaken to improve municipal service delivery to the residents of the unincorporated areas of the County.

IV. INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (Continued)

At this point in the meeting Chairman Philibosian interrupted Ms. Sheehan to welcome Supervisor Yaroslavsky. He stated that the Supervisor was there not only to honor the outgoing Chairman, but also to administer the oath of office to the commissioners. He added that after the oath of office, Vice Chairman Lucente would conduct the remainder of the program.

After the oath of office had been administered to the commission by the Supervisor, Vice Chairman Lucente invited Commissioner Abel to join Supervisor Yaroslavsky and himself at the head of the table. He continued saying that it was his pleasure, on behalf of Chairman Philibosian and the Economy and Efficiency Commission, to recognize Commissioner Abel and thank him for his hard work as Chairman of the Commission. Vice Chairman Lucente then gave a brief history of the work and accomplishments of Commissioner Abel as Chairman for the last three years. He then invited Supervisor Yaroslavsky to make a few remarks.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky, in his opening remarks, expressed his feelings regarding the oath of office he had just administered to the commissioners. He continued commenting on Commissioner Abel's efforts and accomplishments.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky presented Commissioner Abel with a scroll signed both by Supervisor Molina and himself, as a token of appreciation for his hard work as Chairman of the Economy and Efficiency Commission on behalf of the County of Los Angeles.

Commissioner Abel stated that it had been an honor to be Chairman and an honor to have been appointed to the Commission. He thanked Supervisor Yaroslavsky and the members of the Commission for their expression of appreciation. He added that his ability to function effectively was due to the cooperation of the commissioners and the support of the Board.

Vice Chairman Lucente presented Commissioner Abel with a gift from the Commission.

Commissioner Boonshaft adding her comments to the work and accomplishments of Commissioner Abel also presented him with a gift.

Chairman Philibosian thanked Supervisor Yaroslavsky for his participation in honoring Commissioner Abel. He again

thanked Commissioner Abel for his past and continuing work with the Commission.

Upon the completion of the ceremony Chairman Philibosian asked that Ms. Sheehan continue with her presentation.

V. OLD BUSINESS (Continued)

7. Grand Jury Implementation

Vice Chairman Lucente said that Commissioner Kennedy would report for the Grand Jury Implementation Task Force.

Commissioner Kennedy reported that Commissioners Lucente and Sylva, as well as herself and Mr. Staniforth, were given a tour of the newly renovated Juvenile Hall. She said that the tour was informative, but that she felt there was more to be examined than they were shown. She suggested a return visit at another time. Vice Chairman Lucente interjected that he planned to schedule a conference call meeting in March to discuss these matters.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Philibosian said that he wanted to discuss future project and presentations. He added that there had been a number of suggestions from Commissioners, these are listed in the handout previously distributed. In addition, Commissioners Crowley and Hill have indicated an interest in the County's financial situation. He said that Commissioner Hill also expressed an interest in Supervisor Molina's discussion of child care facilities.

Commissioner Abel interjected that the study that was initiated, a year ago, by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) has been completed. He suggested that the Commission might want to hear from Mr. Marc Baldassarre and his team about their findings on the actual state of our County's budget.

Chairman Philibosian asked for a consensus from the Commission on inviting an address from Mr. Baldasare and it was agreed upon. Commissioner Padilla suggested that the Commission be given copies of the report prior to Mr. Baldassarre's presentation. Chairman Philibosian agreed, and said that copies of the report would be given to the Commissioners before Mr. Baldassarre was invited

Chairman Philibosian asked Commissioner Crowley for his thoughts on the County's budget. Commissioner Crowley stated that the importance has been raised in the headlines that anticipate the County of Los Angeles facing the possibility of bankruptcy, if there was a serious drop in the economy. He said that in the past money had been put into a reserve as a preventive measure. Commissioner Crowley suggested that the Commission should explore the creation of a solvency reserve.

Commissioner Abel interjected that he felt that one of the things that the PPIC report will say is that Los Angeles County, even as good as its financial health is, it is one Federal waiver away from bankruptcy. That will be one of the conclusions of this report. He added that he thought that there will be a State look at the organization of local government.

Chairman Philibosian said that there had been a Task Force that he chaired called Budget and Economic Growth. Revival of this Task Force, with a new chair, may be an option at this time. He asked the commissioners to consider this possibility and to let the Executive Director know of their decision. He added that if anyone would like to chair such a Task Force to also let the Executive Director know.

Chairman Philibosian called on Commissioner Hill to discuss child care. Commissioner Hill stated that Chairman Philibosian and she, as Chairman of the Quality and Productivity Commission, attended a meeting of all the county commissions chairmen. Supervisor Molina attended in the capacity as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Molina has a deep interest in childcare and would like to expand childcare availability throughout the County to include county employees. Commissioner Hill said that while this proposal has tremendous merit and validity, that the costs involved were of major concern. She felt that the Economy and Efficiency Commission could bring objectivity to what would be a sensitive situation. Costs need to be clearly addressed.

Chairman Philibosian stated that he had been informed that this matter was addressed at the last Board of Supervisors meeting and had been sent to the Chief Administrative Office for review. He added this was an issue he did not feel the Commission should address on our own, unless the Board of Supervisors wants us to. Commissioner Hill said that there were Supervisors who support the idea, but are very much concerned with the costs.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion from the floor, Chairman Philibosian adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted.



Bruce J. Staniforth
Executive Director

[Go to March, 2000 Agenda](#)

[Return to April, 2000 Agenda](#)



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