

Cook County Board of Commissioners Meeting  
July 31, 2007

President Todd Stroger called the meeting to order at 10:15am. Comm. Steele was the only commissioner not present. After recognizing Morton Grove for their Family Circle award, the United Negro College Fund for an upcoming race, the Employee of the Month, and the Sheriff's Police for recent dog fighting arrests, Comm. Suffredin requested that the Fund Transfer dealing with the COLA pay raises for non-union employees (Item #98) be considered next. The agenda change was approved.

The salient points from the ensuing discussion of the Fund Transfer request included:

- 6221 non-union employees will be getting some type of raise and/or bonus
- At least 2 groups have been identified as not being included at this time – supervisor's in the police department and those whose salaries are paid by grants – and there might be others
- \$47m was pieced together from the budget and one time sources (settlements of law suits) and since the raises will need to be continued \$27m is being added to the fund balance for next year and \$20m is being used this year
- The Public Safety sector needs to develop increased revenue sources
- The SA office needs to increase the number of minorities they employ
- To ensure that the raises will be able to be funded in the future some commissioners advocated for a tax increase while others advocated for continued restructuring of Cook County government

The motion for approval of the transfer was approved unanimously.

The Finance Committee was called to order at 11:45pm by Chairman Daley. Most agenda items were approved without discussion. The Appropriation Trial Balance and the Revenue Report were submitted for filing. Comm. Daley asked Mr. Fratto, the Comptroller, to address these reports. He stated that the \$5.7m negative variance reported for the period ending June 30 was a decrease from the previous month. He also stated that compared to last year at this time, the budget is in better shape although patient fees continue to be a problem. He stated that \$35-40m is still expected to be transferred from the state for Medicaide reimbursement, and that there is an additional \$100m that is expected from the state. The BOH continues to overspend its budget. Tom Glaser again reported that the expectation by the end of this fiscal year is that the BOH will overspend by \$16m and have a \$35m shortfall in revenue that will result in a \$50m deficit. The commissioners pressed Dr. Simon on further budget cuts but he stated that further cuts were not possible without having significant repercussions elsewhere. Comm. Quigley asked whether all of the departments (ie Clerk of the Court) that had stated in the 2007 budget hearings that they intended to raise revenues were being held accountable for their revenue claims. It was once again pointed out that all county health systems are having financial difficulties and Comm. Goslin stated that he is chairing a national committee to look at this issue. The Finance Committee meeting was adjourned at 12:28pm.

There was no Building and Zoning Committee meeting.

Comm. Moreno called the Roads and Bridges Committee meeting to order at 12:29pm. All agenda items were approved and the meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.

Comm. Moreno reconvened the board meeting at 12:30pm. Once again there were several corrections to the agenda. Comm. Beavers stated that if items are not correct they should not be included in the agenda. There was discussion of when items need to be submitted and when they can be changed.

The first agenda item was to reconsider the approval from the 7/10/07 board meeting of the contract expansion with Chamberlin and Edmonds Associates for their services in assessing financial eligibility for patients at Stroger Hospital. The motion to reconsider was approved. Mr. John Cookingham, CFO for the Bureau of Health (BOH), explained that the reason for this contract expansion was to expedite the collections process to increase patient revenue for in-patients at Stroger Hospital. The commissioners had questions about how the contract was awarded; why the 3 other companies that do this work were not given the same opportunity to do the work since those companies had reimbursement percentages that were lower?; were the other companies capable of doing this work?; was the process fair for awarding this contract? etc. After a lengthy discussion of the issues, the motion to approve the contract was voted on and failed. A motion to refer the item to the Finance Committee was approved.

Item #3 was a motion from Comm. Gorman requesting that an item referred to the Law Enforcement Committee, chaired by Comm. Moldonado, be discharged from that committee and brought back to the Board since the committee did not meet. After a testy exchange between Comm. Gorman and Comm. Moldonado, the motion failed.

Item #11 was the appointment by President Stroger of Anne M. Burke to the Cook County Judicial Advisory Council to fill a vacancy. The appointment was approved and Comm. Peraica stated that this council has not met in the past and he hopes this appointment will lead to meetings of this council and dealing with some issues.

Item #44 led to some discussion of infrastructure cameras that Comm. Suffredin stated was leading to dangerous questions since this dealt with homeland security issues. Comm. Sims stated that they needed to find a way to talk about homeland security issues and perhaps that would be in closed session.

Under Committee Reports there was discussion of whether the Litigation Sub-Committee report from 7/24/07 (Executive Session dealing with payment in the John Burge case among other issues) could be approved since it was not on the agenda. It was decided that it could not be approved since an agenda item requires 72 hours of notice and a poll would be conducted for approval of the report.

The meeting went into Executive Session at 3:05 to discuss an issue concerning the Juvenile Detention Center. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00pm.

Reported by Cynthia Schilsky, LWVCC Observer