

1                   **OFFICE OF THE COUNTY TREASURER**

2                   CHAIRMAN DALEY:   The Treasurer of Cook  
3   County, Maria Pappas.

4                   MS. PAPPAS:   Thank you for allowing me the  
5   opportunity to speak before this Board today.   I  
6   want to thank the President's Office and  
7   Commissioner John Daley, our Finance Chair, for  
8   their extraordinary guidance and their assistance in  
9   taking this office forward.

10                  You have all been given "this".   It is  
11   eighty-one pages, the state of the office report.   I  
12   will consolidate it and make it quick.   I know that  
13   I am the last one here.

14                  I want to apologize to Commissioner  
15   Schneider for not having attended your brother's  
16   funeral and wake.   My condolences are with you and  
17   your family.

18                  In 1998, we had 250 people in the  
19   Treasurer's Office.   If those 250 people were still  
20   with us today, our budget would be \$38.5 million.  
21   We currently have eighty-nine and our budget is  
22   \$12.2; \$11.1 million of the \$12.2 comes from the  
23   five-dollar fee.   I am only coming to you this year  
24   for \$1.1 million.   We will talk a little bit later

1 about how we are going to get rid of that.

2 Personnel costs make up seventy-four  
3 percent of the budget. I would remind you that if  
4 all 250 people were still working for me, their  
5 insurance costs alone would be \$7.9 million.

6 In 1998, we had two payment options  
7 for the entire office. Now there are nine payment  
8 options. You voted, you decided, you endorsed the  
9 following; so when people ask you what you do on the  
10 Cook County Board, tell them that you support the  
11 Treasurer's automation efforts and this is what has  
12 been accomplished.

13 The lockbox system -- there has been  
14 9.8 million payments; 550 bank branches have seen  
15 twelve million payments. Local community banks,  
16 outside of Chase, have seen 72,000 payments. In  
17 1998, 384,000 people walked into the Treasurer's  
18 Office to pay. Last year, 20,000 people walked in  
19 to pay.

20 Wire payments from mortgage companies  
21 -- seventeen million payments have been made online  
22 by mortgage companies. Direct debits from checking  
23 accounts, 637,000. Online payments, 3.1 million.  
24 Credit card payments, 56,000. Tax buyers, who used

1 to come into the office, now pay electronically.

2 They have paid 343,000 times online.

3 Our website. Our website, which was  
4 nonexistent in 1998, does now have 44.5 million  
5 visitors. Our mobile website, this phone, which we  
6 instituted in June, has had 171,000 visits from  
7 taxpayers. Our ethnic brochures, which are in  
8 twenty-three different languages online, and now we  
9 have Google translate, which translates anything  
10 that you want into ninety different languages, which  
11 has been used 400,000 times. It is an amazing  
12 statistic. There are 127 spoken languages in Cook  
13 County; 400,000 times people have downloaded in a  
14 language other than English.

15 Email taxpayer letters. We received  
16 128,000 emails from taxpayers in which we  
17 immediately respond. People used to have to come  
18 into the office and request a tax bill. 130,000  
19 times people have now requested it online.

20 We are moving toward our electronic  
21 warrant book, which I talked to you about two years  
22 ago. The years 2012 and 2013 are electronic, and  
23 going forward everything will be electronic.

24 We used to have a tax sale that took

1     twenty days. It was at the bottom of 69 West  
2     Washington. It took four days. Since 2008, we sold  
3     156,000 PINs electronically. We work with the  
4     Recorder of Deeds' Office, and they have given us  
5     electronically 750,000 name changes, which are no  
6     longer done by hand.

7                     We have a wonderful program with two  
8     people, where the mortgage company and the homeowner  
9     both went to pay. It was a double-pay. We stopped  
10    the second person from paying. This is huge because  
11    we used to allow them to pay, then we would have to  
12    set up a whole refund process. I can tell you that  
13    since we instituted our STOP double payment program,  
14    \$243 million has been returned to people.

15                    It is really interesting. You think  
16    the people don't care what goes on in government?  
17    When you send somebody a thousand-dollar check back,  
18    and say, "Sir, your husband paid. You shouldn't pay  
19    as well." You send them a thousand dollars back.  
20    They actually write thank you notes.

21                    Any of the 2000 governmental agencies  
22    in Cook County who come into our system and look at  
23    their financial state -- number one, are they going  
24    to get money. What they owe in refunds, anything

1     else. We used to have to mail them that  
2     information.

3                     So now, on the issue of transparency  
4     -- as you know, the very first bill has all of the  
5     information about what the debt is of that  
6     particular government. The second installment bills  
7     now have all of the TIF data. We are working with  
8     the other property tax officers, and the new  
9     property tax portal has had 8.4 million visitors.  
10    Anyone who FOIAs us for anything, we put that online  
11    as well.

