

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

ROOM 372, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 625-3611, Ext. 64605

February 28, 1966

Mr. A.C. Rubel, Chairman
Citizens Economy and Efficiency Committee
372, Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California

SUBJECT: Preliminary Report on the Feasibility of
the Proposed Reorganization of the Depart-
ment of Charities Contained in Board
Order 114, dated January 4, 1966

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J. B. Roche,
Executive Secretary

Dear Mr. Rubel:

In accordance with the direction of the Committee and with the excellent assistance and cooperation of your Executive Secretary, Mr. J.B. Roche, the preliminary survey and analysis of the Los Angeles County Department of Charities organization has been completed. It is both appropriate and timely to report to the Committee the findings and recommendations stemming from this survey and analysis. Because of the short span of time allotted to this assignment, you will appreciate, I trust, the necessity for stating both findings and recommendations in rather general terms. A cautionary note should be added that no definitive action should be taken on this report without further study in depth of those areas affected.

Feasibility of the Hahn Proposal

There is no real question as to the feasibility of bestowing full County departmental status on the present Bureau of Public Assistance. The consensus of opinion among those people both

knowledgeable and experienced in the field of Social Welfare is that separation from its present organizational grouping and establishment of its independent status is inevitable in view of the current trend of governmental philosophy in the welfare area. Based on accepted organization principles, the splitting off of the Bureau of Public Assistance from its present association is not only feasible but even desirable for most of the reasons stated in Supervisor Hahn's proposal, i.e., better management, tighter controls, concentration of like interests and activities in one organizational entity, shortened communication channels.

The real questions of feasibility are concerned with the most effective method of organizational realignment and the proper time for implementation of the approved reorganization. On these questions, there is no consensus of expert opinion except to the extent that all agree, including this analyst, that the Hahn proposal is not the most effective method of reorganization for the present Department of Charities.

The three propositions contained in the Hahn proposal need to be assessed for organizational scope and impact, both internal and external, to the Department of Charities itself. From this assessment will flow those factors on which specific recommendations can be based and offered to your Committee for discussion and decision as to the course of action to be followed.

Creation of Four New Departments

The first of these propositions is to establish four new County departments, Hospitals, Public Assistance, Adoptions, and

Resources and Collections, to replace the present Department of Charities. Two present organizational elements, the Bureau of Physically Handicapped Children and the Bureau of Medical Social Service were not mentioned and no indication given of their ultimate disposition.

This proposition is startling when one finds over fifty departments, districts, offices, and commissions already reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors. The first reaction is to consider means to reduce this awesome span of control rather than increase it by adding four to six new departments. This is not to suggest that upon reaching a specific number the establishment of new organizational elements is automatically prohibited; however, it does suggest that before such action is taken careful analysis should be made of the requirements presented for the new element. Approval for its establishment should be given only upon evidence of compelling need.

In support of this proposition, much weight is given to the size of the present Department of Charities and its share of the total County budget. From an organization planning viewpoint, it is equally as effective oftentimes to make "big pieces out of little pieces," as it is to fragment the large organizational elements into smaller ones. Size of itself is not a primary consideration for reorganization. In fact, effective organization planning negates the factor of size in management.

It is recommended, therefore, in response to the first proposition of the Hahn proposal that this area be studied along with other areas of County organization in an effort to achieve the most effective structure for this specific area, Charities, within a reduced rather than increased span of control in the total County structure. Precipitate action now could be detrimental to this over-all objective.

Departmental Responsibility and the Board of Supervisors

The second proposition of the Hahn proposal is to assign responsibility for each of the four newly created departments to individual Board Supervisors replacing the present method of over-all responsibility for the Department of Charities being vested in a Committee of the Whole comprised of all Board Supervisors. This proposition appears to be contrary to the Rules of the Board of Supervisors, Chapter VII - Committees and Duties, Sections 27 and 28, as interpreted by this analyst. Regardless of the legality aspect, this proposition is fraught with peril on other grounds.

The Department of Charities is admittedly the most costly function in County government being budgeted at just over half a billion dollars. The Bureau of Public Assistance accounts for 402.5 million dollars of the total. The major portion of its task is the disbursing of public funds to those who qualify for assistance. It is a well recognized fact that considerable power traditionally attends the disbursement of funds. Group

responsibility for overseeing this type of activity is always preferred to individual responsibility. This implies nothing of a personal nature; it is simply a statement of sound business principle. Implementation of this proposition could conceivably work now, though this is highly questionable, but lead to disastrous consequences in subsequent years due to unforeseen changes in circumstances and personnel.

It is recommended by this analyst that no matter what action is taken on the other propositions of the Hahn proposal, this proposition be opposed without compromise.

Superintendent of Charities Position

The third proposition of the Hahn proposal directly relates to elevation of the present bureaus to full departmental status. It proposes to relieve the present position of Superintendent of Charities of responsibility for day to day administration but retain the position for over-all attention to major problems affecting welfare programs. Additionally, it proposes this position could provide representation for the total program in relations with the State and Federal government.

This proposition presents the perfect anomaly in organization planning. If the four or six present bureaus were made departments reporting directly to the Board of Supervisors, obviously the line supervisory position previously directing the subordinate bureaus is eliminated. It has been replaced by a "staff" position of coordinator or liaison officer. The description of relief from day to day administration and concentration on major problems is quite correct for the present position and its placement in the

organization structure; it is completely impossible and unworkable in the proposed organization structure. The proposal takes cognizance of the fact that it may violate Article VI, Section 22 of the Charter of the County of Los Angeles. In the opinion of this analyst, it does and thus would entail revision to the present Charter. Revision of Section 22 is not only feasible but probably desirable in that it is unwise to lock organization "in concrete." Flexibility in organization is essential to meet new or revised objectives created by changing conditions. Whatever direction the reorganization of the Department of Charities ultimately takes, if it involves separation of present functions, it will require Charter revision. Likewise, if it eliminates the Superintendent of Charities position in its present supervisory capacity, it will require Charter revision despite well meaning phrases designed to make it appear otherwise.

