



DIGEST

Around and About

DIRECTOR OF personnel Gordon Nesvig will give his recommendations for 1970-71 County salaries to the Board of Supervisors on Friday (May 15). A special issue of The DIGEST that day will summarize Nesvig's proposed salaries. His recommendations, originally scheduled for May 1, were delayed two weeks to give additional time for negotiations between County management and newly formed employee representation units.

THE BOARD of Supervisors, as part of a long-range plan to provide more parking for County employees, voted (April 21) to form itself into a five-member parking authority. State law permits such an authority to issue revenue bonds, build parking facilities, and repay the bonds by leasing the facilities to the County. First projects on the list—a tentatively planned underground structure for perhaps 1,500 cars on the County-owned block south of the Dorothy Chandler pavilion (now a surface parking lot mostly for court jurors and witnesses); and a 250-car facility at the a-building Whittier civic center, Painter and Mar Vista avenues.

MAY 1

1970

Volume 3 Number 8

1970-71 Proposed Budget

CAO SAYS COUNTY IN BIND

CAO LIN Hollinger painted a picture of a County financially beleaguered as he laid before the Board of Supervisors last Tuesday (April 28) a proposed 1970-71 budget totaling an unprecedented \$2.1 billion for the County and its special districts.

The Board voted to adopt the budget for printing purposes and set June 8 to begin public hearings on the proposed spending program. The Board must adopt the final budget before the end of June so that it may go into effect July 1.

Hollinger's budget letter to the Board said:

"1970 is the year the dam burst for local government—and particularly for Los Angeles County. I am recommending a budget that meets only the basic requirements of programs for which the County is responsible—the great bulk of which are mandated by the state and federal governments. . . . Repeatedly your Board has urged the federal and state governments to provide financial assistance to meet the needs of this County's citizens. No help has been forthcoming. It is obvious that something must change in 1970. The cost of providing for our people has gone far beyond the ability of local government to pay through the property tax." Hollinger said his proposed budget would mean a property tax rate increase of 94 cents per \$100 of assessed value, assuming that assessor Philip Watson later reports a 6 per cent rise in the total value of taxable property in the county. The present County general fund tax rate is \$2.90 per \$100.

Hollinger's letter continued:

"Property tax relief must be provided either by the legislature or directly by the people through approval of the Board-sponsored Proposition 8 on the June ballot. If no relief is forthcoming, you will be faced with two difficult alternatives—either to continue existing minimum levels of service at the expense of the local taxpayer or to drastically cut programs. . . .

Why are we recommending a tax levy increase of \$197 million in one year—a 37 percent jump? . . .

"First, the cost of welfare has gone completely out of sight. Next year's tax levy increase for welfare will be over three times as much as this year, and this year's increase was huge.

"Second, inflation will force salaries up over \$37 million, half again as much as the increase recommended just one year ago.

"Third, space and facilities to provide County services require an increase of over \$36 million next year—more than three times this year's increase.

"And fourth, the shift in cost from the state and federal governments to the County, particularly in hospitals and welfare, has added almost \$19 million to the property tax levy.

". . . We get little comfort from the fact that local government everywhere is in the same boat . . .

Where It Will Go

"Over 80 percent of the projected tax levy increase will go to support three basic areas which make up the

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POLITICKING:

Do's and Don't's

COUNTY EMPLOYEES who feel an urge toward politicking in this election year of 1970 got some guidelines this week from County counsel John Maharg.

Maharg told The DIGEST that while court decisions in recent years have given public employees more political freedom than they once had, some restrictions still remain through state law and County ordinances.

As examples, Maharg cited:

- A county officer or employee may not wear his uniform while engaging in political activity.
- Neither an employee nor anyone else may do political soliciting on County property.
- An employee may not use his County position to influence the political actions of other employees or of citizens in general.
- At no time may a County employee solicit political funds or signatures on petitions from other County employees. This rule, however, does not apply if the employee is promoting the passage (or defeat) of a ballot measure that would affect his pay, hours of work, retirement, civil service, or other working conditions. In such instances the employee's department head has the right to limit his participation to off-duty hours.
- As a private citizen, a County employee during off-duty hours may solicit funds or participate in other political efforts, provided that he does not represent himself as a County

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HOLLINGER SAYS COUNTY IN BIND

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heart of County government—welfare, law enforcement and the court system, and hospital and health services . . . If it were possible to hold the line in these areas—which it is not—all the rest of the County government would present few budget problems.”

The CAO's figures showed welfare accounting for nearly half the expected increase in the tax rate, courts and law enforcement for slightly under a third of the boost, hospital-health services around 15 percent, and all other County functions slightly over 10 percent.

WELFARE. “Next year 842,000 people will be on some sort of welfare in this County—one out of every nine,” the Hollinger letter said. “This is up 156,000 people from this year when it was one out of every eleven. Although 80 percent of welfare cost is paid by the federal and state governments, this huge jump in caseload adds tremendously to the amount the County must put up next year. . .”

