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COPY

**JOURNAL of the PROCEEDINGS
of the
CITY COUNCIL
of the
CITY of CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

Inaugural Meeting -- Monday, May 21, 2007

at 12:00 Noon

(Council Chambers -- City Hall -- Chicago, Illinois)

OFFICIAL RECORD

RICHARD M. DALEY
Mayor

MIGUEL DEL VALLE
City Clerk

Attendance At Meeting.

Present -- The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor, and Aldermen Flores, Fioretti, Dowell, Preckwinkle, Hairston, Lyle, Jackson, Harris, Beale, Pope, Balcer, Cárdenas, Olivo, Burke, Foulkes, Thompson, Thomas, Lane, Rugai, Cochran, Brookins, Muñoz, Zalewski, Dixon, Solis, Ocasio, Burnett, E. Smith, Carothers, Reboyras, Suarez, Waguespack, Mell, Austin, Colón, Banks, Mitts, Allen, Laurino, O'Connor, Doherty, Reilly, Daley, Tunney, Levar, Shiller, Schulter, M. Smith, Moore, Stone.

Absent -- None.

MUSICAL PRELUDE.

The Chicago Youth Symphony String Quartet performed the musical prelude.

INTRODUCTION OF JUDGES.

The following judges officiating at the ceremony were introduced and took their places on the rostrums:

The Honorable Timothy C. Evans,
Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County;

The Honorable David Delgado,
Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County; and

The Honorable Shelli Williams-Hayes,
Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

INTRODUCTION OF 2007 CITY COUNCIL.

Each of the members of the 2007 City Council of Chicago were introduced as they entered the chambers.

INTRODUCTION OF CITY OFFICERS.

The Honorable Stephanie D. Neely, Treasurer of the City of Chicago and The Honorable Miguel del Valle, City Clerk of the City of Chicago, were introduced and took their places on the Clerk's rostrum.

The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago, was introduced and took his place on the Mayor's rostrum.

PRESENCE OF SPECIAL GUESTS.

The following special guests were in attendance:

The Honorable Patrick Quinn, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Illinois;

The Honorable Jesse White, Secretary of State of the State of Illinois;

The Honorable Daniel Hynes, Comptroller of the State of Illinois;

The Honorable Alexi Giannoulias, Treasurer of the State of Illinois;

The Honorable Emil Jones, Jr., President of the Illinois Senate;

The Honorable David Orr, County Clerk of Cook County;

The Honorable Maria Pappas, Treasurer of Cook County;

The Honorable Tom Dart, Sheriff of Cook County;

The Honorable Eugene Moore, Recorder of Deeds of Cook County;

The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County;

The Honorable Deborah Sims, Commissioner of the 5th District of Cook County;

The Honorable John P. Daley, Commissioner of the 11th District of Cook County;

The Honorable Lawrence Suffredin, Commissioner of the 13th District of Cook County;

The Honorable Elizabeth Ann Doody Gorman, Commissioner of the 17th District of Cook County;

The Honorable Joseph Berrios, Commissioner of the Cook County Board of Review;

The Honorable Brendan Houlihan, Commissioner of the Cook County Board of Review;

The Honorable Patricia Maza-Pittsford, Dean of Chicago's Consular Corps.;

Ms. Carole Brown, Chairman of the Chicago Transit Authority Board;

Mr. Arne Duncan, Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools;

Mr. Ron Huberman, President of the Chicago Transit Authority;

Ms. Sharon Gist-Gilliam, Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Housing Authority;

Mr. Timothy Mitchell, General Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Park District;

Mr. Martin Nesbitt, Chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority Board;

Ms. Maria Saldana, President of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners;

Mr. James Tyree, Chairman of the City Colleges of Chicago Board of Trustees;

Dr. Wayne Watson, Chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago; and

Mr. Rufus Williams, President of the Chicago Board of Education.

Also in attendance were members of the Mayor's cabinet and the following dignitaries:

The Honorable Ann M. Burke, Supreme Court Justice of the 1st District of Illinois;

The Honorable Jesse Jackson, Jr., Congressman of the 2nd District of Illinois; and

The Honorable Luis Gutierrez, Congressman of the 4th District of Illinois.

Call To Order.