It is recommended, in view of the length of time involved in making a Charter change, that continuing effort be exerted in this area by the appropriate County offices on the basis that establishment of a separate and independent Department of Social Welfare is probably inevitable. Under the applicable opinion by the County Counsel, this is presently impossible. As to that aspect of this proposition that, in essence, converts the Superintendent of Charities position from line management to high-level staff, it is the opinion of this analyst that this does not appear to be the fullest utilization of accumulated knowledge and experience possessed by the present incumbent. However, this is really

a staffing problem and somewhat outside the province of this survey and analysis.

Additional Considerations

There are some additional factors that merit mention in this report. Considerable interest has been shown in the Hahn proposal for reorganization of the Department of Charities by both the Welfare Planning Council of Los Angeles and the Social Workers Union, Local 535/AFL-CIO. Both groups stand firmly for the establishment of a Department of Social Welfare as an independent County function divorced from its present organizational ties to the Department of Charities. Every encouragement has been given these agencies to share their knowledge and experience with the Committee and its representatives. No commitment has been made as to the Committee's views or ultimate position in the final analysis of Department of Charities organization. Recommended organization structures for the proposed Department of Social Welfare have been provided by both groups and are available in the Committee's files for further study, when appropriate. It is recognized that each of these groups have special interests in this area; but, to make a complete assessment of the problems, all inputs to the Committee have value.

Even within the limited scope of this preliminary survey, evidence was turned up to indicate internal problems of magnitude within the Department of Charities and specifically within the Bureau of Public Assistance. There was not sufficient time nor was it particularly necessary to probe these internal areas to respond to the feasibility of the Hahn proposal. At the present time, a team from the Management Services Division of the Chief

Administrative Office is conducting a management improvement study within the Bureau of Public Assistance. Although this study is primarily systems oriented in nature, it is recommended that the Committee follow its progress closely and upon completion of the study, review the final report carefully to detect those problem areas that appear to be organizationally rooted. Also, it is recommended that careful study be made of the internal organization structures of each element of the present Department of Charities prior to any proposal of over-all reorganization.

Within the scope of this preliminary survey and analysis, no attempt was made to identify the existing interfaces between the County and State organizations in the welfare area. This study would be essential before intelligent recommendations could be made concerning reorganization in the County welfare function.

This preliminary report, if it has accomplished its purpose, has stated that the Hahn proposal as outlined is not feasible. It has pointed out the necessity for more time to be allotted to permit comprehensive study of the whole County organization structure and the development of a progressive plan for organizational improvement. It has been made most clear that the Department of Charities organization would figure largely in such a project. Evidence of "instant solutions" to problems by creation of a new department already exist in the present County organization. In many cases, it would likely be found that this technique compounded the problem rather than solving it.

Alternate Recommendation

If it develops that the Board of Supervisors will not accept the request for time to do the complete project, there is an alternate approach that can be taken. Most of the desired objectives outlined in the Hahn proposal could be accomplished through this alternate approach. The first step has already been taken in the establishment of the positions of Chief Deputy Superintendent of Charities and Assistant Superintendent of Charities. At the time of preparing this report, there appeared to be a lack of knowledge on the part of subordinates definitely affected as to the authorities and responsibilities delegated to these positions. If there has been no delegation, organizationally this is unsound in that it establishes a "one over one over one" structure that is basically inefficient. If there has been delegation to these positions, it should be carefully defined and disseminated along proper organization channels to reach all those affected by this action.

If no action has been taken in this regard, this analyst recommends the following steps to achieve a partial solution to current problems:

1. Consolidate the present Department of Charities organization into two groupings by blending the Service Bureaus into either the Bureau of Hospitals or the Bureau of Public Assistance as they logically group with related activities.
2. Delegate authority and responsibility for day to day administration to the recently created Chief

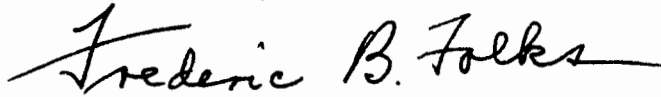
Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent in a "group executive" capacity permitting further redelegation downward as feasible. This frees the Superintendent from detailed administrative responsibilities and permits his concentration on executive policy, required coordination, and liaison with other agencies, county, state, and federal. This arrangement makes fullest utilization of executive management. If it is required to identify a "second in command" for purposes of serving in the absence or disability of the Superintendent, this is still possible within this structure without charting it as a "one over one" by simply making it a permanent matter of record by issuing the appropriate document.

3. Initiate whatever procedural revisions are required to give semi-independent status to the two consolidated groups, particularly separation of budget submission and approval. This will accomplish much in permitting internal improvements, promoting higher employee morale, and eliminating confusion. It severs the unnecessary controls without destroying the natural relationships that exist between the concerned functions.

These simple steps of organizational change, definition, and implementation can be accomplished now without a disruptive effect on the internal or external organization structures and

without a Charter revision. They meet the needs described in the Hahn proposal almost completely. They provide a logical progression to the eventual separation of Social Welfare from its present organizational relationships. Operation under this semi-independent status would furnish valuable experience for the ultimate independence as a Department of Social Welfare.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frederic B. Folks". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Frederic B. Folks

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