12                    We have reduced our corporate budget  
13    for fifteen years in a row. As I said, we are down  
14    to eighty-nine positions. That is a sixty-five  
15    percent reduction in personnel.

16                    Moving forward, we are going to work  
17    with the Bureau of Technology on our integrated  
18    property tax system, the ERP financial system, and  
19    the time and attendance system.

20                    We are now seriously working on  
21    becoming completely paperless. That is called the  
22    document imaging and scanning project. There won't  
23    be much shuffling of paper. Everything is being  
24    scanned -- not within the next year, but within the

1 next two years. All the filing cabinets we have we  
2 will donate to the County so that they can be used  
3 elsewhere.

4 We are converting to all e-forms, so  
5 any form that you want out of my office you will be  
6 able to get online. We are thinking about putting  
7 kiosks in so that people can come in, put their name  
8 change information in, and get their duplicate  
9 bills.

10 We are working on possibly presenting  
11 an electronic bill. Just like when you board the  
12 plane, you get your boarding pass, we are thinking  
13 about doing that so it has the proper scan line on  
14 it and you can just use that. Hopefully then we  
15 don't have to mail out all of these bills. We are  
16 allowing people to opt in on that.

17 There are additional future projects  
18 on pages seventy-one through seventy-six. These are  
19 all automation projects. Everything that we have  
20 completed this year is on page seventy-seven and  
21 seventy-eight.

22 That is the good news. Thank you very  
23 much.

24 You have no questions?

1           CHAIRMAN DALEY: Vice-Chair Sims.

2           COMMISSIONER SIMS: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chairman.

4                   Madam Treasurer, I know the County has  
5 a new automation project that they are trying to  
6 include all of the other stakeholders in this one  
7 project. Are you working towards being a part of  
8 this system?

9           MS. PAPPAS: Yes. We all are. What they  
10 will do for us is take whatever language that they  
11 use, which is this actual programming language from  
12 the 1930s, and convert it to this language that we  
13 have. They are trying to get up to speed in this  
14 century with the proper computer language.

15           COMMISSIONER SIMS: You also mentioned that  
16 you were giving money back to the County. Do you  
17 want to tell us exactly or the approximate amount?

18           MS. PAPPAS: We think -- we won't know  
19 because it depends upon how many people paid late,  
20 that sort of thing. But it appears that by the  
21 close of this budget there might be between \$5 and  
22 \$7 million in additional revenue.

23                   I know you are looking for revenue  
24 because you got a problem with I think it was the

1 cable TV revenue not going through. I think it will  
2 be somewhere between \$5 and \$7 million.

3 CHAIRMAN DALEY: We have the Budget  
4 Director.

5 MS. ANTHONY: Just for clarity. It is  
6 expected that perhaps we will have about \$7, maybe  
7 \$8 million in additional revenue from the  
8 Treasurer's Office for 2015. That is not 2016. As  
9 you know, we are experiencing a deficit in other  
10 revenue sources throughout, so that \$5 to \$8 million  
11 would only help 2015's budget issues.

12 COMMISSIONER SIMS: So that is not spilling  
13 over.

14 MS. ANTHONY: It is not additional funding  
15 that we will have available for 2016.

16 MS. PAPPAS: I would like to know who fell  
17 short in 2015 that I have to pick up.

18 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner, are you  
19 finished?

20 COMMISSIONER SIMS: Who fell short?

21 MS. ANTHONY: There are several revenue  
22 sources that are falling short. They have been  
23 presented every month in the revenue report.

24 COMMISSIONER SIMS: Is it the Hospital?



1 MS. ANTHONY: No, it is not the Hospital.

2 COMMISSIONER SIMS: Who is it?

3 MS. ANTHONY: One of them is the Clerk. I  
4 don't have the list in front of me, but, as you  
5 know, we have been dealing with the Circuit Court  
6 and several other sources, a few other sources, as  
7 well as the State is delinquent in giving us some of  
8 the revenues that we were expecting.

9 COMMISSIONER SIMS: What if you get those  
10 revenues in? Where does that project?

11 CHAIRMAN DALEY: You won't be getting that.

12 MS. ANTHONY: We are still going to be  
13 short.

14 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Those revenues have been  
15 consistently short.

16 COMMISSIONER SIMS: Mr. Chairman, for the  
17 past -- I don't know how many years -- you have said  
18 if there were people that were short, that somehow  
19 they would have to make it up in their budget.

20 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Then the Board would have  
21 to say yes, if you are short -- say it is \$10  
22 million -- then you absorb it in your budget. So  
23 far, we haven't.

24 COMMISSIONER SIMS: You say that every

1 year.

