

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

November 1, 1978

Dr. Warren H. Schmidt, Chairperson
Gloria Starr, Vice Chairperson

Members Present:

Warren Schmidt, Chairperson
Gloria Starr, Vice Chairperson
George E. Bodle
Catherine Burke
John Byork
Margaret Carr
Anne Collins
Dorothy Courtney
Mario Di Giovanni
Carolyn Ellner
Jerry Epstein
Richard Gunther
Mary Jane Kidd
Leo Majich
George Shellenberger

Members Excused:

Milton Gordon
Lauro Neri
Robert Ruchti
Luis Ruiz
Bryan Walker

George E. Bodle
Dr. Catherine G. Burke
John D. Byork
Margaret Paterson Carr
Anne S. Collins
Dorothy Avila Courtney
Dr. Mario Di Giovanni
Dr. Carolyn L. Ellner
Jerry Epstein
Milton G. Gordon
Richard S. Gunther
Mary Jane Kidd
Leo A. Majich
Lauro J. Neri
Robert Ruchti, II
Luis A. Ruiz, CLU
George Shellenberger
Bryan Walker

Burke Roche
Executive Secretary
John Campbell
Staff Specialist
Maxlynn Larsen
Commission Secretary

Warren Schmidt called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. and welcomed visitors Pat Yeoman, Grand Jurors' Association; and Dorothy Courtney's mother, Mrs. Schaeffer.

Approval of Minutes - On motion of George Shellenberger the minutes of October 4 were approved as written.

Meeting Attendance - Burke Roche reviewed the action which the members had taken at the last meeting regarding meeting attendance. 1) Any member who cannot attend the regular monthly meeting must notify the office, give the reason, and request to be excused. 2) The minutes will show members present, members absent, and members excused.

He reported that Milton Gordon was in the hospital; Robert Ruchti has a business conflict; Luis Ruiz has a full-day meeting conference; and Bryan Walker has the flu. Lauro Neri has been out of town and could not be contacted.

Jerry Epstein moved that the members be excused. Motion was seconded by Mary Jane Kidd and passed unanimously.

County Proposition C - Elected County Executive - Jerry Epstein, EEC representative on the Proposition C campaign committee, reported that things looked reasonably good. The cooperation he has received from EEC members has been very heartening. Not only have they volunteered for speaking engagements, they have also sent in financial contributions. He thanked Dorothy Courtney and Pat Yeoman in particular for all the work they have been doing on the campaign.

He reported that 93% of the news media is in support. The Times sent one of their reporters, Richard O'Reilly to Seattle to get proof of how the elected county executive system works. The last push before the election will be the news conference scheduled for tomorrow with Supervisors Edelman, Hahn, and Schabarum in attendance. The League of Women Voters and Common Cause were two of the many organizations which have cooperated. Mr. Epstein said that the cooperation of all these involved people has made this experience one of the most gratifying that he has had.

Other Ballot Propositions - Burke Roche reviewed the other County propositions. He said that Proposition A (contracting with private firms) was receiving strong support from the news media. The Times ran an editorial opposing Proposition B (civil service reform), and he reminded the members that they had decided not to take a position on that proposition.

Study on Government Structure - Warren Schmidt stated that the A. Alan Post Commission was looking at government, and the EEC had supplied that Commission with a lot of information. He asked Catie Burke to report.

Catie Burke reported that some of the task forces were turning in their reports. The government structure report deals with the same subjects the EEC task force has been working on. If the EEC report were available, she feels that it could have a great amount of influence on the A. Alan Post report. He has 45 to 50 task forces working and wants to get the best thinking in the State on all these subjects before making recommendations to the Legislature. She hopes it isn't too late for the EEC report to provide some input.

Warren Schmidt asked Burke Roche how soon the report would be ready. Mr. Roche answered that the staff plans to have a draft ready for the task force members next week. A task force meeting will be called after they have had time to study it.

Members discussed whether or not to send copies of the draft to the entire commission. It was decided to send to the task force only, but if other members want copies, they should notify the office.

Mary Jane Kidd reminded Warren Schmidt that she had asked to be relieved from chairing the task force when her time became so fragmented. Warren Schmidt asked her to retain the chair until the task force meets. At that time it will also discuss the report and the strategy for publication and involving people.

Commission Priorities and Plans - Warren Schmidt said the the EEC now has the government structure task force and the task force looking at the civil service and personnel practices in the County. The latter study is in a holding pattern waiting the outcome of the election. The ballot proposition may change the makeup of civil service. Also, if the proposal for an elected County executive passes, there will be significant changes in the County. He said that after the election will be a good time for the Executive Committee to get together and think about priorities and plans for the balance of the year. If anyone has any ideas on what the commission should be looking into, he will be glad to bring those ideas to the attention of the Executive Committee.

Guest Speaker - Warren Schmidt announced that periodically the commission has invited department heads to speak to the commission on how their departments operate, the kind of problems they are concerned with, and how the commission might relate to any of these.

Dr. Schmidt said that the commission was delighted to have Edward Messinger, Director of the County Communications Department, as its guest today. Mr. Messinger has had 37 years of management experience in communications and management consulting. He comes from the private sector; has been Vice President of Administration and Planning for United Telecommunications, which is the third largest telephone holding company in the United States. He founded a telecommunications management consulting company which employed 150 professional people. He has a long series of credentials and is obviously a highly qualified professional man.

Mr. Messinger introduced his fiscal and budget officer, Mr. Ed Blundon. They distributed material which had been prepared for the meeting. Following is a brief summary of Mr. Messinger's remarks.

His department handles all of the County telephones, all of the County mail service, trains radio operators (including paramedics), and has one of the largest microwave systems in the country which contains over 15,000 miles of circuits. Anything electrical in the County - alarm systems, intercoms, security - they engineer, install, and maintain. He estimates there are 150,000 to 200,000 pieces of equipment. About 75% of the costs are billed out to other departments.

Proposition 13 has caused serious problems for his department. His people are leaving in droves for better salaries and more certain job conditions in private industry. He will not be able to hire the same types of people he is losing, because he can't compete with the salaries in private industry. According to his industrial experience, the County employee is not overpaid, and County benefits don't even equal the benefits paid by General Motors.

Mr. Messinger said that he was very fearful of what is going to happen to government. When the County loses expertise, people will see more incompetence in government than they ever saw in their lives. If they want good government, they

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should help to remove the uncertainty from the jobs. He also cautioned against removing too many civil service protections, because those protections enable employees to be more forthright.

The members applauded Mr. Messinger's presentation. Warren Schmidt thanked him for explaining the operation of his department and the problems involved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.