



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **CELEBRATING THE 191ST ANNIVERSARY OF COOK COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, Cook County was founded by an act of the Illinois legislature on January 15, 1831, and

**WHEREAS**, originally part of the commonwealth of Virginia, the area which comprises modern day Cook County was also part of the Northwest Territory and then a part of 10 separate counties as the territory was formed into states, including Illinois. The ten counties are Knox (1790), St. Clair (1801), Madison (1812), Edwards (1814), Crawford (1816), Clark (1819), Pike (1819), Fulton (1823), Peoria (1825), Putnam (1826), and

**WHEREAS**, when formed in 1831, Cook County's original boundaries included all of McHenry, Lake, DuPage and parts of Kane and Will. The other counties were separately created between 1836 and 1839, leading to Cook County's current boundaries, and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County was named for Daniel Pope Cook (1794 - October 16, 1827). Originally from Kentucky, Cook moved to Illinois and became a lawyer, newspaper publisher, politician and one of the early advocates of statehood for Illinois. An anti-slavery advocate, he was the state's first Attorney General, and then congressman. Cook County, Illinois is named after him. It is believed Cook never visited the area which would be named in his honor, and

**WHEREAS**, the first Cook County Board of Commissioners was elected on March 7, 1831, taking office and holding their first meeting the following day. Three commissioners-Gholson Kercheval, Samuel Miller and James Walker convened a meeting at Fort Dearborn on the Chicago Settlement lakeshore, in the magazine (powder room). The first County Board meeting would last for two days, and

**WHEREAS**, also elected on March 7 were James Kinsey, Sheriff and John K. Clark, Coroner; William See, County Clerk, Archibald Clybourn, County Treasurer were appointed March 8 and Jededah Wooley was recommended as County Surveyor to the Governor and Legislature, and

**WHEREAS**, one of the first acts of the new board was approval of a resolution asking Illinois for 10 acres of land including the corner of Clark and Randolph for the location of a new County Courthouse. This building would be completed in 1835 and included a small stockade which served as the first County Jail and later added an Almshouse which was the forerunner of the County Hospital, and

**WHEREAS**, the official population of Cook County at the time of its founding was 100 (a count of settlers, not including Native Americans forcibly removed from the local area). The Chicago settlement (Chicago was not incorporated as a town until 1833) had 50 to 60 residents, and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County would become a leader in growing the region, the state and the nation; blazing trails in the fields of transportation, food processing, public health, education, juvenile justice, art and music. The dynamic and diverse county population would swell the county population to 350,000 in 1870, over 1.1 million 20 years later and 1.8 million at the turn of the 20th Century. By 1910, Cook County had 2.4 million residents, surpassing three million residents by 1920. By 1940, Cook County grew to four million residents. In 1960, Cook County population totaled 5.1 million, and

**WHEREAS**, the history of Cook County Government contributed directly to the development of the region and the State of Illinois, with many projects and initiatives of several County departments directly impacting the economic and political direction of the region for years to come, and

**WHEREAS**, as Cook County approaches its 200th anniversary-and having developed a unique and extensive collection of public documents and records that contain historical significance-establishing an initiative to archive historically significant documents and records is imperative to County Government history; and

**WHEREAS**, fundamental to capturing the history of Cook County is a thorough and complete documentation of the history of Cook County Government; and

**WHEREAS**, in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget, the Board of Commissioners created a County Historic Archives and Records Office (CARO) to affirmatively coordinate efforts across all departments and with all officials to determine the historical value of various county documents and records and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding access and promotion of the County's history; and

**WHEREAS**, in the Fiscal Year 2021, the first full year that Cook County had its inaugural Manager of Archives leading CARO, the department, along with Records Management, presented to the Board of Commissioners the Cook County Compliance and Archives Ordinance governing County documents, which was passed, establishing policies and protocols to ensure the preservation of Cook County's historically significant materials, and

**WHEREAS**, also in 2021, under the leadership of the Manager of Archives, the Cook County Historic and Records Archives Office (CARO) continued the education and training of its staff, developed partnerships with both County and external stakeholders, engaged experts in the field of archives, took part in events that highlighted the work and mission of the unit, discovered, assessed, and planned regarding County holdings with an eye for the future, and

**WHEREAS**, looking forward to Cook County's Bicentennial in 2031, and building upon the previous years' work, CARO seeks to establish a Cook County Archives Center to continue to manage, promote, document, and preserve said materials, activate its collections; and to engage exploratory initiatives to establish sustainable external fiscal support through the development of a foundation to support the ongoing growth of CARO, and

**WHEREAS**, in the coming months, finalists will be announced for the Flag 2021 initiative led by Commissioner Britton and the Flag 2021 Advisory Panel, that sought to find a New Flag for a New Century for Cook County Government, which has endured the Covid-19 pandemic and brought together student designers and design mentors from throughout Cook County, and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President and the members of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County does hereby celebrate the 191st anniversary of the founding of Cook County, Illinois; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President and the members of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County are contributing to the preservation of Cook County Government; and encourages all County agencies under all elected and appointed officials to work closely with the Manager of Archives and the Cook County Historic Archives and Records Office (CARO) to preserve the history of their offices, to include all formats of physical and electronic documents, photographs, maps, films, other media and artifacts towards that purpose.