2 CHAIRMAN DALEY: We haven't. If there is  
3 an amendment when the budget is present, if you  
4 predict \$10 million or whatever that you are short,  
5 amendment number one, cut whoever's budget with an  
6 appropriation cut of \$10 million.

7 COMMISSIONER SIMS: I know we have talked  
8 about departments overestimating their projections.  
9 Maybe we need to figure out how we can hone in on  
10 this. Is this part of the problem? Maybe we should  
11 ask them to be more conservative in their  
12 projections as opposed to being more aggressive in  
13 their projections. That way, when we get to  
14 yearend, we will maybe be a little bit more flat, as  
15 opposed to being over.

16 MS. ANTHONY: We do take the revenue  
17 estimates from the departments. However, in this  
18 particular case, if we see a continual trend of  
19 being under budget, we definitely dig in a little  
20 deeper. You will see that the Clerk's revenue has  
21 been decreased, based upon historical trends not  
22 necessarily being quite on target.

23 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Are you finished?

24 COMMISSIONER SIMS: Yes, thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Murphy.

2                   COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Thank you.

3                   Always good to have you here because  
4 you are the one that really saves us some money.

5                   You said that you may be completely  
6 paper-free, paperless in a few years. What about  
7 the folks that don't have computers? They don't use  
8 computers or they are older. How do we deal with  
9 them?

10                  MS. PAPPAS: We are still available. That  
11 is a good question because the people who do come  
12 in, the 20,000 who do come in, are either seniors or  
13 people who don't speak English.

14                  It is amazing. If you actually come  
15 during the run and just stand there for a while, it  
16 is anybody who doesn't have a computer. We are  
17 literally open for those 20,000, and all of the  
18 other things that we do. But those 20,000 come in  
19 year-round.

20                  What has really helped us is when a  
21 non-English-speaking person comes in, those four  
22 brochures that we have, because they come in with  
23 the whole family, we can give them the brochures.  
24 We actually have a place for them to sit down. The

1 property tax system is extraordinarily complicated  
2 for them. We give them that. They sit down. They  
3 read it. More often than not, they don't want to  
4 talk to anyone. Then they just want to pay because  
5 they have got this in their hands.

6 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: They understand it?

7 MS. PAPPAS: Right.

8 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: But, still, when you  
9 changed the way to pay to our local banks and stuff  
10 like that, that was wonderful.

11 MS. PAPPAS: If anyone has a local bank in  
12 their District that would like to join our program,  
13 we welcome them.

14 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I think I have two  
15 banks in Crestwood. I think both of them.

16 MS. PAPPAS: We will be happy to take them.

17 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: One of them, you can  
18 do it right now. I am not sure about the Crestwood  
19 Bank.

20 MS. PAPPAS: We will talk to you after the  
21 meeting.

22 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Suffredin.

23 COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: Thank you.

24 It is always a pleasure to have you

1 here, Madam Treasurer.

2 Let me just ask; I want to make sure I  
3 am understanding this. You are taking \$3 million  
4 less this year than last year from the tax sales  
5 automation fund; is that correct? I am looking at  
6 T-1, the special purpose fund. It would appear --  
7 I'm sorry. I see. You are taking \$3 million more,  
8 but you are reducing \$3 million from the general  
9 revenue fund; is that right?

10 MS. PAPPAS: Here is what it is. "This",  
11 this 534, that is the tax sale automation. "This"  
12 is funded with \$11.1 million from the five-dollar  
13 fee. "This" is the corporate fund. My total budget  
14 is twelve. "This" right now is eleven. I only come  
15 to you for one.

16 So every year, and as I decrease  
17 people, I try and cut this down, come to you for  
18 less and build this up.

19 Now the next question is: How do I  
20 build this up more? I am waiting for somebody to  
21 ask me that.

22 COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: That was going to  
23 be my next question. I would also like you to talk  
24 about the scavenger sale, too, and its relationship

1 to how that raises it up.

2 MS. PAPPAS: Scavenger sales -- the only  
3 thing that has happened there is more five-dollar  
4 fees.

5 What I would suggest, strongly, is  
6 that a new committee be formed, under the  
7 President's direction, of probably the people who  
8 have been here the longest so they would be able to  
9 clearly understand this issue of electronifying the  
10 warrant books.

11 Once you take twenty years of 1.7  
12 million parcels of property and make it electronic,  
13 what you have is every mortgage company, every law  
14 firm, every home-related store, going in there,  
15 pulling up the addresses and marketing the  
16 information. They make millions when they do that.  
17 There are title companies who are in the business of  
18 doing that.

19 This Board, with its serious revenue  
20 problems, needs a committee. Now that we have  
21 discovered that we are able to do this, and are  
22 about to go online with it and going forward, a  
23 committee of the whole to sit down, talk to the  
24 State's Attorney and all of the powers that be and

1 say, "What is this invaluable information worth?"

