



# DIGEST

## Charter Changes?

THE CITIZENS Economy and Efficiency committee is approaching the end of its year-long study into what changes, if any, should be made in the County charter affecting the CAO, department heads, and the number of County Supervisors.

The committee of 21 volunteers appointed by the Board of Supervisors expects to hand its recommendations to the Board by mid-July giving the Supervisors time to place whatever charter amendments they wish on the November ballot.

The March 6 DIGEST summarized proposals the committee heard last fall and winter from seven nationally recognized experts on local government. E & E followed up with six sessions where spokesmen for Los Angeles organizations spoke their minds. A brief summary follows:

February 25

MELVIN HORTON, Property Owners Tax Association of California—Advocated that the CAO and department heads should be removed from civil service and should be em-

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J U N E 5

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## BOARD OK'S SALARIES FOR '70-'71

PAY INCREASES for most County employees will go into effect next month in almost exactly the form which the Board of Supervisors received from director of personnel Gordon Nesvig May 15. The Nesvig package was based in part on 21 agreements County management had negotiated with employee organizations.

The May 15 DIGEST carried details of the proposed pay increases.

Only exception will be the salaries of 114 department heads and chief deputies. Nesvig had recommended three-schedule (8¼ percent) increases for the 114. The Supervisors, however, in adopting the salary ordinance last Wednesday (June 3) reduced the increases to one schedule (2.75 percent) for department heads and two schedules (5½ percent) for chief deputies. Board members declared they found

the lesser increases would result in salaries meeting the County charter requirement for payment of prevailing wages.

In other significant action, the Board asked the Citizens Efficiency and Economy committee to review the possibility of submitting two charter amendments to the voters next November.

One would repeal section 47 of the charter, the "prevailing wage" section.

The other amendment would remove department heads from civil service status, a suggestion the E and E committee has heard from several witnesses in its current study of possible charter changes (see adjoining story, column 1).

The Board of Supervisors asked the committee to recommend whether the two amendments

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## Talks Are under Way on Employee Benefits

PROVISIONS FOR holidays, vacations, sick leave and other employee benefits remain unchanged in the 1970-71 salary ordinance which the Board of Supervisors adopted last Wednesday (June 3).

County management, however, is negotiating with several employee organizations on possible changes in benefits. Deputy director of personnel John James said these negotiations may result in agreements to ask the Board of Supervisors to enact some alterations in present benefits.

James said negotiating groups include Fire Fighters Union local 1014; AFSOME (American Feder-

ation of State, County and Municipal Employees); and a council of representatives from Los Angeles County Employees association, SEIU (Service Employees International union), and the Building and Construction Trades council.

James said discussions are centering around the County's contribution toward medical-hospital insurance for employees, and what a uniform, County-wide policy should be on paid holidays, vacations, sick leave, bereavement or "compassionate" leave.

"We had hoped," James said, "to have a single negotiating council on

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## Charter Changes?

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ployed under renewable contracts of three to five years.

J. ROY HOLLAND, California Taxpayers association—Suggested that major department heads should have confidential aides exempt from civil service.

Both Horton and Holland opposed the idea of an elected County "mayor."

April 6

ED PRATT, California Association of Professional Employees—Urged no change in the civil service system, said changing the number of Supervisors would accomplish nothing, said the chief executive should not be elected.

VICTOR HOCHEE, Los Angeles County Employees association—Said the chief executive should hire and fire department heads, and the CAO's powers should be expanded to those of a true county manager, outside civil service and holding office at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors. Hochee urged enlarging the Board to seven or nine to give minorities a better chance at representation.

Both Hochee and Pratt said the present system of individual Supervisors serving as chairmen of various departments should be eliminated to strengthen the chief executive.

April 15

ESTEBAN TORRES, Congress of Mexican-American Unity, introduced a succession of ten speakers. All deplored their lack of representation on the Board of Supervisors and urged increasing the Board of seven members, drawing district lines to enhance election of a Mexican-American to the Board.

April 22

Three spokesman from the black community—Mrs. MARNESBA TACKETT, attorney MORGAN MOTEN, and OLIN NEWSOME, chair-

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## SALARIES

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should appear on the November general election ballot.

(Section 47 of the charter reads: ". . . The Board of Supervisors shall . . . provide a salary or wage at least equal to the prevailing salary or wage for the same quality of service rendered to private persons, firms or corporations under similar employment in case such prevailing salary or wage can be ascertained.")

The salary ordinance raises the County minimum wage from \$417 a month to \$440. It gives a large number of clerical employees, custodians, hospital attendants, laundry workers, food service workers, grounds maintenance men, road laborers and others an increase of 5½ per cent plus \$10 a month, which totals out to approximately 7½ percent more a month.

A rise of three schedules (8¼ percent) goes to more than 10,000 employees, among them probation officers, librarians, accountants, truck drivers, x-ray technicians.

