



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 20-0557, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING MARTHA MARTINEZ UPON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

WHEREAS, Cook County Chief Administrative Officer Martha Martinez will be retiring from Cook County Government on December 31, 2019 after a storied, accomplished and diverse 34-year career of serving the residents of Cook County, Illinois, as a key government official; and

WHEREAS, throughout her long and illustrious tenure with Cook County, Martha has gained a reputation as a person who is willing to tackle hard challenges, work as a team player, create long-term and sustainable solutions to County issues and to do so with a cheery disposition supported by her determination to always do things right; and

WHEREAS, a lifelong resident of Cook County, Martha Ann Byrnes was born at Jackson Park Hospital on Chicago's South Side. Growing up, Martha was a member of a very active family in the Chicago Fire Department, other government agencies, the Beverly community, St. Barnabas Parish and the 19th Ward Democratic Organization; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Mother McAuley High School, Martha began her own public service career with a summer position in the Treasurer's Office in the summer of 1981; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Northern Illinois University, Martha began her full-time career at Cook County in 1986 as a Training Coordinator in the Department of Personnel. Martha's new role developed her approaches to improving customer service for County residents. It also happened to be where she would meet her future husband Luis Martinez; and

WHEREAS, with the passage of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, Cook County turned to Martha to become the County's first Disability Affairs Coordinator in 1990, a position created in the office of Chief Administrative Officer William Doyle; and

WHEREAS, in 1991 under new Chief Administrative Officer Albert Pritchett, Martha would work closely with the wide variety of departments and their directors which comprised the Bureau of Administration. Judicial Advisory Council, technology issues, Highways and Transportation, rabies vaccinations and pet health, Law Library patrons and concern for those needing our adoption services or Medical Examiner services would occupy her agenda; and

WHEREAS, because her organization skills and attention to detail were well known, Martha was given additional responsibilities representing Cook County on the Local Records Commission, the home rehabilitation project Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago, the quasi-governmental human services agency Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County (CEDA) and as coordinator of annual food drives and charity campaign efforts; and

WHEREAS, President Richard J. Phelan, County Finance Chairman John H. Stroger, Jr. and Cook County were the hosts of the annual conference of the National Association of Counties (NACo) in 1993, and turned to Martha to organize and lead the wide variety of events and activities for conference attendees and their families; and

WHEREAS, in 2006 NACo turned to Cook County once again to host the conference after the designated host city backed out. Martha was appointed the Conference Coordinator for what is still regarded by NACo leadership and membership as the best annual conference to this day; and

WHEREAS, in 1995 Chicago and Cook County experienced one of the deadliest heat waves in American History. A crisis was quickly developing at the Medical Examiner's Office as hundreds of bodies were brought there to determine cause of death. Martha worked closely with Medical Examiner leadership, vendors and others to keep operations running as smoothly as possible while a political firestorm raged about; and

WHEREAS, Martha's performance during that crisis, as well as her continuing work with County departments on day to day issues and the ongoing relationship with NACo would be ultimately rewarded in 2014, when Martha was appointed the County's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), a position she holds with distinction ever since; and,

WHEREAS, Martha's talents and can-do attitude have shown themselves throughout her tenure in the CAO office, notably when she oversaw major reforms at and the overhaul of the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office in 2012 and was appointed the Interim Bureau Chief of Human Resources in 2015; and

WHEREAS, as the CAO, Martha oversaw 15 Departments, a \$189.9 million budget and 637 employees including the Departments of Emergency Management and Regional Security, Transportation and Highways, Medical Examiner, Environment and Sustainability, Adoption and Child Custody Advocacy, Child Support Compliance Enforcement, Records Management, Animal and Rabies Control, Law Library, Printing and Graphics Services, Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Research Operations and Innovation; and

WHEREAS, among Martha's many accomplishments, Martha launched the County's Shared Fleet program and created a Records Management Division; and

WHEREAS, beyond the work accomplishments and professional relationships, Martha Martinez leaves everyone she meets a better person for having known her. Many of her co-workers do not consider themselves as mere colleagues, but also friends who have been there for her in times of need and for whom Martha was there in times of tragedy: and

WHEREAS, Martha Martinez is truly what it means to be a County employee-someone with care and concern for the people who need our services and for the people who provide them. Her desire to be a good and successful public servant has its roots in her lifelong residency, her family, her community; and

WHEREAS, having honorably served the residents of Cook County for 34 years, Martha Martinez has earned a break. Since her last vacation was "taking her now college-aged children to Disney World when they were in elementary school," hopefully, Martha will take a well-earned vacation; and

WHEREAS, the President, Cook County Board of Commissioners, Cook County staff and all who know Martha wish her well as she now has more time to spend with her husband Luis and her three children, Michael, Madeleine and Gabrielle.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Members of the Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the 5.2 million Cook County residents and more than 22,000 employees of Cook County, congratulate Martha Martinez upon the occasion of her retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to Martha Martinez.