On Monday, May 21, 2007, at 12:00 Noon, The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor, called the City Council to order.

Posting Of The Colors.

Cadets from the Chicago Military Academy -- Bronzeville posted the colors. Upon posting of the colors, members of the Brass Ambassadors of the Navy Band -- Great Lakes performed the musical selection "The National Emblem March", by EE. Bagley.

Pledge Of Allegiance.

Miss Whitney Smith, Chicago Park District Junior Citizen of the Year, led the City Council and assembled guests in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

NATIONAL ANTHEM.

Ms. Elizabeth Norman, Lyric Coloratura Soprano, led the City Council and assembled guests in singing the National Anthem.

Invocation.

His Eminence Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, opened the meeting with prayer.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO
THE HONORABLE MIGUEL DEL VALLE
AS CITY CLERK OF CHICAGO.

The Honorable David Delgado, Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, administered the Oath of Office prescribed by statute to The Honorable Miguel del Valle as City Clerk of the City of Chicago, which oath was subscribed to by City Clerk del Valle and filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

BLESSING.

Ms. Asayo Horibe, President of the Buddhist Council of the Midwest, delivered the blessing.

Placed On File -- STATEMENTS OF RETURNS AND PROCLAMATIONS
OF RESULTS CONCERNING ELECTION OF MAYOR,
CITY CLERK, CITY TREASURER AND ALDERMEN.

The Honorable Miguel del Valle, City Clerk, thereupon presented for the record the following communications confirming the election of the Mayor, City Clerk, City Treasurer and Aldermen:

March 21, 2007

Honorable Miguel del Valle
City Clerk of the City of Chicago
Room 107 -- City Hall
121 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear Clerk del Valle,

On March 20, 2007 we received a signed proclamation from Chairman Langdon D. Neal, Commissioner Richard A. Cowen and Commissioner Marisel A. Hernandez

of the Board of Election Commissioners, City of Chicago, indicating the statement of returns and proclamation of results of the February 27, 2007 Municipal General Election for the City of Chicago. Listed below are those candidates who were elected to their respective offices at this election.

Office	Name
Mayor	Richard M. Daley
City Clerk	Miguel del Valle
City Treasurer	Stephanie D. Neely

Ward	Alderman
Ward 1	Manuel "Manny" Flores
Ward 4	Toni Preckwinkle
Ward 5	Leslie A. Hairston
Ward 6	Freddrenna M. Lyle
Ward 7	Sandi Jackson
Ward 8	Michelle A. Harris
Ward 9	Anthony A. Beale
Ward 10	John A. Pope
Ward 11	James A. Balcer
Ward 12	George Cárdenas
Ward 13	Frank J. Olivo
Ward 14	Edward M. Burke
Ward 17	Latasha R. Thomas

Ward	Alderman
Ward 19	Virginia A. Rugai
Ward 20	Willie B. Cochran
Ward 22	Ricardo Muñoz
Ward 23	Michael R. Zalewski
Ward 25	Daniel “Danny” Solis
Ward 26	Billy Ocasio
Ward 27	Walter Burnett, Jr.
Ward 28	Ed H. Smith
Ward 29	Isaac “Ike” Sims Carothers
Ward 30	Ariel E. Reboyras
Ward 31	Regner “Ray” Suarez
Ward 33	Richard F. Mell
Ward 34	Carrie M. Austin
Ward 36	William J. P. Banks
Ward 37	Emma M. Mitts
Ward 38	Thomas R. Allen
Ward 39	Margaret Laurino
Ward 40	Patrick J. O’Connor
Ward 41	Brian G. Doherty
Ward 42	Brendan Reilly
Ward 44	Tom Tunney
Ward 45	Patrick J. Levar

Ward	Alderman
Ward 46	Helen Shiller
Ward 47	Gene Schulter
Ward 48	Mary Ann Smith

On April 17, 2007 Supplementary Aldermanic Run-Off elections will be held in the following wards: 2, 3, 15, 16, 18, 21, 24, 32, 35, 43, 49 and 50.

If you have any questions or need any additional information please call.

