

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/500 WEST TEMPLE/LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012/625-3611, Ext. 64605

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, February 25, 1970
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Hall of Administration, Room 739

Robert Mitchell,
Chairman

Raymond Arbuthnot
Dr. John C. Bollens
Davis Brabant
John D. Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren S. Jones
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Irvin Mazzei
L. E. McKee
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith
William Torrence
Gus A. Walker
Burke Roche,
Executive Secretary

Members Present:

Robert Mitchell, Chairman
Joseph Bishop
Dr. John Bollens
Davis Brabant
John Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Mrs. Ray Kidd
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
L. E. McKee
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
William Torrence

Members Absent:

Raymond Arbuthnot
Dr. Warren Jones
Harlan Loud
Irvin Mazzei
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith
Gus Walker

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Melvin Horton, Executive Vice President
Property Owners Tax Association of
California

J. Roy Holland, Regional Director of
Local Affairs
California Taxpayers Association

Mr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m. He explained that the committee had completed Phase I of the charter study during which it had invited seven experts from other areas of the country to testify on the charter issues. This was the first meeting of Phase II, during which the committee will invite representatives of local community organizations to testify on the charter issues and on the recommendations of the out-of-area speakers. He reminded the committee members that the committee would be gathering information and opinions from the Phase II speakers, and that the committee would not begin its own deliberations until it had heard from all available sources. He then asked Dr. Bollens, Chairman of the charter study task force, to introduce the speakers.

Dr. Bollens first introduced Mr. Horton. Mr. Horton said that County government must be improved. The Charter is old and decrepit but does have some virtues which should be preserved. It is short and has responded well to some necessities of political life. Under it a program of expanded municipal services has been developed, including the contract cities plan. It has also provided for the development of special districts and provided for such services as flood control and sewerage disposal.

The departments, however, operate in a very independent manner - to the point of almost running themselves - with minimum control and supervision by the supervisors and the CAO. This independence makes it very difficult to administer

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 25, 1970

Page 2

the County as an entire entity. Each department very largely goes its own way and takes its own course in relation to the demands put upon it by the community.

Mr. Horton said that his association does not entirely agree with the concept, advocated by most previous speakers, of a strong chief executive with broad appointment and dismissal powers who serves at the pleasure of the board. Some elements of independence need to be preserved for both the chief executive and the department heads. To protect the chief executive as well as the department heads against arbitrary dismissal or undue political pressure, he advocated that department heads as well as the CAO serve on a contract basis. These County executives should be removed from civil service, but they should have the protection of a contract. He said that a department head should start with a two-year contract which would be subject to renewal every three or four years. The chief executive should also serve under a contract, probably for a longer period than the department heads. Such a contract system would enable department heads to prove themselves over a reasonable period of time and would protect them against undue political pressure and any threat of immediate dismissal.

Mr. Horton said he supported the concept of grouping County departments into agencies reporting to the chief executive. He said his association would oppose the election of the chief executive. An elected chief executive officer would launch County government on a new and different path with which it has had very little experience. He advocated building on the present structure rather than a radical revamping of the entire system.

On the size of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Horton said that he did not advocate enlargement; but on the other hand, his association would not, he thought, resist increasing the board to seven members.

Dr. Bollens then introduced the second speaker Mr. Holland. Mr. Holland said there is a difference in the degree of authority which can be assigned to a County manager and that which can be assigned to a city manager. Since the County is an administrative arm of the State, State law much more closely regulates the authority and responsibility of County officials. The County manager cannot be delegated authority which has by State law been assigned to other County officials. The City, on the other hand, has almost unlimited authority to organize and assign responsibility as it sees fit. Consequently, a city can do many things that a county cannot do.

Mr. Holland said that his association opposes an elected chief executive because it would precipitate this office into violent partisan politics. It would become the second highest office in the State and could not help but become one that would be contested for politically. After the first year, most of the time of the chief executive would be consumed in running for office. The California Taxpayers Association believes that the non-partisan tradition in local government should be preserved.

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 25, 1970

Page 3

Mr. Holland said that his association agrees with the experts that the chief executive should be appointed and should serve at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. Whether the chief executive should be protected by civil service or by a contract arrangement is an open question. Mr. Holland did not take a position on this issue.