2 Trust me. It is worth a whole lot.

3 If it were done properly, I would have  
4 a whole lot more than \$12 million here, because  
5 people are constantly looking at the warrant books.  
6 The warrant books are the only accurate source of  
7 property tax information in the entire County. The  
8 mainframe is not as accurate as the warrant books.  
9 This is a mini gold mine.

10 You are going to have to figure out,  
11 as a committee of the whole, under the President's  
12 direction, how it is that revenue can be generated  
13 from this.

14 Let's say somebody comes in and says  
15 -- you know what? I want the name and address of  
16 everyone who lives in this zip code. I want  
17 everybody whose name ends with a "Z". I don't know.  
18 It goes on and on and on and on. It is invaluable  
19 information.

20 It should, because of the commercial  
21 value of it -- that is what people are using it for.  
22 They are not using it to look up where their house  
23 is -- fall outside of the realm of the Freedom of  
24 Information Act information.

1           COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: You believe that  
2 the ordinance that we have, which allows you to sell  
3 certain aspects of your data, is not adequate enough  
4 so we really need to sit down and have a real  
5 expansion of it?

6           MS. PAPPAS: No one ever anticipated that  
7 an elected official would come along and say, "Okay.  
8 Let's make all of the warrant books electronic,"  
9 because they have never been electronic. If you  
10 actually see them now, you will see them soon in  
11 electronic form. You are going to say, "This is  
12 amazing."

13           I know you are in and out of  
14 Springfield, too. I know there is serious revenue  
15 problems in every aspect of this government -- City,  
16 State, and County.

17           COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: Let me ask you  
18 about that part. You help with the local units of  
19 governments that are on our tax bills by getting  
20 these tax bills out on time. Next week, the General  
21 Assembly comes back. One of the bills that will be  
22 up is the City of Chicago's exemption bill, which  
23 also has in it, as written now, the ability of the  
24 County of Cook for the whole county.



1                   Do you have a position on this? And  
2   is this bill in danger of delaying our property tax  
3   bills getting out? Which will then create --

4                   MS. PAPPAS: That's the Mayor.

5                   COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: You mentioned his  
6   name. Maybe he has got some tuna fish for you. I  
7   don't know.

8                   MS. PAPPAS: So what? You know what,  
9   Larry? I am proud to tell you that I have survived  
10   the political arena. And you, in many ways, are  
11   like me. We are both old warhorses at this. We  
12   have come and gone, and we have seen it come and go.

13                   My position is -- I will be sixty-  
14   seven years old in June. I do not fight with  
15   anybody. If that is what they want, if that is what  
16   the Mayor wants, he will get it. If that is what  
17   the Governor wants, he will get it. If that is what  
18   the President of the County Board wants, she will  
19   get it. If you want to give it to me, I will give  
20   it to you. That is my position.

21                   COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: Thank you.

22                   CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Gainer.

23                   COMMISSIONER GAINER: Does that apply to  
24   us, too?

1           COMMISSIONER SUFFREDIN: I am turning  
2 sixty-eight. Daley is older than both of us.

3           CHAIRMAN DALEY: Jerry is older than us.

4           MS. PAPPAS: I remember when I first came  
5 on this Board. The likes of Lechowicz and Stroger  
6 and Mary McDonald -- we really had some -- it was  
7 really a lot of fun.

8                   For those of you who are just coming  
9 in, unfortunately it is not as much fun as it used  
10 to be. You guys are not as much as characters as we  
11 used to be. But we were really -- you don't have as  
12 many characters.

13           CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Gainer.

14           COMMISSIONER GAINER: I was going to say --  
15 does getting anything we want apply to us, too? But  
16 we will see. Maybe - maybe not.

17                   First of all, I have to say it because  
18 everybody else does, because it is totally true.  
19 Sometimes when I look at your budget I wish you were  
20 running everything. I commend you because I know it  
21 is not easy. A thousand small decisions that were  
22 made in the right way. That was the big traumatic  
23 thing, but it is really a great job.

24                   On the additional revenue fund, on the

1 tax sale -- I always love it when I run into people  
2 who are involved in the tax sale before they know  
3 what I do or something. I sat next to someone at a  
4 bar mitzvah and I got an earful about the horrible  
5 job of putting the tax sale on the electronics.  
6 They thought it was so terrible and wrecked  
7 everything, the collusion and everything else that  
8 went on there.

9                   To Larry's point, I agree with you.  
10 Someone who looks at the vacant land. Getting this  
11 information and looking at the realty tract and all  
12 of what those guys do, they send people over to the  
13 Clerk's Office. They go through all of this stuff.  
14 They put it into a mode that a normal business can  
15 actually use it.

