

Committee meetings

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Agency: Cook County Board of Commissioners

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Summary

- During all eight meetings covered, I could not make the distinction between the city's county's and state's jurisdiction in regards to government and budget. Locating a clear analysis is difficult to find. Who ultimately determines who will foot the bill for social services in Illinois and how do these entities overlap? I've determined that the county is essentially an administrative unit. The city has municipal responsibilities (public works). Separation of powers of city, county and state impose internal limits by dividing government against itself, giving different branches separate functions and forcing them to share power.
- COVID testing capacity in suburban Cook County is expected to expand significantly in the coming weeks, according to Dr. Joshi. The state has received a large number of rapid testing kits that can be administered by any medical professional without the need for a lab; results would be available in 15 minutes. "We are in the process of developing a plan for that, and an application process for community-based organizations to apply for those testing kits at no cost," said Joshi.
- The [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) has done limited work around testing. They don't have testing sites and don't provide clinical services in general but they refer and facilitate testing and partnerships with other community partners.

Follow-Up Questions

- Are committee chairs appointed and by whom?
- The committee voted to approve or pass court order/appellate cases with fees listed that ranged from \$500 to \$1,400 for indigent respondents. There was a worker's compensation claim, in the amount of \$172,947.37, paid to a correctional officer due to an injury she'd incurred while at work. Many, if not all, of these claims were approved previously by a subcommittee and then approved by the committee. I'd like to understand the process. Who's on the subcommittee—is it Risk Management? The decision to approve these cases was made prior to the

Committee on Finance meeting.

- What is [BIPA](#), as it relates to Cook County funding?

Notes

All meetings were virtual and held in succession, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m.

Schedule

- 9:30 a.m. Rules and Administration Committee
- 9:30 a.m. Zoning and Building Committee
- 10 a.m. Health & Hospitals Committee
- 10:15 a.m. Environment and Sustainability Committee
- 10:30 a.m. Business and Economic Development Committee
- 11:15 a.m. Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee
- 11:45 a.m. Asset Management Committee

Pre-research

The Cook County Board of Commissioners is presided over by the Board President, currently Toni Preckwinkle. It's made up of 17 commissioners, each of whom is elected to represent a [district](#) of roughly 300,000 residents. Commissioners oversee the health and hospitals system, forest preserve district, law enforcement in unincorporated areas and assessment of property values.

The newest member of the board, Frank Aguilar (D, 16th District), was elected in 2020. The longest-serving member, John P. Daley (D, 11th District), was elected in 1992 and is son of the 48th mayor of Chicago, [Richard J. Daley](#) and brother of the 54th, [Richard M. Daley](#). Each commissioner is elected for a four-year term. However, there seems to be no term limit, Of the 17 current commissioners, only two are Republican.

In recent news, Cook County Commissioner, Bridget Degnen “vowed to be a full-time officeholder who wouldn’t profit from outside work.” However, Degnen became part owner in a company, hoping to open cannabis dispensaries across the state. The Board of Commissioners earlier this year unveiled proposed reforms that mostly won the approval of two ousted ethics board chairs.

The changes are based on revisions that the [Cook County Ethics Board](#), a body of five individuals tasked with enforcing the ethics ordinance, voted in favor of in January despite objection from Board President Preckwinkle’s office that more time was needed to examine the language. Since then, two members have said the reforms would be

“substantive and meaningful.” But while Preckwinkle urged the board to quickly pass it, she said she was disappointed this version left out a definition of dual employment as any position that creates an “appearance of impropriety,” similar to the City of Chicago’s Ethics Code.

The Cook County Board of Commissioners

Headshots and more information about the commissioners may be found [here](#).

- Alma E. Anaya (7th District)
- Bill Lowry (3rd District)
- Brandon Johnson (1st District)
- Bridget Degnen (12th District)
- Bridget Gainer (1st District)
- Deborah Sims (5th District)
- Dennis Deer (2nd District)
- Donna Miller (6th District)
- Frank J. Aguilar (16th District)
- John P. Daley (11th District)
- Kevin B. Morrison (15th District)
- Larry Suffredin (13th District)
- Luis Arroyo Jr. (8th District)
- Peter N. Silvestri (9th District)
- Scott Britton (14th District)
- Sean M. Morrison (15th District)
- Stanley Moore (4th District)

Finance Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Commissioner John P. Daley, Chairman

Agenda items may be viewed on the [meeting’s Legistar details page](#).

No public testimony. Minutes were [approved](#) from the September 23, 2020, meeting.

Motions to approve the following were made and passed unanimously:

- All court orders, appellate cases (pages 1-60)
- All workers compensation claims (pages 61-77)
- All workers compensation proposed settlement letters (pages 73-75)

A motion was made to receive and file the following reports:

- [20-4640](#): Department of Risk Management September Report on Patient Arrestees Claims. Payments total \$540.36.