A sizable group including nurses, engineers and architects receive two-schedule increases.

A small number of classes where inequities or difficult recruiting problems had developed will get increases of four schedules or more. This group, totaling some 3,100 among the County's 70,000 employees, includes supervising probation officers, physicians, power equipment operators, coroner's investigators and farm foremen.

The Board accepted Nesvig's recommendation that no further increase be given the 7,500 firemen, sheriff's officers and related classes who received an 11 percent increase last April 24. Sheriff Peter Pitchess appeared before the Board last Wednesday asking additional pay boosts of 5½ percent for deputy sheriffs, 11 percent for sergeants, 5½ percent for lieutenants and above, plus many fringe benefits. The Board referred his requests to Nesvig to consider according to employee relations ordinance procedures.

Board members also repeated earlier statements urging that all employee organizations seek pay

## C-NOTE CLUB

*Introducing County employees whose better-work suggestions have won them \$100 or more, and membership in the Century Note club.*

Most COUNTY employees will recall that during their pre-employment medical examination they were shut inside a soundproof booth, put on earphones, and listened to a variety of notes, beeps and squeaks—a hearing test that has been used for nearly 100 years.

With only one booth, this part of the examination often proved a bottleneck on days when the inflow of applicants was heavy. So Dr. Jean Felton, director, occupational health service, asked the Board of Supervisors for authority to buy two more soundproof booths. Total cost: nearly \$4,200. The Board said okay.

But before the purchase order went through, OHS attendant Charles Schmitt suggested another possibility—to test hearing with "aural domes", which cost about \$100 each, or one-twentieth as much as a soundproof booth.

Experiments showed the aural domes, which are nothing but over-size precision-made headsets, are satisfactory for the hearing exams. The purchase of the two soundproof booths was cancelled, and the Suggestion Award board voted Schmitt an award of \$320.

Schmitt, who is 25, a paraplegic, and goes about his work in a motor driven wheelchair, received his award at an Ambassador hotel luncheon May 20. At the same luncheon Supervisor Ernest Debs accepted for the County a citation from the Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped to OHS for "extending more opportunities in employment to handicapped workers."

OHS last December adopted new medical standards that permitted physically handicapped persons to fill selected County jobs.

adjustments through machinery provided by the employee relations ordinance and the employee relations commission, and bring their requests to the Board only as a last resort.

# KAISER RAISES HEALTH RATES

THE 18,000 County employees who subscribe to the Kaiser Foundation health plan will begin paying higher premiums, effective July 1.

The foundation notified County officials that rising hospital and medical costs have forced the increase.

The employee who has coverage only for himself will have a payroll deduction of \$5.06 a month instead of the present \$3.70.

Coverage for an employee and one dependent will mean a deduction of \$18.12 instead of \$15.40 a month.

And a policy for an employee plus two or more dependents will

carry a deduction of \$29.38 a month compared with the present \$25.50.

In addition to these amounts the county contributes \$8 a month toward each employee's premium.

Since health insurance premiums are prepaid, subscribers will notice the change in their June 10 paychecks. Auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood will make the deduction changes automatically on the June 10 checks without requiring new authorization cards from subscribers.

Kaiser has the heaviest enrollment among the four County-administered health plans, with 44 percent of the total of approximately 41,000 subscribers.

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man of Men of Tomorrow—appeared before the committee. Excerpts from their testimony:

"The Board of Supervisors don't represent themselves, they represent interests, your interests. We don't have anyone on the board to represent our interests. . . At present if anything goes wrong in the black or brown community, it is viewed as the fault of a white Board of Supervisors. . . Enlarge the Board to seven, redraw district lines so the opportunity of electing a black Supervisor is maximized. . ."

April 27

SIGMUND ARYWITZ, County Federation of Labor—"Heads of departments giving direct service to the people and involving policy decisions should be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Board. Where the function is ministerial, housekeeping, maintaining services, the department head should be protected by civil service.

"Increase to seven Supervisors with redistricting to allow representation from minority communities. We need not ask do minorities really suffer because there is no minority representative. It is enough that they *think* they are suffering. . .

"Nothing would be served by reducing the status of the Board. . . I think sometimes we are in danger, for the sake of efficiency, of looking for the strong executive who can cram everything down everybody's throat. I am rather suspicious of the strong executive in government."

May 20

ROBERT ARAGON, executive secretary, Los Angeles Urban Coalition—Reported his board of trustees advocated increasing the Board of Supervisors to seven members, both because of the county's increase in population and the need to give minority communities a better chance for representation.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

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benefits with representatives from all employee organizations, but this idea failed to get acceptance."

The employee relations commission has urged both County management and the employee organizations to push ahead with negotiations on benefits so that any recommended changes can go into effect no later than August 1.

In a May 18 letter to "All Certified Employee Organizations" the commission said that if the organizations can not agree with management on a benefits package, the commission will appoint one or more of its three members to mediate the dispute.