16                   Would that be different? Would making  
17 the warrant books electronics be different than the  
18 information that exists there?

19                   MS. PAPPAS: It is all part and parcel of  
20 that same thing.

21                   If anybody wants, who sits on the  
22 Board, we would like to come and show you want this  
23 electronic warrant book looks like. If you did set  
24 up this committee to look at how it is, you can

1 generate revenue from it. We would love to share  
2 this with you so you are not out in the cold on it.

3 I would also say that beyond that  
4 there is invaluable information in our office for  
5 your constituents, both in the forms of brochures  
6 and electronically, if you want it for your offices.  
7 It will be great, yes.

8 Joe and company, Steve Edimonson and  
9 this group will come down. They will go over that.

10 COMMISSIONER GAINER: On the revenue  
11 raising fronts, in addition to making the warrant  
12 books electronics. Now that you have this view for  
13 this period of time, how else would you garner  
14 additional revenue for the County, the City, or  
15 others?

16 MS. PAPPAS: You have to do what we did.  
17 You have to figure out -- this would be the second  
18 punch with the electronic warrant thing. You have  
19 to figure out who is it that is a third party, like  
20 the mortgage companies who come to the County. Then  
21 they get rid of all of their employees because we  
22 give them all of this information for free.

23 We charge them five dollars. They  
24 don't complain about it because now they are happy

1     because they also get the tax sale lists and  
2     everything else. Now you have got to figure out how  
3     all of these third parties -- not the taxpayers --  
4     they are actually deep pockets coming and getting  
5     information, literally -- like almost hacking  
6     information out of here and putting it in some form  
7     and selling it.

8                     There are plumbing companies that come  
9     in and say, "You know, I want a list." You get all  
10    of this junk mail. Where do they get the address?  
11    They got it from us. But the person who came and  
12    got it from us, got it for free from us. They went,  
13    the company that got it for free, somehow or another  
14    sliced and diced it and sold it to the plumbing  
15    company.

16                    What I am saying is the County needs  
17    to intervene before it gets sold to this third  
18    party. We need to become the seller.

19                    What you have is invaluable; it is  
20    invaluable. We are not doing it in a way that is to  
21    your benefit. You are talking a lot of money here,  
22    a lot of money. People pay for these lists. People  
23    will pay for the list for everyone who lives on the  
24    611 Gold Coast who needs a cable TV. Everybody who

1 lives in Ravenswood who wants a burglar alarm  
2 system. There are people that do that.

3 We can do that. We can make money.  
4 We need to figure out with the State's Attorney and  
5 the powers that be how it can be done.

6 COMMISSIONER GAINER: I think that is a  
7 great idea. Anything else that you see coming down  
8 the pike for your office in particular? Either  
9 additional opportunities or other things that you  
10 want to take on or work on?

11 MS. PAPPAS: Right now, I have got my hands  
12 full. What I really want to do is to get rid of the  
13 rest of the filing cabinets. That is an  
14 extraordinarily ambitious project. If anyone --  
15 really anyone -- wants to come down, I would really  
16 love you to come down and just take a tour of the  
17 office. We have got eighty-seven foreign countries.  
18 We have eighty-seven flags there. We have had  
19 eighty-seven foreign countries come in to look at  
20 the systems in this office.

21 I will tell you a funny story and I  
22 will go. We had a well-known finance minister from  
23 Europe come in. He came into the office and he  
24 said, "I want to see how you bid out the money." On

1 Wednesday night, we tell four hundred banks,  
2 "Tomorrow morning we have a million dollars." The  
3 next morning, within a twenty-minute period, all  
4 four hundred banks come online and they look at who  
5 is bidding what so they can see who is bidding what.

6 At the end of twenty minutes, the  
7 switch goes off. The money is wired to the highest  
8 bidder, who simultaneously wires us 110% collateral.

9 It is amazing. I mean it is just  
10 amazing to watch and watch how well it works, and it  
11 is all done in twenty minutes. It used to take four  
12 days where we would have to talk to everybody. Now  
13 we don't talk to anybody.

14 So this finance minister looks at it.  
15 He looks at me and he says, "Seriously? We don't  
16 want that in my country. We couldn't steal if we  
17 had that."

18 Thank you very much.

19 COMMISSIONER GAINER: I have just one more  
20 really quick thing. "A", I wonder if you are being  
21 recruited by Greece --

22 MS. PAPPAS: I tried that. It didn't work.

23 COMMISSIONER GAINER: My last question is  
24 about the impact of the tax sale legislation and

1 about the tax buyers moving the calendar up earlier.  
2 What do you think the impact is going to be on us?  
3 I understand the financial impact in the budget. It  
4 is \$30 million.