- [20-3367](#): Department of Risk Management September Report on Subrogation Claim Recoveries. Total number of recoveries is four and amount to \$25,666.42.
- [20-4639](#) (pages 75-76): Department of Risk Management September Report on Self Insurance Claims. Payments total \$10,253.93.
- [20-4666](#) (page 76): [Comptroller](#) Analysis of Revenues and Expenses for the Corporate, Safety and Health Funds. Lawrence Wilson, the County Comptroller, reported that the year-to-date (as of August 31, 2020) results include:
 - General fund: Unfavorable budget variance net \$118 million (comprised of an unfavorable revenue variance of \$179 million and favorable expense variance of \$61 million)
 - Health fund: Unfavorable net budget variance of \$25 million (comprised of a favorable revenue variance of \$342 million and unfavorable expense variance of \$367 million)
 - Receivables from the State of Illinois included a total due to the county of \$167 million (\$59 million due to the general fund and \$107 million for the health fund). The health fund amounts have been collected.
- 20-0996 [?]

Andrea Gibson, Budget Director, Cook County Health and Hospitals System

There is a looming issue I wanted to preview to the commissioners and that relates to our disproportionate share of hospital funding. In September we were informed that because of a constraint in how the federal legislation was drafted, the [enhanced FMAP](#) (federal medical assistance percentage) that was supposed to be tacked on to our normal [Disproportionate Share Hospital \(DSH\)](#) payment, will not be coming to fruition; we will not be receiving the \$16 million DSH payment that we had expected. The state informed us in September. The [enhanced FMAP](#) ended up not having a positive impact for Cook County Health this year related to DSH. Going forward we're hoping that some legislation will retroactively correct that."

The federal [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) that preceded the CARES Act was intended to enhance the amount of DSH funding to state and local governments. We'd been receiving an additional \$1.87 million linked to how long the national emergency is in place. Because they didn't increase the pool of funds it simply acted as an advance so there is a fatal flaw in how that legislation was drafted, that resulted in the "no payment" for September. We haven't reached the same conclusion if we have the same problem with BIPA (Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000).

Zoning and Building Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Commissioner Peter Silvestri, Chairman

[Minutes](#) were approved from the meeting on 9/23/2020

Barrington Countryside Fire Protection District (BCFPD)

[20-4682](#): The motion passed unanimously to concur with the recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) to grant the special use request for the addition of a fire station at 1004 S. Hough St., Lake Barrington in Barrington Township, County District: 15 (Request: Special Use SU 2001). The subject property consists of 4.54 acres located on the west side of Hough Street (Barrington Road), 0.412 miles south of Barrington Road and Hawthorn Road (Route 59). The site is currently zoned as R-3 single family residential district.

A letter was read aloud on behalf of the trustees of the BCFPD, communicating their support and belief that there will be a minimal effect upon traffic and no diminution in the value to adjoining properties. Residents had voiced concerns in previous hearings, regarding traffic and the proximity to a grammar school.

Over 25 comments in opposition were submitted.

- Jim McGrath said that the BCFPD application reported that the location is across the street from commercial property but that this is false; it is a half-mile away from commercial property, in a totally residential area. The recently retired Barrington fire chief does not support this location...
- Tom McGrath said that the property is surrounded by single-family homes, which is consistent with a long-standing county designation of R-3 single-family residences. I have lived in my home in this residential neighborhood for over 30 years. When I was notified of the Fire Protection District's intent to purchase the 4.5 acre parcel of land to construct a station, I created a petition signed by me and my neighbors to show our opposition to the requested special use.

[20-4683](#): Recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals to approve a special use request to construct a Planned Unit Development (PUD), a new single-family home with an attached garage and detached pool house on a property designated as "Environmentally Sensitive." 5341 South Edgewood Avenue, LaGrange Highlands, Illinois.

The chair recognizes that the motion passes unanimously and that the special use will be granted.

[20-4332](#): An amendment to the building regulation and sign ordinance fee schedule to

align it with what surrounding suburban communities charge.

Health and Hospitals Committee (10 a.m.)

Commissioner Deborah Sims, Vice Chair

Additional agenda information may be found on the meeting's [Legistar details page](#).

No public speakers.

[20-1116](#): Dr. Kiran Joshi presented the Cook County Department of Public Health quarterly report, explaining the updated COVID-19 response to date and Cook County's contact tracing initiative; the jurisdiction is most of suburban Cook County. "Our overall goal is to ensure health equity for all of our residents," said Joshi.

As of October 21, there have been more than 70,000 cases of COVID-19 in Cook County, along with over 2,000 deaths. Cases are trending upwards, as is the test positivity, currently approximately 7%. "What that tells us is that the increase in case counts are real and not just an artifact resulting from increased testing," said Joshi. Some neighboring counties are "in the orange," a [color-coded designation](#) created by the state that indicates increased COVID-19 risk.

