



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

Criminal Justice Committee

Monday, July 27, 2020

3:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

NOTICE AND AGENDA

There will be a meeting of the Committee or Subcommittee of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County at the date, time and location listed above to consider the following:

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Due to the current health crisis, there is no in-person participation for the County Board committee meetings. The President and/or Commissioners will participate remotely. The public can observe the livestream <https://www.cookcountyil.gov/service/watch-live-board-proceedings>

The public can still testify to the Committee Meetings. Only written comment will be accepted for those wishing to provide Public Testimony. Written comments provided prior to the start of the meeting will be acknowledged at the meeting. If you have additional material for the Board to consider, please email testimony to cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov and indicate a desire that your testimony be entered into the record. All written comment which complies with County Board Rules will be posted online.

[20-3365](#)

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of 9/25/2019

[20-2867](#)

Sponsored by: BRANDON JOHNSON, FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS DEER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BILL LOWRY, DONNA MILLER, KEVIN B. MORRISON, PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS and LARRY SUFFREDIN, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

JUSTICE FOR BLACK LIVES

WHEREAS, throughout the history of the United States, policing, criminalization, and incarceration have been used as tools of violence and retribution against marginalized groups seeking safety, especially Black people; and

WHEREAS, policing was in part developed as a tool to preserve the institution of slavery in the 1700's, focusing on chasing down runaway slaves and shutting down slave revolts, grew into a weapon to disrupt labor uprisings in the 1800s, and matured in the 1900s to be used as the single most effective tool in repressing the civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, policing has a troubled history in Cook County, most conspicuously visible in the decades-long collaboration by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and members of the judiciary in prosecutions enabled by disgraced Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and his associates' terrorization, torture, and wrongful conviction of more than 150 Black people over dozens of years, thereby permanently damaging the lives of thousands of accused people, their family members, and Black communities at large; and

WHEREAS, all actors in the Cook County justice system, from the State's Attorney's Office to the Chief Judge, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and Public Defender have no choice but to collaborate with rank and file law enforcement officers that have successfully resisted calls and efforts to acknowledge the inherent racial bias in policing and reduce the violence experienced by Black people, ending all past efforts at reform unsuccessfully; and

WHEREAS, the historic resistance to acknowledge problems in policing was recently illustrated clearly by a number of active duty Cook County Sheriff's Officers threatening social media responses to the peaceful protesting by attorneys in the Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender on June 12th, and as such remarks included calling for fire hoses to be brought in to quell the march and making thinly veiled threats of physical violence such as "good luck to them when the courts open up,"; and

WHEREAS, the brutality of law enforcement highlighted by the above referenced social media comments have become so commonplace in Black life that it has become an ever present cultural rite of passage in Black families to teach their children how to not be killed by law enforcement before they become adults; and

WHEREAS, despite centuries-long increased spending on traditional law enforcement, violence remains a problem in many communities, and there is little positive correlation between residents' feeling of safety and the degree of law enforcement presence in those communities; and

WHEREAS, most crimes are handled outside of the criminal justice system in the status quo. The majority of sexual assaults and roughly half of robberies and aggravated assaults are never reported to police. Given the choice, many crime survivors choose nothing at all or accountability outside of criminal prosecution rather than seek help from our current justice system; and

WHEREAS, across the country, spending grows on traditional law enforcement and incarceration with no correlation to metrics of success such as clearance rates or sense of safety. For example, despite a 50% decrease in the number of people incarcerated in the Cook County Jail between 2013 and 2020, the Cook County Department of Corrections budget grew 26% over the same time period; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Jail is an institution that perpetrates violence against Black people in particular and people of color and low-income people more broadly. Almost all people incarcerated in the jail are there while awaiting trial, and many hundreds specifically because they cannot afford to pay a money bond. They are presumed innocent but still sit locked in cages because they are Black and poor. Corrections is not capable of addressing the root causes of violence or engaging in the restorative processes that actually address harm and generate needed accountability, healing, and repair for survivors of violence; and

WHEREAS, interventions that would alleviate the need for traditional law enforcement have been seen by too many officials with the power to allocate public resources as secondary efforts to maintain community peace. Specific endeavors that engage school-aged children, support street outreach workers, reclaim public spaces, promote job preparation and job growth and others go underfunded as a result of our reliance on traditional law enforcement spending; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby that to best keep communities safe and reduce contact between people and law enforcement that has historically increased unaccountable violence inflicted on Black and Brown communities physically, economically, and emotionally, Cook County shall redirect money from the failed and racist systems of policing, criminalization, and incarceration that have not kept our communities safe, and will instead invest that money in public services not administered by law enforcement that promote community health and safety equitably across the County, but especially in Black and Brown communities most impacted by violence and incarceration. These services shall include:

- 1. Housing:** According to the 2019 State of Rental Housing in Cook County, 50% of renter households in Cook County are paying unaffordable housing costs. Cook County should invest large-scale resources in expanding the availability of high-quality affordable housing and strengthen pathways for homeownership in communities of color to build wealth.
- 2. Health care:** In this global pandemic, the same communities of color harmed by police violence and

incarceration are also bearing the brunt of COVID-19 infections and deaths. Cook County should expand health care offerings and options in communities of color.

3. **Mental health:** Cook County should expand mental health care and ensure that first responders for people in mental health crisis are mental health professionals and not police.
4. **Restorative Justice:** The County should invest more resources in restorative justice programs that restore harm done to survivors of crime and violence and engage in community accountability with people who do harm to others rather than just punishing people.
5. **Job creation:** Cook County should use its resources to create living wage, public sector jobs for people in communities of color in public services such as education, environmental sustainability, and infrastructure.
6. **Public transit:** Black and Brown communities are inadequately served by public transportation options. Cook County should expand spending on public transit in communities of color and low-income communities.
7. **Eviction/Foreclosure:** Ensure those facing evictions and mortgage foreclosures have ready access to high quality legal assistance.
8. **Increase MWBE Opportunity:** Entities with county contracts or receiving tax incentives from Cook County that fail to meet MWBE requirement will have their business with the county revoked; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ceremonial copies of this resolution be delivered to Sheriff Tom Dart, State's Attorney Kim Foxx, Public Defender Amy Campanelli, Clerk of the Circuit Court Dorothy Brown, and Chief Judge Timothy Evans

Legislative History : 6/18/20 - Board of Commissioners - refer to the Criminal Justice Committee



Secretary

Chairman: Moore
Vice-Chairman: Johnson
Members: Committee of the Whole