5 MS. PAPPAS: Terrible. You know what is  
6 most terrible about it? Forget about the revenue.  
7 People are going to get some pretty heavy-duty tax  
8 bills the next time. Don't you think people are  
9 entitled to have a longer period of time to pay  
10 their taxes? Seriously? Why are you moving this  
11 tax date up? For whom?

12 I don't want to tell you what I think.  
13 You should give people as long as possible to pay  
14 their taxes. Everybody who sits on this Board, who  
15 has constituents in their District, they should be  
16 given -- if they can't afford to pay, they should be  
17 given an extra nine months, okay? Or ten months, or  
18 whatever.

19 But to say, "You didn't pay. Now I'm  
20 going to send you to a tax sale." You are going to  
21 wreak havoc, not just on your revenues, but to  
22 people who literally don't have the money to pay.

23 If you don't believe me when I said  
24 that 20,000 people come downstairs, here is what



1 happens during the collection. An eighty-five-year-  
2 old senior citizen comes downstairs to the counter  
3 and she is crying. She is disoriented and says, "I  
4 can't afford to pay my taxes." She brings her  
5 prescription bills, her electric bill, her cable  
6 bill, all of her monthly things, her Social Security  
7 check. She lays it out. She really wants  
8 counseling services.

9                   If you push this date up, you're just  
10 going to have more people downstairs. When they  
11 come in, they don't do anything except complain  
12 about the fact that the bill was too high. That is  
13 all they come in for. Michael -- stand up. Come to  
14 the microphone.

15                   This is the guy on the counter. There  
16 is no small reason why he is out on the counter.  
17 Look how big he is. He comes in -- I want to tell  
18 you a wonderful story about this young man. I met  
19 this man in 1998. He was a janitor. His job was to  
20 clean the office. One day I was going up and down  
21 the back steps. He looked up at me, and he says,  
22 "Treas, do I have to be a janitor the rest of my  
23 life?" I said, "I will tell you what. I will make  
24 you a deal." I gave him some disks. I said, "You

1 learn how to do Word Perfect and I will hire you."  
2 That kid came back. He passed the test. He was  
3 making \$28,000 in 1998. His name is Michael Lee.  
4 He is one of my star pupils. He is making \$90,000  
5 in this budget. He is my first floor go-to guy  
6 after my two chiefs. That is the guy that everybody  
7 has to deal with.

8 I am telling you, nobody wants to mess  
9 with Michael Lee. Right, Michael?

10 MR. LEE: You said it.

11 COMMISSIONER GAINER: A man of few words.

12 One last question. There was an  
13 announcement on the City side about finding hidden  
14 money and lost money because of a new investment  
15 strategy and not leaving cash on hand longer. Is  
16 that something that you have already taken care of,  
17 as far as what we are investing our funds in? I  
18 couldn't tell --

19 MS. PAPPAS: We are on an investment policy  
20 that gets reviewed every three months. There is  
21 just not another dime down there.

22 The only other dime down there that  
23 you would see out of us is this new revenue or if  
24 somebody came to their senses on the date of the tax

1 sale, on the date.

2 COMMISSIONER GAINER: Firstly, that is not  
3 up to us. That is a Springfield decision. I agree.

4 MS. PAPPAS: On the date, because it is the  
5 taxpayers that will make off big time on it.

6 COMMISSIONER GAINER: Thanks.

7 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Steele.

8 COMMISSIONER STEELE: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman, and hello, Madam Treasurer.

10 MS. PAPPAS: How are you?

11 COMMISSIONER STEELE: I am fantastic.  
12 Great to see you and the staff here. Mr. Fratto has  
13 come up and gave me some background on what you have  
14 asked him to do, and he has given me some briefing  
15 on some of the things that you are doing in your  
16 office. So he and his team players have dumped a  
17 lot of information in my office, in Spanish, Polish,  
18 so we are getting it out to the public from my  
19 office. I am glad you are making sure the  
20 information is readable in all of the communities,  
21 and the ethnicities around this County.

22 MS. PAPPAS: I forgot to mention something.  
23 The lady, Kasia, who owns Kasia's Deli -- you passed  
24 a resolution for Kasia's Deli, her eightieth

1 birthday, which is Friday. She is like a  
2 centrifugal force in the Polish community. On this  
3 Friday, she is being given an award. She is the new  
4 Polish Cook County honorary Deputy Treasurer.

5 This Friday, if you are around at five  
6 o'clock, we are bestowing that award on her. She  
7 came here twenty years ago with ten dollars in her  
8 pocket. She is now supplying pierogis to every  
9 Costco in the United States. Her factory is on the  
10 west side.

