

Cook County Board of Commissioners Meeting
January 23, 2007

Prior to the meeting the African-American Christian Ministers Network was holding a press conference in the hall regarding the reported closure of health clinics. This culminated in a loud group protest outside of President Stroger's office. Inside the Board Room the Chicago Bears fight song was playing. There were no printed agendas available for the meeting and upon inquiry after the meeting was informed that they will no longer be available at the meetings since they are available online.

The Finance Committee was called to order by Comm. Daley at 9:50am to introduce 36 budget amendments from President Stroger. The meeting was recessed at 9:52am until the Public Hearing scheduled for 6:30pm that same evening at the Markham Court House.

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10am by President Stroger and after determining that a quorum was present the meeting was recessed for the Finance Committee Meeting.

Comm. Daley called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 10:05am. All bills and claims were approved without discussion. Comm. Schneider made a statement that he will be voting no on all Workmen's Compensation Claims until there is further investigation into the nature of these claims and their payment. The Finance Committee Meeting was adjourned at 10:16am.

The Zoning and Building Committee was called to order by Comm. Silvestri at 10:16am. All items on the agenda were approved as recommended and the meeting was adjourned at 10:17am.

The Roads and Bridges Committee was called to order by Comm. Moreno at 10:17am. All items on the agenda were approved as recommended and the meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.

The Board Meeting then reconvened and an ordinance was read into the record honoring Dr. Dan Parmer, Administrator of Cook County Animal and Rabies Control, for his service to the county, and followed by accolades from several commissioners.

Comm. Sims then asked "for leave of the body" to allow the ministers who were in attendance at the meeting to express their concerns over closure of the health clinics due to the cuts in the Bureau of Health budget. She stated that there was no venue for them to speak and she also stated that she thought another way to balance the budget needed to be found.

Comm. Daley stated that the Public Hearings (4 are scheduled) were the forum for the ministers as well as the rest of the public to express their concerns with the proposed budget. Comm. Beavers wanted to know if the clinics had actually been closed. A spokesperson for the ministers then attempted to address the board to urge them not to cut the health clinics from the budget, but President Stroger told them they could not speak at this meeting. Several persons from the group began to chant "No Health Cuts" but order was soon restored and shortly thereafter most of the group left the room.

Comm. Suffredin then requested that Item #54 be taken out of order since it might have bearing on other considerations during the meeting. This was a proposal to create an Elections sub-committee of the Legislative Committee. Comm. Suffredin stated that this committee will meet regularly to ensure better oversight of the election process. The item was considered at this time and approved.

Agenda items were approved or withdrawn with minimal discussion. The following items were discussed.

Item #23 authorized a change in the taping and broadcasting of the board meetings. They are now being done in house and Comm. Silvestri commended the administration on this change which will be a cost savings.

Item #25 authorized a contract for a consultant to work with the Election Review Panel and the Clerk's office to implement changes recommended in the election procedures. Comm. Collins stated that she wanted to vote no on all items that committed funds from the 2007 budget until the budget was approved. President Stroger told her she would have to indicate such vote on each individual item as it was voted.

Item #27 authorized a contract for the pharmacy delivery system at Stroger Hospital. Comm. Silvestri requested that Mr. Brown, the Chief Operating Officer for Stroger Hospital, submit a one page benefit analysis of this system to all the commissioners.

Items #30-39 were all referred to the Audit Committee and were financial reports from various departments for fiscal years ending in November of 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Comm. Suffredin asked Catherine Maras O'Leary, Chief of the Bureau of Information Technology, about an IT contract that the Purchasing Agent had submitted for approval. She stated it was an annual maintenance contract for a software package overseen by the Bureau of Health. Comm. Peraica had many questions about why this contract was being voted on and what it involved. He wanted to know if this would address the many billing problems of the country that are part of the health delivery system. Comm. Daley stated that these concerns could be addressed when the Finance Committee holds departmental hearings.

Item #53 was a proposed Ordinance amendment sponsored by Comm. Quigley to raise the fees for vital records in the Clerk's office from \$10 to \$13. Comm. Quigley stated that this was an opportunity to assess fees and cover cost since it is not the will of the board to

raise taxes. These fees are expected to generate an additional \$1.1m for the corporate fund. Comm. Goslin stated that this was an effort to align Cook County's fees with those of surrounding counties. Comm. Sufredin asked if this was the maximum the fees could be raised by law. A representative from the Clerk's office stated that the fees could be raised to \$15. Comm. Quigley stated that the suggested fees reflected the market rate. The Ordinance amendment was approved as submitted.

Item # 57 was an Ordinance submitted by Comm. Moreno proposing the establishment of a Cook County Regional Health Care Network. Comm. Claypool stated that he had done a study of the health system a few years ago and had made this recommendation then and that public input would probably be beneficial. After some discussion concerning approval or referral to committee, the item was referred to the Health and Hospitals Committee.

All items on the Consent Calendar were approved.

- There was discussion with Dr. Simon, Chief of the Bureau of Health Services, about reconsidering a contract for the IT systems for the pharmacy. Apparently systems that have been approved in the past are not well integrated and have created billing problems as well as problems between the 3 hospitals and the clinic system. Dr. Simon said these problems are being addressed but it will take time to correct the many issues involved.
- Donna Dunnings, Budget Director, was asked how many dollars are reflected in the budget amendments that Pres. Stroger has submitted for Bureau of Health. She stated that there were \$107.8m. It was also stated that the contract with ACS to collect revenues will generate \$43m in revenue. Comm. Claypool asked if additional amendments were going to be introduced. Comm. Peraica stated that in his review of the amendments that had been submitted it was apparent to him that the number of positions that had been eliminated were "woefully short" of what was necessary to balance the budget. Comm. Daley stated that questions will be addressed in the hearings of the Finance Committee with Dr. Simon.

All committee reports were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47am.

Report submitted by Cynthia Schilsky, LWV Observer