LAW ENFORCEMENT, COURTS. “Just as welfare caseloads climb up and up, the crime rate does also. This affects every element of

New Purchasing Agent

H. E. (GENE) Davis has taken over as County purchasing agent, replacing Victor Quam who retired March 28.

The Board of Supervisors named Davis (April 21) after he emerged with the top rating on a closely competitive civil service examination among ten contenders.

Davis, 45, who has been chief of the personnel department workman's compensation and rehabilitation division, joined the County in 1958 as a \$575-a-month assistant personnel technician, transferred to the CAO's office five months later as an analyst, and was chief analyst in the CAO's special services division when he moved last July to head the newly created comp-rehab division.

He is a 1950 USC graduate in international relations.

the criminal justice system—from the law enforcement officer in the field to the courts that try the cases, the district attorney who prosecutes, the public defender who defends, the probation officer who investigates, the County clerk who records, and finally the sheriff who jails. Their combined requirements will add 34 cents to next year's tax rate.”

HOSPITALS, HEALTH. “Because of cutbacks in the governor's budget, the County taxpayer must pick up a much higher proportion of hospital costs next year. Your Board earlier had committed itself to building and operating the vitally needed Martin Luther King, Jr., and Olive View hospitals, with the understanding that the state would help finance this cost through the Medi-Cal program. As things stand now, the state will not keep its commitment.

“These hospitals must be operated next year and the added costs to County taxpayers (\$10 million) are included in the recommended budget . . .”

SALARY INCREASES. Hollinger said his proposed budget includes \$37.2 million for County salary increases. He indicated details will appear in salary recommendations which director of personnel Gordon Nesvig will file with the Board May 15.

MORE EMPLOYEES. The CAO recommended nearly 6,000 additional positions for 1970-71, most of them (4,300) in welfare and in

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County of Los Angeles

D I G E S T

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health and hospital services. Another 724 are included for law enforcement and courts, and some 400 additions for four other departments—building services (189), mechanical (101), data processing (65) and communications (50).

"All other County departments," Hollinger said, "receive only 439 additional positions, of which . . . 141 were authorized during this year . . . Only the assessor is recommended for additional work load positions to provide increased frequency of assessments to more accurately reflect real property price movements. All other departments must handle next year's work load with the same number or fewer employees."

Hollinger announced that, to avert a threatened deficit in the general fund, he will allow no addi-

Letters

To the DIGEST:

When The Digest first came out about two years or so ago I thought it was a paper for all County employees. Now I hardly ever get to see one anymore. Is this because I now work in a branch office of my department rather than down town? Or is it because The DIGEST is for supervisors only, as someone in our office told me?

(Name withheld)

Since its beginning in January 1968 The DIGEST has been published for all County employees. It is our policy that every employee who wants to read a copy should be able to do so. We now print 41,000 copies, which works out to about two copies for every three employees. In the interest of economy we have asked offices where it is convenient to do so to pass copies around among two or three employees. But the main point is that every interested County employee should have access to The DIGEST. Any office that has a shortage should drop a note to The DIGEST office, room 526, Hall of Administration—or telephone Lois Hudson, 625-3611, extension 65420.—THE EDITOR

tions to County staff between now and the end of the fiscal year June 30. He said the sheriff's staff will be frozen as of the level it reaches June 30.

What Lies Ahead

Hollinger said the threatened sharp increase of 94 cents in the general fund tax rate would be transformed into a tax saving of \$1.42 per \$100 if state voters approve Proposition 8 at the June primary.

He expressed "deep concern," however, over certain tax proposals of Governor Reagan, especially as to changing state contributions to welfare, hospital and Medi-Cal costs.

Language Bonus Voted

COUNTY EMPLOYEES whose jobs require them to be fluent in both English and a foreign language will receive an extra \$15 a month salary.

The Board of Supervisors voted the bonus (April 21) to improve services in communities where many residents understand only Spanish or another foreign tongue. The Board motion states that both the director of personnel and an employee's department head must find that the employee's assignment "requires frequent use of his second language for public service."

The language bonus will go into effect July 1.

Note on Deductions

NEXT FRIDAY's paychecks (May 8) will contain a note to all County employees from auditor-controller Mark Bloodgood saying that after June 10 any deductions he makes from paychecks for employee organizations may be changed only if he receives an authorization card signed by the employee involved.

Bloodgood said the cards will be needed to increase, reduce or cancel deductions, or to start a new deduction.

Until now, some organizations have not supplied authorization cards when asking the auditor-controller to begin deductions or change the amounts deducted.

POLITICKING:

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employee or otherwise utilize his County position to aid in soliciting funds or assisting any political candidate.

Maharg said County department heads have wide discretion in deciding whether a given employee's behavior injures his department—for example, wearing a campaign button while meeting the public on County business.

Maharg said the department head usually will have the discretion as to whether an employee may be granted leave from his job to work in a political campaign.