Sincerely,

David Orr,
Cook County Clerk

By: (Signed) Clem Balanoff
Director of Elections

May 4, 2007

Honorable Miguel del Valle
City Clerk of the City of Chicago
Room 107 -- City Hall
121 North La Salle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Dear Clerk del Valle,

On May 3, 2007 we received a signed proclamation from Chairman Langdon D. Neal, Commissioner Richard A. Cowen and Commissioner Marisel A. Hernandez of the Board of Election Commissioners, City of Chicago, indicating the statement of returns and proclamation of results of the April 17, 2007 Supplementary

Aldermanic Elections for the City of Chicago. Listed below are those candidates who were elected to their respective offices at this election.

Ward	Alderman
Ward 2	Bob Fioretti
Ward 3	Pat Dowell
Ward 15	Toni L. Foulkes
Ward 16	Joann Thompson
Ward 18	Lona Lane
Ward 21	Howard B. Brookins, Jr.
Ward 24	Sharon Denise Dixon
Ward 32	Scott Waguespack
Ward 35	Rey Colón
Ward 43	Vi Daley
Ward 49	Joe Moore
Ward 50	Bernard L. Stone

If you have any questions or need any additional information please call.

Sincerely,

David Orr,
Cook County Clerk

By: (Signed) Clem Balanoff
Director of Elections

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO
ALDERMEN-ELECT.

The Honorable Miguel del Valle, City Clerk, administered the Oath of Office to the aldermen-elect.

Determination Of Quorum.

The Honorable Miguel del Valle, City Clerk, called the roll of members and it was found that there were present at that time: Aldermen Flores, Fioretti, Dowell, Preckwinkle, Hairston, Lyle, Jackson, Harris, Beale, Pope, Balcer, Cárdenas, Olivo, Burke, Foulkes, Thompson, Thomas, Lane, Rugai, Cochran, Brookins, Muñoz, Zalewski, Dixon, Solis, Ocasio, Burnett, E. Smith, Carothers, Reboyas, Suarez, Waguespack, Mell, Austin, Colón, Banks, Mitts, Allen, Laurino, O'Connor, Doherty, Reilly, Daley, Tunney, Levar, Shiller, Schulter, M. Smith, Moore, Stone -- 50.

Quorum present.

APPROVAL OF OFFICIAL BONDS FOR MAYOR,
CITY CLERK AND CITY TREASURER.

The Honorable Miguel del Valle, City Clerk, thereupon presented the official bond of The Honorable Richard M. Daley as Mayor of the City of Chicago, in the penal sum of \$500,000.00, with The Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, as surety, his official bond as City Clerk of the City of Chicago, in the penal sum of \$500,000.00, with The Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, as surety, and the official bond of The Honorable Stephanie D. Neely as Treasurer of the City of Chicago, in the penal sum of \$2,000,000.00, with The Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, as surety.

On motion of Alderman Burke, each of the bonds was *Approved* by a viva voce vote.

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE.

Dr. Arthur M. Brazier, Pastor of the Apostolic Church of God, offered a prayer for guidance.

PRESENTATION OF MUSICAL SELECTION.

Members of the Brass Ambassadors of the Navy Band -- Great Lakes, performed the song "God Bless America".

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO
THE HONORABLE STEPHANIE D. NEELY
AS TREASURER OF CHICAGO.

The Honorable Shelli Williams-Hayes, Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, administered the Oath of Office to The Honorable Stephanie D. Neely as Treasurer of the City of Chicago, which oath was subscribed to by Treasurer Neely and filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

PRAYER FOR PEACE.

Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid, Chairman of the Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago, offered a prayer for peace.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO
THE HONORABLE RICHARD M. DALEY
AS MAYOR OF CHICAGO.

The Honorable Timothy C. Evans, Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, administered the Oath of Office to The Honorable Richard M. Daley as Mayor of the City of Chicago, which oath was subscribed to by Mayor Daley and filed in the Office of the City Clerk.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
THE HONORABLE RICHARD M. DALEY, MAYOR.

The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor, thereupon addressed the City Council and assembled guests, as follows:

I am honored to stand before you today as I begin a new term as the Mayor of Chicago.

I am grateful that the people of Chicago have confidence in me to guide our city into the future and keep Chicago moving forward.

I want to thank my family -- my wife Maggie and our children Patrick, Elizabeth and Nora; our son-in-law Sean; our granddaughter Maggie; our grandson, Jack; and Kevin, who is always in our hearts. I also want to thank my brothers and sisters. Without the continued support of my entire family I would not be here today.

