

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

September 29, 1976

Dr. Robert J. Downey  
Chairman

Members Present:

Robert Downey, Chairman  
George Bodle  
Catherine Burke  
John Byork  
Anne Collins  
Mario Di Giovanni  
Carolyn Ellner  
Jerry Epstein  
Douglas Ferguson  
Milton Gordon  
Richard Gunther  
Mary Jane Kidd  
Luis Ruiz  
Warren Schmidt  
George Shellenberger  
Gloria Starr  
Bryan Walker

Members Absent:

Margaret Carr  
Leo Majich  
Robert Ruchti, II  
Larkin Teasley

George E. Bodle  
Catherine Graeffe Burke  
John D. Byork  
Margaret Paterson Carr  
Anne S. Collins  
Mario Di Giovanni  
Dr. Carolyn L. Ellner  
Jerry Epstein  
Douglas W. Ferguson  
Milton G. Gordon  
Richard S. Gunther  
Mary Jane Kidd  
Leo A. Majich  
Robert Ruchti, II  
Luis A. Ruiz  
Dr. Warren H. Schmidt  
George Shellenberger  
Gloria Starr  
Larkin Teasley  
Bryan Walker

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

Dr. Downey convened the meeting at 9:38 a.m. He introduced new member Luis Ruiz, appointed by Supervisor Edelman to replace Gustave Anaya. Mr. Ruiz is self-employed and is an insurance and securities broker.

Management and Finances Task Force - Dr. Downey announced that Leo Majich, chairman of the task force, was called out of town this morning so would not be present. He asked Mario Di Giovanni to present the task force report, but first he wanted to announce that since the last meeting Mario received his Doctorate in Engineering, so he would be Dr. Di Giovanni from now on.

Dr. Di Giovanni said that this report "Eliminating Automatic Step Increases and Controlling Supervisory Costs in Los Angeles County Government," was the second report of the task force. It had been mailed to all members, and he was now formally presenting it for approval.

Carolyn Ellner moved that the report be approved. The motion was seconded by John Byork.

Dr. Downey said the recommendations could be considered separately. He read Recommendation #1 - elimination of the automatic step increase - and then asked for comments.

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George Bodle spoke against the recommendation. He said that he felt that the plan had some merit and therefore would oppose the recommendation.

Dr. Di Giovanni answered that the problem was not the step increase; the problem was that it was automatic. Second, when combined with the across the board cost of living increase it amounts to more of an increase than private industry receives.

Burke Roche said that the system is generating \$20 million of excess costs each year. One point that should be emphasized is that this system was developed in the 30's and is pretty universal in government. This commission is recommending that the County take the lead in abolishing the systems which have no place in a collective bargaining environment.

George Bodle said that it was not confined to government. His own firm is a very small one but it gives an across the board cost of living increase each year and also step increases.

Dr. Downey read Recommendation #2 - regarding supervisory levels in the County. He said that one-fourth of every salary dollar is for supervision, and he does not see that ratio in industry. Several members commented about the ratios in industry.

Dr. Schmidt stated that over-supervision is the most disturbing thing he has learned about the County. It means that either the supervisors are doing non-supervisory work, or that there is a high degree of alienation among the employees. We taxpayers, he said, are doing a lot to create this type of condition by beginning a kind of mythology that people in public service are basically lazy and incompetent. So what you get are people in the system who aren't excited or proud about their jobs. Instead of more controls on people in government, think about improving the quality of working conditions to give them more involvement and more participation. He said that he hopes somewhere along the line this commission takes the leadership in reversing the attitude of people working in government. He is glad the report mentions the non-monetary benefits which could come from reducing supervision - such as morale, incentive to perform, and improvement in communication.

Mr. Gunther said that a table on supervision had been used in the first report, and he thought that it should have been included in this report also. Members discussed various ways of incorporating the table.

Mr. Roche explained that the previous report used data from the salary ordinance and other less precise sources. The data in this report is much more refined. Dr. Schmidt suggested that the staff consider using more visual ways of describing data rather than tables.

Dr. Downey called for the question on Recommendation #1. The vote was 16-1 in favor. Recommendation #2 was adopted unanimously.

Task Force on DPSS Commissions - Anne Collins, Chairman, reported that the task force had hurriedly completed its report on the commission structure in the Department of Public Social Services in June so it could be considered before budget deliberations ended. It has been on the agenda each week, and each week it has been postponed. It is now scheduled to be heard next Tuesday. She will report any action taken by the Board at the next meeting.

Task Force on Community Relations - Carolyn Ellner, Chairman, reported that they have been meeting with members of the electronic media and also with representatives of the Los Angeles Times. They are now working on establishment of an effective speakers bureau and are also looking into setting up a conference with other County commissioners to develop an orientation program. At the next full commission meeting the task force will present a statement of policy and recommend that it be added to the By-Laws of the Commission.

Milton Gordon reported that he and Burke Roche met with several representatives of the Los Angeles Times. Both gentlemen were kindly disposed towards the concept of a County mayor.

Task Force on Charter Amendments - Mario Di Giovanni, Chairman, reported that the task force would be meeting on Friday to finalize the report on Propositions A and B before submitting it to the full commission. The report will give the pros and cons of the propositions and will make recommendations.

Burke Roche explained that Friday would be the first of October, and the regular commission meeting was scheduled for the 6th. There would not be enough time between the task force meeting and the commission meeting to get the report typed, printed, and mailed to the members. The decision was made to postpone the full commission meeting to October 13.

Canyon County Issue - Dr. Downey reported that approaches had been made to the E & E Commission on this issue, not on whether or not there should be a Canyon County, but whether there has been accurate data gathered. He asked Burke Roche to report.

Burke Roche reported that John Campbell attended the County presentation of the issue at the Chamber of Commerce, State and Local Government Committee. The facts are very serious. The Formation Commission was appointed by the Governor to study the issue and the procedures for secession. The voters will be voting on the recommendations made by this Commission. Some of its conclusions raise serious questions - such as Los Angeles County having to subsidize the new county for two years. Another serious problem is fire protection of the rural areas. This would be taken over by the new county, and the projected tax rate will not support the level of protection now provided. A considerable amount of misinformation is being released, and it may be the responsibility of the E & E Commission to release a report and point out as objectively as possible the pros and cons of the issue. John Campbell is gathering more detailed information.

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Dr. Downey said that he would like to express his appreciation to Leo Majich and the other members of the task force for the very fine job they did on the report. The other members are Mario Di Giovanni, Richard Gunther, Mary Jane Kidd, Robert Ruchti, George Shellenberger, Gloria Starr, and Larkin Teasley.

Dr. Downey also announced that former chairman of the commission, Maurice Chez, has been appointed to the State's Little Hoover Commission. He reminded the members the next meeting would be October 13, and adjourned the meeting at 11:07 am.