11 COMMISSIONER STEELE: We had her pierogis  
12 here, too. They brought them here. They were good.

13 MS. PAPPAS: She is amazing.

14 COMMISSIONER STEELE: Back to my question,  
15 Madam Treasurer. Forget the rest of these guys,  
16 Madam Treasurer. I would like to congratulate you.  
17 You have been the number one publicly-elected  
18 official, outside of the Commissioners themselves,  
19 to be in compliance every year -- every year you met  
20 your compliance with the President's Office on  
21 budget, cutting your staff, adding more technology  
22 to your staff. You have been number one every year,  
23 and let me congratulate you on that.

24 MS. PAPPAS: Thanks.

1           COMMISSIONER STEELE: It is not easy to cut  
2 every year and try to consolidate as much as you can  
3 to keep yourself moving in the right direction, but  
4 you have done it. You put new resources in your  
5 office that have really made you more effective and  
6 more responsible to the public's dollars that you  
7 take care of.

8           Thank you so much for what you are  
9 doing.

10           MS. PAPPAS: I just want to tell you  
11 something. If you look really closely at my budget,  
12 since I have been around budgeting for a while, I  
13 say that there are eighty-nine positions -- there is  
14 seventeen open positions. Do you understand that?  
15 But it is on 534. So the money just stays there.

16           The reason I keep them and I keep them  
17 open is because at some point in what I may do next,  
18 I may need new programmers. About half of the  
19 people in my office now are in the IT department.  
20 Half of the people in my office are in the IT  
21 department. As you know, we gave back one-third of  
22 our space to the County.

23           COMMISSIONER STEELE: A couple of other  
24 things, Madam Treasurer, and I will be done.

1                   There is a new process -- I was just  
2   in Phoenix, Arizona, about two weeks ago with the  
3   National Association of Counties. We had a meeting  
4   on finance. There is a new tool that is out for  
5   your office to take advantage of that allows you to  
6   invest money on a daily basis, as much as you like,  
7   with an eight percent return -- eight percent return  
8   on those dollars. You can put as much in or take  
9   out on any individual debt.

10                   I want to make that information  
11   available to you --

12                   MS. PAPPAS: We will come and get it.

13                   COMMISSIONER STEELE: That is for your  
14   office to us. That is an excellent tool that the  
15   National Association of Counties has developed and  
16   put together for counties like ours. We are the  
17   number one county participating in NaCO, the  
18   largest. Not the number one, but the largest of all  
19   counties.

20                   MS. PAPPAS: I will take a look at that.

21                   COMMISSIONER STEELE: You can set the mark  
22   on however you want to take advantage of this  
23   program. I wanted to share that information with  
24   you and your staff.

1 MS. PAPPAS: I will look at that.

2 COMMISSIONER STEELE: One other thing that  
3 you kind of shared about Mr. Lee. I want you to  
4 know that Mr. Lee is very special to me. He is  
5 married to my goddaughter.

6 MS. PAPPAS: Is he really?

7 COMMISSIONER STEELE: Yes. He is married  
8 to my goddaughter.

9 MS. PAPPAS: I love Mr. Lee. He is my star  
10 pupil.

11 COMMISSIONER STEELE: She didn't know the  
12 salary, what that is. I am telling her tonight.  
13 You have been keeping secrets, man. Those two  
14 babies will find out that daddy got some Christmas  
15 money.

16 He is a wonderful guy. I am so glad  
17 you brought him. You helped to raise his ability to  
18 do more for your office. Again, he represents you  
19 very well in public.

20 Thank you for allowing some of our  
21 young folks to do something.

22 Tell me a little bit about diversity  
23 in your office.

24 MS. PAPPAS: We keep it about where it is

1     supposed to be. It is about thirty-three percent  
2     minority. We actually, because now we are like half  
3     IT, our Asian population just shot up in there.

4                     You know, it is kind of interesting.  
5     I used to walk into my office and people would talk  
6     to me. I walk in there now, nobody talks to me.  
7     They don't even talk to each other. Especially if I  
8     go into the IT department, which is the entire  
9     second floor that we have left.

10                    I had a guy come to me in the IT  
11     department. He said, "May I have another screen?"  
12     This guy has three screens in front of him. You  
13     ought to come down and see it.

14                    The IT department, they don't want to  
15     be disturbed.

16                    COMMISSIONER STEELE: He is like the Board  
17     of Trade by himself.

18                    MS. PAPPAS: They don't talk to each other.  
19     They don't talk to me. I walk in there -- because  
20     they are programming. It is a completely different  
21     mindset than when I came. When I came there were  
22     two hundred electronic typewriters down there. It  
23     is just a new age.

24                    I wouldn't have thought that this year



1 171,000 people are going to use this phone,  
2 downloading stuff.