I want to congratulate our City Clerk, Miguel del Valle, and our City Treasurer, Stephanie Neely, as they begin their new terms. They are dedicated public servants, and I look forward to working with them in the years ahead.

I also want to congratulate all the members of the City Council -- especially the new members. We are all here to work for a better, stronger Chicago. I welcome your energy, your insights and your ideas.

Every single one of us is here today because we love our city and want to make it even better.

All of you are here because you care about your neighborhoods and want to make them even stronger.

Whatever differences we may have are overwhelmed by our shared responsibility for the future of Chicago. And I look forward to working with you to achieve our common goals.

Chicago is a great city today because we've had leaders of vision. But vision alone is not enough.

In Chicago, we don't just dream. We do.

Rebuilding our city after the Great Chicago Fire. Embracing the visionary plans of Daniel Burnham. Hosting the World's Columbian Exposition.

Chicago has made great progress because we've addressed our problems head-on in the basic American way: If something doesn't work, try new ideas and new approaches.

From improving our schools to reducing crime to improving quality of life and creating opportunity, we've built a record of progress that is recognized around the world.

I don't know of any city in the world where block clubs and community groups have been so involved in a city's progress.

I don't know of any city where the relationship between government and business is stronger or more beneficial.

We've set a tone of tolerance and worked to improve life for everyone, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or economic background.

And the people of Chicago have embraced our ideas and made them real.

Our teachers are working harder and our parents are taking greater responsibility for their children. Our students are taking their education more seriously. Our workers are helping us attract new businesses. And our residents are getting more involved to make their neighborhoods safer.

Now, with the support of the people of Chicago, we've embarked on a bold new vision for our city -- hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the summer of 2016. We're all proud that Chicago was selected to become the United States applicant city.

Our bid committee and the business community provided the plans, but it was the commitment and enthusiasm of people across our city and region that made the difference.

The United States Olympic Committee understood that the people of Chicago are its greatest strength.

And it was the promise of what the Games could do for all our people that convinced me to support this effort.

They would be a catalyst for transit improvements, more affordable housing and new facilities in our neighborhoods.

They would bring new businesses, jobs, revenue and other economic benefits that would help all our people.

And as we move forward on the international bid process, we'll make sure that all Chicagoans have a voice in the plan.

I believe deeply in the Olympic spirit -- that people from different backgrounds and ethnicities can come together to pursue their dreams.

Here in Chicago, we live that ideal every day. Here, people of every background live, work and play together. And out of our diversity comes our city's great strength.

Here, we welcome immigrants from other lands, as we have for generations.

Chicago remains a beacon of hope and opportunity for people around the world.

That's why our city continues to thrive, while many others are struggling.

Just last month, a Financial Times publication called Chicago the "City of the Future" in North America. That award was based on more than 60 criteria -- from infrastructure to human resources to quality of life. We can all be proud to live in a city with such promise for the future.

But we must make sure that all Chicagoans share in that promise.

And, in turn, the people of our city expect their leaders to continue working together. They want action to meet our challenges, not endless politics.

Just look at Washington, D.C. and state capitals around the nation -- never-ending debate and little action on the issues that matter to people.

We don't have that luxury in Chicago. As our challenges keep growing, there's too much at stake.

So I ask you to join me in making sure that Chicago remains a place where working men and women can pursue a brighter future for themselves and their children.

We must work together to end poverty and provide support to those who need it most -- the elderly, the poor and people with disabilities.

We cannot survive as a city -- or a country -- of haves and have-nots. All of us have a stake in Chicago and its future. We cannot leave anyone out of our progress.

As we look to the future, our hope for a better tomorrow starts with improving our schools and giving all our children the same chance to dream and grow and realize their potential.

As my friend Miguel del Valle has said many times, a good education is the great equalizer in our society, the pathway out of poverty.

Today, more than ever, a well-educated workforce is necessary to compete in the global economy and bring well-paid jobs to our city.

Chicago has led the nation in turning around a once broken system that failed our children in every way. Today, test scores -- especially at the elementary level -- are up, along with graduation rates.