Maharg pointed out that some departments, notably DPSS, have many employees whose political activities are limited by the federal Hatch act—this because they are employed in programs financed by federal funds. He said the most important restriction here is against an employee's taking "an active part in political management in political campaigns." However, Maharg added, the Hatch act permits a County employee to express political opinions, use bumper stickers, have a sign on his lawn and otherwise indicate his preference as to candidates and issues.

Maharg suggested any employee wishing to engage in political campaigning who believes he is subject to the Hatch act should see his supervisor or department's personnel officer for guidance as to possible conflict.

Last Big One: Social Workers

THE YEAR-long string of County employee elections to choose negotiating representatives will approach its end next Thursday (May 7) when 7,700 social services employees will have their chance to ballot.

Director of personnel Gordon Nesvig said this apparently will be the last of the big elections involving several thousand employees, although the employee relations commission (ERCOM) may order future elections of relatively small units. Since April last year, ERCOM has conducted 37 representation elections in units ranging in size from 50 agricultural inspectors to nearly 13,000 clerical workers.

The commission has divided the social services employees into six units for negotiating purposes. Each unit will have a separate ballot next Thursday.

The units are:

UNIT 1, Supervising Social Services employees, including social services supervisors, supervising child welfare workers, staff development specialists, and others. Total, approximately 1,200.

Three organizations are competing to represent Unit 1—the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers, the California Property Consultants association, and a joint council of Los Angeles County Employees association and Social Workers Union local 535.

The 238 professional employees in this unit will be asked to vote whether they wish to be included in the unit.

UNIT 2, Social Services Investigators, including eligibility workers, welfare investigators, property services advisors, and others. Total, 1,820.

The Unit 2 ballot will list three organizations—a joint council of LACEA and Social Workers Union local 535; California Property Consultants association; and AFSCME.

UNIT 3, Medical Social Workers, including medical caseworkers, medical social workers, casework as-

sistants, and medical social work consultants. Total, 413.

The 187 professionals in this unit will have the option of deciding whether they wish the 226 nonprofessional employees included in the unit.

The Unit 3 ballot will list only one organization—a joint council of LACEA and County Employees Union local 434. Voters will have a yes-no choice.

UNIT 4, Psychiatric Social Workers. Total, 134.

Two organizations will compete on this ballot—the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers and Social Workers Union local 535.

UNIT 5, Social Workers, also including community workers, homemakers, social services aides, and others. Total, 3,844.

Only Social Workers Union local 535 will appear on this ballot, with a yes-no choice. This ballot, incidentally, will be printed in both English and Spanish.

UNIT 6, Child Welfare Workers. Total, 335.

As in Unit 5, the ballot will list only local 535 with a yes-no choice.

Most of the 30 polling places will be open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday. These are DPSS offices in West L.A., Inglewood, Belvedere, Long Beach, Compton, Cudahy, South Central, El Monte, Panorama City, Reseda, South Grand, Medical Center, Metro North, Exposition Park, Men's Center, Lancaster, Glendale, and Bell.

Polls will be open half-days at ten smaller offices—from 8 to 11:30 a.m. at DPSS centers in Pasadena, South Bay and Pomona, and at adoptions offices in West Covina and Long Beach; and from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. in DPSS offices in Alhambra, Covina and Compton, and at adoptions offices at 2550 West Olympic and 8443 Crenshaw boulevards.

Some 10 percent of the employees in all units, those who work at outlying locations, were sent mail-in

ballots April 23. Deadline for returning these ballots is 5 p.m. next Thursday (May 7).

The American Arbitration association will count the ballots May 8 at its headquarters, 2333 Beverly boulevard, Los Angeles. The association is conducting the election because registrar-recorder Ray Lee's staff is fully occupied preparing for the June 2 primary.

No Go for PPOA

For the second time, a light vote has prevented Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers association from winning selection as negotiating representative for some 3,500 deputy sheriffs, investigators and criminalists in the sheriff's and district attorney's departments. Only 46 percent of them returned ballots for the count last Monday (April 27). PPOA got 1,316 yes to 292 no, but a 60 percent turnout was required. The same unit failed to cast enough ballots in an election last December.

LACEA Just Misses

After weeks of suspense, the employee relations commission has ruled that LACEA failed April 1 to win representation rights for a unit of 302 supervising administrative technical and staff employees.

LACEA, unopposed on the ballot, received 144 yes votes on the first count and needed eight more yeses among the challenged ballots to pass the required 50 percent mark. However, a check of the challenged ballots gave LACEA only three more yes votes for a total of 48.7 per cent.

LACEA won approval April 1 as representative for three other white-collar units.

In separate action, the employee relations commission has certified LACEA as negotiating representative for a unit of nearly 2,800 maintenance men, laborers, truck drivers, machine operators and other blue-collar County employees.

Although LACEA had won a close election for the unit last Jan. 27, the commission had delayed certification while considering objections to the election procedures by rival AFSCME. The commission voted unanimously April 17 to reject the AFSCME protest.