3 COMMISSIONER STEELE: That is because you  
4 have the number one CIO in government in your  
5 office. The guy that runs your information  
6 department pushes people to do that. Steve is one  
7 of those guys who make things happen.

8 MS. PAPPAS: Steve Edimonson is the best --  
9 stand up, Steve. He has made all of these  
10 electronics --

11 COMMISSIONER STEELE: We used to know him  
12 well around here.

13 MS. PAPPAS: Steve is a great person to  
14 have because his personality is so much less  
15 volatile than mine.

16 COMMISSIONER STEELE: You couldn't be more  
17 truthful about that. Steve is so docile in his  
18 personality. He used to call me all the time. He  
19 will talk to anybody. He talked to a rock before; a  
20 rock that is just sitting there.

21 Steve is a wonderful guy. Thank you,  
22 Steve. You and I talked about some issues last  
23 week.

24 MS. PAPPAS: He knows everything about the

1 mainframe because he was head of it under Stroger;  
2 if you want to ask him anything.

3 COMMISSIONER STEELE: For those who don't  
4 know, he has a background in ERP as well. Strong  
5 leadership background because he involved the State  
6 of Ohio's ERP program. He has a lot of background  
7 in ERP.

8 Again, I am done with it. Thank you,  
9 Mr. Chair, for allowing me to ask these questions.

10 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Madam Treasurer, thank you  
11 again for your leadership.

12 MS. PAPPAS: If you want to see anything  
13 about the office, I will be happy to share it.

14 CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioner Schneider.

15 COMMISSIONER SCHNEIDER: Just real quick.  
16 Thank you for the expression of condolences for my  
17 brother; I appreciate that.

18 I think you are doing a great job. If  
19 many other departments in this County ran the way  
20 the Treasurer's Department is run -- every year you  
21 amaze me. You mentioned this gentleman in the back.  
22 The things you are doing in your office are  
23 remarkable.

24 The way you have used technology to

1     reduce headcount over the years -- we have been  
2     looking for it in other departments and we never see  
3     it. They always say it is coming, and it never  
4     happens. In your department and in the Treasurer's  
5     Office, it happens.

6                     I commend you for everything you do.  
7     Thank you.

8                     MS. PAPPAS: Thank you. You know what? I  
9     got to tell you -- when I wrote the County the  
10    letter -- I wrote two letters this year. I wrote a  
11    letter that said, "Here" -- actually I wrote the  
12    letter. Don't invite me to any meetings about  
13    meetings. I am sure you all got that.

14                    COMMISSIONER STEELE: I remember that one.

15                    MS. PAPPAS: I hate the meetings.

16                    When I was able to give the space  
17    back, it was like a relief that I got rid of it. It  
18    is like dead weight. It was like -- go.

19                    I hope -- as we move forward, we are  
20    about to give you the entire basement back. That is  
21    amazing. You are going to have the whole basement.

22                    CHAIRMAN DALEY: Vice-Chair Sims.

23                    COMMISSIONER SIMS: Maria -- I can call you  
24    that because you used to be my seatmate.

1                   It is truly an honor to see where you  
2   have taken this office. When you were here, we were  
3   talking about when you first went down to the  
4   Treasurer's Office and there was money still on the  
5   floor, and how you cleaned that office. That office  
6   has come a long way.

7                   MS. PAPPAS: Thanks.

8                   COMMISSIONER SIMS: That was under your  
9   leadership. Some of the people, I think if they  
10  were here when you were here, budget time was  
11  really, really a time when you got to really do all  
12  of those amendments in the book. We were here until  
13  late hours at night. When you say most everybody  
14  should have been here, they would probably say we  
15  are glad Maria is where she is now because she would  
16  keep us here.

17                  But you have truly, truly turned that  
18  office around. Coming from this seat, being the  
19  Treasurer, I think being here also made it easy for  
20  you to know exactly what you needed to do in order  
21  to turn that office around.

22                  Thank you.

23                  CHAIRMAN DALEY: Thank you again.

24                  MS. PAPPAS: Thank you.

1                   CHAIRMAN DALEY: Commissioners, I just want  
2   you to know that the amendment process was  
3   tentatively due for Friday. In all likelihood, they  
4   will be pushed back as well as the budget passage.  
5   Originally it was scheduled for the thirteenth. I  
6   believe it will be pushed back to the week of the  
7   seventeenth or the eighteenth. The seventeenth is a  
8   board meeting.

9                   I will find out this week and then  
10   advise when the amendments will be due. I would  
11   think the amendments will be pushed back to the week  
12   of the thirteenth, and hopefully the passage will be  
13   the following week.

14                  This Committee will stand in recess to  
15   the hour of 9:00 a.m. tomorrow, when we will have a  
16   public hearing.