Yet despite our progress, too many students drop out and too few go on to college. We still have too many troubled schools -- especially high schools. And among minority students, the performance gap between girls and boys is too wide.

We must apply all we have learned about improving schools to every classroom in the system so that every child is gaining, every child is learning and every child is reaching his or her full potential.

On behalf of our city, I reaffirm our shared commitment to improving learning in the classroom, and to teaching the basics of reading, science and math.

I also reaffirm our commitment to improving our neighborhood schools, which the majority of students attend.

If we are to compete in the global economy, we must continue to hire well-qualified teachers, especially in math and science. A good teacher is central to all classroom progress. Teachers are on the front line and deserve their share of the credit for the progress we've made.

We must keep recruiting more qualified principals, an effort that is already paying off.

And we must build on our groundbreaking language programs like Chinese and Arabic to prepare Chicago's children for global competition.

To provide the most up-to-date learning environments, we will continue to invest in building and renovating our schools.

But these steps -- as important as they are -- won't take our schools to the next level.

I believe it's vital that we spend more time educating our students -- starting early in life. The more they are involved in some type of educational activity, the better they will do in school.

Every child must have access to both pre-school and full-day kindergarten.

We must work toward a longer day in the classroom. Chicago has the shortest school day of any major school district in the nation.

We need even more after-school and summer programs.

And we must consider a longer school year for those who need it the most.

None of this will be easy. All of it will be expensive.

An extra hour of school each day would cost over \$300 Million more a year.

Our high schools, of course, continue to be a great challenge.

Test scores and graduation rates are up in many schools. More of our graduates are going to college, but too many students still drop out and too many others go through four years without learning enough to succeed in college or get a secure job.

Unless we continue to focus on those who under-perform from year to year, we will leave a generation of students behind -- and that's something we cannot do.

That's why we'll expand several of our initiatives in the years ahead.

Under Renaissance 2010, we will continue to re-create high schools or bring in new charter operators.

Many of these new schools are already setting records in terms of graduation rates, college enrollment, attendance and gains on test scores.

I share the concern of many parents who don't want their children's school closed for a year. So I've asked school leaders to keep students in their school, whenever possible, and bring in new principals and teachers over the summer.

With the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, this year we began to upgrade the curriculum and retrain teachers in 14 high schools -- all with college in mind. Two weeks ago, we added 11 more high schools to the program.

For young people eager to go straight into the workforce after graduation, we will create new career academies targeting private job sectors that offer industry certificates upon graduation. Health care, computers, and hospitality are three of the fields that are begging for motivated young workers.

We will also focus on those neighborhood high schools that still need our attention. We know what works -- from summer school for incoming freshmen and sophomores, to holding tutoring and study sessions and offering after-school clubs.

But if state government doesn't act to reform the way our state funds education, many of the steps we need to take to keep our schools moving forward will not be possible.

Once again, I appeal to our state leaders to accept the challenge and reform the system -- this session. It's time to put politics aside and work in a spirit of compromise.

I hope those in this chamber will join me in sending the strongest possible message to our representatives in Springfield that the State of Illinois needs to live up to its responsibility to all of our children.

While good schools are vital to our city's future, safe neighborhoods are vital to a good quality of life today.

Historic lows in the homicide and violent crime rates are a testament to the dedication of the hardworking men and women of the Chicago Police Department.

But unless we remain diligent in preventing and fighting violence in every neighborhood, we can easily fall behind.

We've come far in part because our police officers are better trained than ever and because the Department has adopted new tools and implemented new crime-fighting strategies throughout the city.

We've relied on the latest technology to create Targeted Response Units or TRU teams to disrupt and prevent crime from occurring in the first place. We'll continue to be innovative in our efforts.

We've installed hundreds of safety cameras in neighborhoods across the city. They deter crime and support beat policing.

The people of Chicago, along with our block clubs and community groups want more neighborhood cameras, and we'll purchase them.

They also want more police on the beat. I will challenge the new Chicago Police Superintendent to transfer even more officers from behind desks to street duty and to take other steps to achieve this goal.

At the same time, we must step up our efforts to get guns off our streets.

All of us were shocked by the recent murder of a courageous young Chicagoan, Blair Holt. Blair died in a senseless gang shooting, while protecting the life of a friend. Our hearts go out to his family, as all Chicago mourns his loss.