The letter continued:

"Upon the mediator's determination that any such dispute is not subject to agreement he will report his determination to the commission, and the commission will consider his recommendation, if any, as to which issue or issues should be submitted to fact-finding and shall appoint one or more fact-finders who will be instructed to hear the matter promptly and to file their reports with the commission, so that thereafter the Board of Supervisors may act upon such report and recommendations at an early date."

## New Hospital Contracts

CAO LIN Hollinger has informed the Board of Supervisors he is negotiating with UCLA for a teaching contract in pediatrics and general surgery at new Olive View hospital facilities. Hollinger said the contract should be ready for the Supervisors and University board of regents about September 1.

UCLA already has a contract for teaching at Harbor General hospital.

The Board of Supervisors has approved boosting its \$3.9 million teaching contract with USC medical school to \$5.5 million for the year starting July 1. USC will provide new services for the drug detoxification unit and cardiac ward at Rancho Los Amigos hospital and for added hepatitis beds at John Wesley hospital.

## Victory for All Four

THE FOUR County officials on last Tuesday's primary ballot emerged with majorities assuring them another four years in office.

Third district Supervisor Ernest Debs gained more votes than all four of his opponents. First district Supervisor Frank Bonelli easily outdrew his lone rival, while sheriff Peter Pitchess defeated three contenders and assessor Philip Watson beat his two challengers.

## A Fair Break in Jobs—

# EXECS FLOOD DPSS WITH PLANS

SCORES OF ideas on how to give minority persons a better crack at County jobs and promotions are under study at the department of public social services and the department of personnel.

The suggestions are the brain-children of 300 DPSS top administrators (deputy district directors and above) who attended seminars on "Orientation to Minority Cultures and Problems" staged by DPSS management March 4 to April 3. Divided into groups of 100, the administrators heard lectures and held discussions at all-morning sessions one day a week for five weeks. Three of the meetings were held in Watts, the other two in east Los Angeles.

DPSS director Ellis Murphy said the seminars were designed to follow through on the County's "affirmative action" program which the Board of Supervisors adopted last September upon recommendation of director of personnel Gordon Nesvig.

Murphy said his department already has placed some of the administrators' proposals into effect, many other are still under study.

The administrators' recommendations included:

### Recruiting

"DPSS should move toward outstation or satellite operations in the community, both for serving recipients and hiring minorities. Give districts the power to examine and hire employees directly."

"Descriptions of duties in job specifications should be simplified. At present they are very formal."

"Because of the imposing structures of Civic Center, it would help if applicants could take civil service examinations in other areas, maybe in their own community."

"Make offices where persons apply more attractive and the process

more humanized. Counsel and help the applicant select what job he should apply for."

"We must get out into the community and let people know about jobs. Advertise in more ways including ads in community papers, throw-aways, placing notices on bulletin boards in supermarkets, laundries and pool halls. Use minority language or the language of the community."

### Testing

"Civil service interviewing boards should have a minority person or persons, and bilingual interviewers. If community persons serve on the boards or as translators, they should be paid."

"The written test should be a weighted part of the exam rather than a screening device."

### Probation, Training

"Place more weight on the probationary period as part of the hiring process. Possibly lengthen the probation period."

"Extend the probation period to one year. There should be definite criteria as to what to expect of an employee at three months, six months, nine months, and a year."

"Administrators should not expect the same competence and excellence from a trainee that is expected from trained staff. This should be true for all entry level positions."

"Community people should be included on the training staff and should be paid for their services."

"Give the best supervision to the minority person."

### Promotions

"A sponsor system for minorities could be established on a voluntary basis. An administrator or supervisor would become the 'sponsor' for a new minority employee. He would

advise the new employee, provide him some training, and help him prepare for promotions."

"Minority persons who demonstrate ability should be recruited for promotional positions. Place them in a job-training situation three or four months before the promotional exam to prepare them for the position. Their performance could be reflected in the Appraisal of Promotability they receive."

"Change the grading weight of the Appraisal of Promotability from 25 percent to 40 percent."

"Eliminate the Appraisal of Promotability."

"Revamp the oral to test the person's sensitivity to minorities' problems. And conduct the oral in groups."

"Don't be selfish in trying to keep a good employee. Encourage all qualified minority people to take any exam they can."

### Executives

"Every executive should see the recent documentaries *Dr. Martin Luther King*, *Mexican-American Chicano*, and *Chinatown USA*."

"Executives should be required to participate in community groups in minority areas."

"Administrators should meet regularly in small groups of ten or so to discuss how to implement the affirmative action program."

"Classes in Spanish should be set up for executives."

County of Los Angeles

## D I G E S T

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Editorial Office: Room 526 Hall of Administration, 222 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012

Telephone 625-3611, ext. 65878

For extra copies, extension 65420