The governor's office has imposed additional mitigation measures on those regions. Cases are trending up as of August. The uptick was initially driven by people in their twenties but increases are now across age groups. Dr. Joshi is seeing that rise in case positivity as well. "We're seeing smaller but still noticeable increases in hospitalization for COVID-19. Illnesses are up-trending. We're watching that number carefully," said Joshi, reiterating that one of their primary goals is to protect the healthcare system in suburban Cook County.

According to Dr. Joshi, the risk is much more directly related to age. Most impacted groups are the Latinx population and the African American population. "There's a growing understanding in public health that these health disparities are the result of years of structural racism." Joshi specifically mentioned [a report by the Chicago Urban League](#) that attributed infection risks to employment/occupational conditions, housing access, barriers to social distancing and mass incarceration.

A motion was made to receive and file the report.

Three items mentioned passed, unanimously.

Environment and Sustainability Committee (10:15 a.m.)

Agenda items may be viewed on this meeting's [Legistar details page](#).

Business and Economic Development Committee (10:30 a.m.)

Agenda items may be viewed on this meeting's [Legistar details page](#).

The committee voted to receive file and defer [20-4415](#), regarding the consolidation of the Office of the Recorder of Deeds with the Office of the County Clerk. "A fiscal note is required from our Bureau of Finance which has been required today," said Suffredin. A hearing was held today on the final report on the merger of the Recorder of Deeds into the Cook County Clerk's Bureau of Vital Records. Suffredin encouraged all employees from the Recorder's Office to apply today for the job openings that have been posted in the Clerk's office. In prior hearings it has been made clear that the jobs in the Recorder's Office would cease to exist when this budget ends November 30th; those employees would not be guaranteed a job in the Clerk's Office. The process under [Shakman](#) requires the job application process. "I want to encourage SEIU Local 73 President Dian Palmer and Cook County's Office Karen Yarbrough to continue to meet to discuss this. The union representation is the same in both offices, said Suffredin.

T. Thomas, an employee in the Recorder's Office: The workers stepped in to make sure that we were keeping up with requests to record real estate documents. Some of the workers like myself gave Cook County free labor without getting overtime or comp time because of our passion for the office and work to protect people's homes. Our office has a backlog which is affecting families and individual homeowners, financial service industries and title companies. [It was noted by a commissioner during the meeting that Thomas volunteered her time].

Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (11:15 a.m.)

Agenda items may be viewed on this meeting's [Legistar details page](#).

This committee met to discuss the appointment of Joseph Harrington to the [Cook County Health and Hospitals System Board](#), as well as Mayor Katrina Thompson (Broadview, Illinois) and Michelle Carr to the [board of the Cook County Land Bank Authority](#) (CCLBA). The objective of CCLBA's 16-member Board of Directors is to address the large inventory of vacant residential, industrial and commercial property in Cook County.

All were welcomed to their new roles. All three appointments were approved. On Thursday at the County Board meeting the committee will ratify the committee action, making the appointments official.

Appointee Joseph M. Harrington: I'm a native Chicagoan. I grew up in Woodlawn. It was a

robust neighborhood; now it has fallen on hard times. The grammar school I went to is a vacant lot, the house I grew up in was a vacant lot and the restaurant that my parents owned for 30 years sits on a vacant lot. I know many of the problems the city has from my personal experience. In the 1980s I worked at the city health department. I was the first and only chair of the Illinois Department of Public Health's minority health task force. That led me to an interest and focus on health disparities and creating equity in Chicago. I look forward to the opportunity to serve on this board.

Appointee Mayor Katrina Thompson: I grew up in Englewood, California. I'm familiar with vacant lots and vacant properties. I was the former executive director at West Humboldt Park Development Council. I'm familiar with the Land Bank and the opportunities that it presents to the community.

Appointee Michelle Carr: I served the last eight years as the Illinois Director of the Nature Conservancy and prior to that I worked in finance for 16 years in an investment bank. I changed careers in part because of my love for our great city and my sincere interest in making a community that's not just economically resilient but also livable, breathable and a place where all of our neighbors can enjoy the fruits of our prosperity together.

Asset Management Committee (11:45 a.m.)

Commissioner Stanley Moore, Chairman

Agenda items may be viewed on this meeting's [Legistar details page](#).

[Minutes](#) from the meeting on January 15, 2020, were approved.

Capital Planning and Policy Report: Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement

Earl Manning of the Department of Capital Planning presented the [report](#).

Amber Smock, Director of Advocacy, [Access Living](#): On behalf of Access Living I would like to express our support for the County's efforts to serve Cook County residents with disabilities of all kinds. The ADA reference dialogue between the county and a new disability working group to investigate programmatic access on top of physical access. It has been my pleasure to help review this inaugural report and begin key discussions about how the county can further include people with disabilities both internally and with the public.

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