But that tragedy is compounded by the knowledge that Blair was the 27th public school student murdered this school year in Chicago. That is an outrage, and it demands a response.

As I've advocated for years, we must challenge the legislature to stand up to the gun lobby and ban assault weapons, .50-caliber rifles and large capacity ammunition clips.

We need to limit handgun purchases to one a month. We need a state law to license gun dealers. And we need a law requiring that all gun transfers be conducted through licensed dealers.

I know that every member of this Council joins me in demanding an end to the carnage. I look forward to working with you to bring that message to Springfield and Washington, D.C. -- loud and clear.

But unless our nation gets a better handle on the drug problem, our cities will continually fight an uphill battle against the drug-dealing gangs on our streets.

The true terrorists in America today are the drug kingpins who have become more sophisticated in their efforts to terrorize our communities and our children.

This year I will step up our efforts with the United States Attorney, the Illinois Attorney General and the Cook County State's Attorney to better fight these drug terrorists.

I will again push for updated strategies and more aggressive legal action against drug kingpins, their illegal assets and profits.

The people of Chicago must trust the police department to serve and protect them if we're to build on our successes of the last decade.

We're all deeply disturbed and angry over the incidents of misconduct that have occurred in recent months.

There must be no tolerance for police misconduct in Chicago.

I will ask our new Police Superintendent to pursue the personnel system announced last year that helps the department identify and intervene with problem officers.

I've asked a group of leading Chicagoans to find a new head for the Office of Professional Standards.

And we've submitted a proposal to create a new Department of Professional Standards outside the Chicago Police Department.

Safe neighborhoods are critical to the quality of life in our communities.

So are the parks, libraries, senior centers, police and fire stations that anchor them.

With your support and the support of our taxpayers, we've invested billions in new and improved infrastructure since I've been Mayor.

The funds we received from the leasing of downtown parking garages will enable us to build new parks and upgrade others across Chicago -- without burdening taxpayers.

And we'll invest more to build libraries and upgrade our transportation system.

As we continue to invest in our city, I want to work with each of you so that we do better on city contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned firms.

Last year, we increased the amount of contracts going to African-American and Latino firms.

But I'm not satisfied -- and I know many of you aren't, either. I've already challenged my staff to develop new ways of removing obstacles that keep existing businesses from working with the city and to train new firms in how to get city contracts.

We can and must do better, and I want your help and ideas.

And we must continue working together to enhance our city's environment. I truly believe that the cities that thrive in the 21st Century will be the ones that embrace an "environmentally friendly" way of life. And I'm proud that Chicago is leading the way.

One key to a better environment is a viable public transit system. We all know that our Chicago Transit Authority is facing tremendous financial challenges.

In recent days the C.T.A. has taken decisive new steps to better manage its finances.

But even with these spending cuts, the legislature needs to act this session and provide additional funding -- especially for infrastructure -- and implement other reforms to keep the C.T.A. and all public transportation on track.

It can be done. We know that state government can help our families when it puts politics aside and addresses the issues that really matter.

Last year, I was proud to work with the Governor and many of you to get the legislature to pass a much-needed increase in the minimum wage -- an increase that's helping working families all across our state.

There is no better way to bring someone out of poverty than a job.

I work every day to bring new businesses and jobs to our city -- especially to under-served neighborhoods that need them the most.

I will never stand by while businesses that could come to Chicago are allowed to go elsewhere.

I know many of you have your own ideas about economic development in our neighborhoods. I encourage each of you to help recruit the new businesses and new jobs your communities need. And I pledge to do everything I can to help you -- and our city -- to succeed.

At the same time, we will continue to work with you to provide greater opportunity to ex-offenders who sincerely want to turn their lives around. We'll do all we can to provide the job training and other services they need to lead a responsible life.

And, through our Veterans Resource Centers and job fair, we will deliver on our commitment to help our city's veterans successfully transition to civilian life. They have given so much, and we owe them our support.

As part of our commitment to create greater opportunity for everyone in our city, we will soon announce our agreement to address the digital divide.

And we will continue to implement our groundbreaking plan to transform public housing in Chicago.

