



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

REQUESTING A MEETING OF THE COOK COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND REGIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND REGIONAL SECURITY

WHEREAS, The Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security (“EMRS”) enhances the safety and security of Cook County and its residents by working to build capacity to prevent, protect against, mitigate the effects of, respond to, and recover from all incidents, both human-caused and natural. EMRS is responsible for coordinating the County’s response to a large-scale emergency or disaster. On a day-to-day basis, EMRS supports municipalities by providing guidance and coordinating resources as needed, including to suburban law enforcement partners; and

WHEREAS, EMRS is not a law enforcement entity, the Department has limited authority and ability to assist with responding to violence and crime specifically. If local law enforcement requests assistance from EMRS, it would typically be in the form of equipment requests such as light towers and jersey barriers. In a rapidly evolving and complex incident, such as an active shooter scenario, local law enforcement may request the use of EMRS’ Unified Command Post/Vehicle, which is equipped with technology allowing for enhanced incident coordination; and

WHEREAS, EMRS maintains strong relationships with municipal law enforcement partners, which may potentially be leveraged to support violence prevention programs. Additionally, EMRS has also served as the County fiscal agent of Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program funds, which provides federal funding for criminal justice projects, including violence prevention programs. Over the past several years, EMRS made a concerted effort to increase the awards to community-based organizations working with justice-impacted populations, including a pre-apprentice carpentry program with the Chicagoland Prison Outreach, reentry programming with the Haymarket Center, and Leave No Veterans Behind; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2022, former Executive Director William “Bill” Barnes resigned from his position as Executive Director of EMRS. Subsequently, on July 1, 2022, President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, Toni Preckwinkle, appointed Theodore “Ted” Berger as the new Executive Director of the Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security; and

WHEREAS, Theodore Berger returns to EMRS where he was previously Chief Deputy Director from 2017-2021, serving as Deputy Incident Commander for the County’s COVID-19 unified command response directly managing emergency operations center activation with over 200 personnel. During his tenure with EMRS, Theodore Berger also served a nine-month assignment as interim Deputy Chief of Staff to the President’s Office providing intergovernmental and operational coordination between six bureaus and 34 departments; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Cook County Emergency Management and Regional Security Committee convene a meeting to introduce new Executive Director, Theodore Berger and discuss the new leadership of EMRS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, EMRS will provide an overall update relative to its recent operations, programs, and initiatives, specifically relative to Cook County’s COVID-19 vaccination planning.