On the issue of civil service tenure of department heads, Mr. Holland said some mechanism should be available to utilize talent of extraordinary character wherever needed by the County. However, there should be some provisions for protecting department officials against political pressures. He also advocated that the principal department heads in the County should have the services of confidential aids exempt from civil service. These positions would best be determined by ordinance covering each specific case.

Regarding expansion of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Holland said that the addition of two supervisors to give representation to minorities should be examined to find out whether or not it would do what it was supposed to do. He asked whether the two additional supervisors would not be automatically relegated to minority status on the board - that is, they could become a minority of two against five - assuming that the board was expanded to seven members. In addition, he said that there would be problems in establishing a district which would represent all Mexican-Americans and a district which would represent all black citizens, since neither minority group is concentrated in one area of the County. Moreover, having done this for these two minorities, what would you do about representation for other minority groups. He concluded his remarks by saying that his organization was not opposed to increasing the Board members, but it is not initiating the concept of an increase.

Dr. Bollens began the question period by asking Mr. Horton what procedure would be used under his recommended contract system for removing a chief executive or a department head when his performance was clearly inadequate. Mr. Horton said perhaps a procedure could be established similar to the civil service procedures for dismissal. However, in most cases, the County would probably have to accept the fact that the official would remain in office until the end of the contract period. He said a two-year period was not a long time to determine whether a man has the capability for the position. The period should be long enough to give the officials a reasonable degree of independence - probably two years for department heads and three years for the chief executive, going to three and five years when the contract is renewed.

Dr. Bollens asked Mr. Holland what provisions should be included in the charter for the number of deputies or other departmental subordinates who should be exempted from civil service status. Mr. Holland replied that the need for exemptions would vary among departments. The charter should provide the Board of Supervisors with the authority to grant exemptions which the Board would then enact by ordinance.

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 25, 1970

Page 4

Mr. Brabant asked if the contract system would not provide too much security and protection to County executives and like the current civil service system, make it almost impossible to discipline executives. Mr. Holland replied that if you exempted the chief executive from civil service, then the contract system would provide some protection against arbitrary or immediate dismissal. The executive's performance, however, would be subjected to review when the contract came up for renewal.

Mr. Horton added that even with a one-year contract there would be some protection to prevent an entire hierarchy of bureaucratic bootlickers administrating the government. The contract would provide for a cooling off period if there were a difference of opinion between the elected officials and the chief executive or the department head.

Mr. Cutri asked Mr. Horton to further explain the concept of a cabinet consisting of agency heads. Mr. Horton said that the cabinet would tend to constitute a buffer between the chief executive and the department heads. However, the chief executive would have his own staff on which he could rely for information on the operation of the departments.

Mr. Shellenberger commented that the agency concept was directed toward reducing the immense span of control in which over 50 departments would be reporting directly to the chief executive. Under the agency concept, each agency head would supervise 8 or 10 department heads, and the chief executive would supervise 8 or 10 agency heads.

Dr. Bollens asked Mr. Holland whether he believed a County manager would produce a stronger more integrated internal administration than is possible under the existing chief administrative officer system. Mr. Holland said that, if the charter provides for the duties of the County manager, as it should, it would still require a good deal of persuasion on the part of the County manager to secure the cooperation of department heads.

Mr. Horton said that the aim of establishing a County manager is to give that position the muscle to put into effect some of the ideas and programs that are known to be advantageous but which are now gathering dust. For example, the Chief Administrative Office has a management audit function which conducts studies of various departments and makes recommendations for change. A County manager would have greater authority to see that the recommendations resulting from such studies would be put into effect.

Dr. Bollens thanked Mr. Horton and Mr. Holland for their appearance before the committee.

Mr. Mitchell asked Mrs. Kidd to report on the action by the Board of Supervisors on the report of the Health Services Planning Committee at the Board meeting the day before. Mrs. Kidd reported that the Board approved the recommendations

E & E COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 25, 1970

Page 5

of the committee in principle. There was, she said, opposition to the second recommendation to consolidate the Health and Mental Health Departments with the Hospitals. The Board asked the committee to remain in operation for the next four months to assist the concerned parties in putting the recommendations into effect.

Mr. Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.