

Cook County Board Meeting  
Thursday, November 2, 2006  
10:00 am

Before the meeting, with all Commissioners present, several photographs were taken to commemorate the last meeting chaired by Commissioner Bobbie Steele as interim president.

The meeting was called to order by President of the Board, Bobbie Steele. A quorum was present. The agenda contained 88 items.

The County Board's Bureau of Budget and Finance received an award for producing a budget that met national guidelines. This is the 13th year it has been recognized for such. President Steele asked the press to acknowledge the 25,000 employees for the fine jobs they do.

States Attorney Dick Divine addressed the board regarding the inequity of salaries between the public defenders (PD) and the assistant state attorneys (ASA) in his office. He urged the Commissioners to uphold the principle of equal pay for equal work. The board had received prior information on the issue.

- The public defenders salaries are negotiated through collective bargaining and they get a yearly increase.
- ASA's salaries are increased only through promotions.
  - Their work loads can be up to 20 hours overtime per week without overtime pay.
  - Their case loads are higher than the PDs.
- The cost to raise salaries to parity will be \$3 million dollars and COLA must be applied to all employees of the County.
- Divine stated that failure to act results in the continued attrition of good staff to private practice.

Jim Riley, President of the RTA, presented its budget which is showing

- a \$100 million deficit which is mainly the CTA's.
- He urged that the County Board get Springfield legislators to up the funding.
- He cited that PACE has all the paratransit services and costs are estimated at \$80 million this year and usage is going up.
- He urged that Cook and the Collar Counties negotiate funding.
- CTA has used capital funds for operation.
- The legislature needs to contribute more to the pension fund.
- Employees and retirees may need to pay more for health insurance
- It is possible that a tax increase may be needed.

The resignation of Daniel H. Winship, Chief, Bureau of Health Services, was noted. In his place, President Steele appointed two physicians to share the position: Carolyn Lopez and Linda Murray.

There was questioning on the billing procedure for pharmaceutical reimbursement that the Board had ordered implemented in the spring. Staff reported that many agencies need to be included to institute the process. Commissioners were not satisfied and expressed frustration. Discussion followed about

- the oversight needed,
- lack of staff accountability and
- the concern that inefficiency affects patient care.

- It was further stated that at a meeting with medical staff there was surprise by staff that the system is in financial crisis.

Commissioners agreed that this is an indication of the lack of communication between administration and staff. President Steele reminded the commissioners that new department heads have been appointed and asked for patience. Commissioners expressed the hope that communication would improve between staff and Health Bureau administration through an environment of openness instituted to include staff in problem solving.

The board was then recessed to hear the Finance Committee Report.

Commissioner Daley presented the *Finance Committee Report* which covered 47 pages.

Approved payouts for attorney fees/insurance settlements/transfers follow:

Appellate Cases: \$4,505

Non capital cases: \$86,373

Domestic Relations: \$2,713

Juvenile Cases: \$161,445

Special Cases: \$69,902

Bill and Claims, including Health Facilities-not totaled

Industrial Claims: \$265,276

Subrogation Recoveries: \$2,745.

Self-insurance claims \$7665

Proposed settlements: \$1,023,983

Patient/Arrestee Claims: \$114,859

Employee Claims: \$738,541

Resolutions passed as follows:

- to begin placing the Bureau of Health Services purchasing, bill payment and related accounting functions under the direct supervision and authority of the Cook County Bureau of Finance;
- to create a special revenue fund for the collection and disbursement of the fee to fiancé the peer or teen court.

This fund is financed by fees collected by the Cook County Circuit Court Clerk. The program will be evaluated at a later date. The fund now has \$1.5- to \$2 million in it and will not siphon any new funds from budget: Approximately 25 teen courts are in the suburbs and 25 in the city in police districts.

Zoning and Building items passed; Roads and Bridges passed.

The Board of Commissioners meeting resumed. All items were approved.

Submitted by: Julie Sass