



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 29, 2013

Press Contact:

Jalyne R. Strong

(312) 603-5690

[jrstrong@cookcountycourt.com](mailto:jrstrong@cookcountycourt.com)

**CLERK BROWN URGES COUNTY BOARD TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO ELIMINATE CARBON PAPER; AND TO HELP COLLECT \$11.2 MILLION OWED BY THE CITY**

**(CHICAGO, October 28, 2013)** At her budget review before the Cook County Board of Commissioners yesterday, Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, urged the commissioners to seriously consider how some of the County Board's budgetary decisions negatively impact the operations of the Office of the Clerk of Court.

Clerk Brown submitted her 2014 Budget Presentation, and addressing the Commissioners, she raised five areas of great concern, which, if left unresolved by the County Board, could continue to impede access to justice for the citizens of Cook County. In addition, Clerk Brown elaborated on each issue in a letter to President Preckwinkle and the Commissioners.

The five concerns are:

- 1. The use of carbon paper by the Clerk of Court is made necessary because budget restraints limit staffing in the County's Print Shop as well as the availability of carbonized paper for required court forms. Clerk Brown asked the Board to ensure that the County's Print Shop is properly staffed and stocked with carbonized-form paper in order to help the Clerk of Court convert all court forms to carbonized forms by 2014.**
2. A County Board resolution prevents the Clerk of Court and other elected officials from hiring and firing employees, thus interfering with sufficient staffing of critical areas and the smooth running of day-to-day operations. Clerk Brown recommended that the County Board rescind the resolution or allow the Clerk of Court to hire and fire in accordance with state statute and case law.
3. Legislation that permits Administrative Hearings rather than court hearings may have a deleterious effect on road safety as well as reduces revenue to the County. Clerk Brown strongly suggested that Cook County lobbyists oppose legislation that has a negative financial impact on the County and the courts.
- 4. The City of Chicago is the County's largest scofflaw, owing \$11.2 million in court costs. Clerk Brown revealed that the City of Chicago is not paying its court filing fees, and asked for the County Board's help in collecting the fines owed, even if it requires a lawsuit.**
5. The Clerk of Court must run dual systems, paper and electronic, until the Illinois Supreme Court allows the electronic record to replace the paper record and be the official court record. Clerk Brown

wants the County Board to work with the Clerk of Court and the judiciary to fulfill the Illinois Supreme Court requirements of providing electronic access to the judiciary, attorneys and litigants, in order to make the electronic record the official record by the first quarter of 2015. Clerk Brown presented PowerPoint slides depicting the type of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Courtroom technology that would help the Circuit Court of Cook County comply with the requirements. Clerk Brown implored the commissioners to assist her in her efforts to rectify the problems resulting from these areas of concern. She emphasized the need for their cooperation and their approval of sufficient funding for the Office of the Clerk of Court.

“Without a change in these areas and assistance by the County Board, these matters will get worse before they get better,” Clerk Brown warned in her letter.