

FY 2019 – RECORDER OF DEEDS – BUDGET REMARKS

I want to start by saying I am proud of the fiscal state in which I will leave the Recorder's Office in December. We ALWAYS bring in much more revenue than we require to operate. We are one of the largest revenue generators per-FTE, and the public land record we maintain is one of the most important reasons for the economic success of this great country.

When I took over in 2012, we had almost 200 employees. We now have 123 FTEs on the payroll.

When I took over in 2012, the percentage of documents submitted electronically was 22%; it is now almost 55%. That means we can process these records more efficiently AND more accurately.

We have even found room to plan for the future of government administration, which will be powered by blockchain database technology. Our work in this area has earned positive coverage for Cook County across the world, and we are showing others how to make government more efficient, and how to actually be an innovator in technology instead of just a customer.

At the request of the title industry and other real estate industry participants, we have joined the nationwide effort to reform our fee structure from one that is based on individual attributes of each document submitted (such as number of pages), to what is called a "Predictable Fee" or "Flat Fee" schedule. This allows homebuyers and those that have to prepare the complicated paperwork for closing on a house to know in advance how much it will cost to record each type of document. This will reduce the need for our office to spend time counting pages, and performing case management or costly refunds when a check is mailed and is \$2 short.

We expect this flat fee schedule to be implemented around the end of the 1st Quarter of 2019, and this will increase our revenue by millions of dollars.

We also plan to implement a Research (or Special Services) Department and Research Fee, to assist those customers who prefer not to visit our office, but would like to request us to perform document searches for them. Other counties offer this service. Be mindful that this is only for those customers who do not

want to come to our office, or are unable due to being out of state. Our staff will ALWAYS assist in-person customers for free to locate their documents.

In closing, some highlights:

- We are on track to meet our FY18 Revenue Predictions by year's end
- We have requested a FY19 Budget that is 2.18% less than last year.
- This is the third year in a row we have decreased expenditures, and we would have done so every year if not for collective bargaining salary adjustments to which we had no control.
- We have always been a great partner in reducing costs, and we have already cut very close to the bone in year's past
- Our new fee structure and policies will ensure that we continue to operate in the fiscally-responsible manner we always have