Thousands of residents have already moved into new homes. Later this month, we will see the return of public housing families to new homes at the site of the former Robert Taylor Homes and Stateway Gardens.

We made a commitment to the residents of public housing -- and we're delivering.

Our commitment to affordable housing goes well beyond the C.H.A.

Last week, the City Council took an important step by passing legislation to help another 1,000 families rent or buy affordable homes and apartments.

This year alone, the Department of Housing will support more than 12,000 units of affordable housing.

This will bring to over 125,000 the total number of affordable units we've created using the tools and programs available to us.

But there are still too many Chicagoans who need affordable housing -- both to own and rent -- and we'll continue to address these challenges. I know that many of you have ideas about how we can proceed, and I'm eager to work with you.

But the most important step to keep Chicago homes affordable this year won't happen in our city.

It will take place in Springfield, where the 7 percent cap on the taxable value of homes must be extended.

Unless the legislature renews it, many Chicago homeowners will receive property tax bills this fall that are thousands of dollars higher than last year's because of higher assessments -- potentially forcing many out of their homes.

I want to make clear again that we must send a message to Springfield that it's time to act on education and C.T.A. funding reform and pass the 7 percent cap. Without action, we'll be facing tough choices in the months ahead.

As our property taxpayers are pressed to the limit, I will continue to challenge city government to do more with less, including restructuring our operations to further improve the delivery of city services and provide them more effectively and efficiently. We must do all we can to protect our taxpayers.

As we continue to improve management at City Hall, I also want to assure the people of Chicago that we will continue to uncover misconduct whenever and wherever it occurs.

We've learned from the mistakes of the past. We're committed to preventing them in the future.

We've put in place a new hiring process -- one that we'll update further in cooperation with the court.

We've revised our contracting procedures.

Our new Inspector General continues to seek out misconduct in city government. We've already given the office more staff and funding to do its job.

I support the efforts of our City Clerk, Miguel del Valle and others in this body, to implement live, on-line transmission of City Council meetings.

And I will support your efforts to reform this body in ways you believe are important.

By working together, our city has made great progress in the last 18 years.

In Chicago today, we see reflected our nation's greatest strengths -- our willingness to work hard and act to address our challenges head-on; our tolerance for different points of view; and our commitment to help working people and those who are struggling.

But in Chicago we also see reflected our nation's greatest challenges -- an education system that still needs improvement; an economy that must compete internationally; and a growing divide between the haves and have-nots.

That's why I commit to each of you here today -- and every Chicagoan -- that we will continue to work together for a better Chicago for all.

From DuSable to Burnham and every generation since, Chicago has been forged by men and women who shared a grand vision of what this city on the lake could be.

They understood that the future is not something that simply happens to us.

Together, we can mold it, shape it and build the city of our dreams. And that dream for me is a city that offers boundless opportunity to all our people and, in every way, serves as a model for the world.

This has been the work of my life. Members of the City Council and fellow Chicagoans, let's make it the mission of these next four years.

If we can join together in pursuit of our common interests, I see a future for our city that is even brighter than today.

I see a future where Chicago continues to thrive and lead the way in the 21st Century . . .

. . . where every child is given the same chance to realize their full, God-given potential . . .

. . . where every neighborhood provides opportunity for a good job and a secure life . . .

. . . and where every Chicagoan has an equal chance for a better tomorrow.

I look forward to working with you in the months ahead to realize this dream for Chicago that we all share.

Thank you.

CLOSING MUSICAL SELECTION.

Ms. Elizabeth Norman, Lyric Coloratura Soprano, accompanied by Mr. Dwayne Lee, Tenor, performed the musical selection "The Prayer", with music by D. Foster, original lyrics by C. B. Sayer, and Italian lyrics by A. Testa/T. Renis.

BENEDICTION.

Rabbi Victor Mirelman, President of the Chicago Board of Rabbis, delivered the benediction.

MOTION TO RECESS.

Alderman Burke moved that the City Council *Recess* until Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at 10:00 A.M.. The motion *Prevailed* and the City Council *Stood in Recess* to be reconvened in regular session on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. in the City Council Chambers in City Hall.

POSTLUDE.

Members of the Chicago Youth Symphony String Quartet performed the musical postlude.

MIGUEL DEL VALLE,
City Clerk.

