



April 24, 2022

Cook County Board of Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to update these Committees on the progress of the Tyler Technologies iasWorld implementation. Taxpayers and municipalities deserve to hear directly from each office about their role in this years-long process to modernize the technology used by our property tax system.

In 2015, the Cook County Board of Commissioners approved a \$30 million contract with Tyler Technologies to replace the forty-year-old mainframe with iasWorld, a modern, integrated system used by so many of our peers around the nation. The assessment functions of systems like these are called Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal systems, or "CAMA" systems. CAMA systems are core to a property tax system's many other functions.

The committees here today are well aware of prior delays with this project so I am pleased that my office, in partnership with the Cook County Bureau of Technology under the Office of the President, was able to work with Tyler Technologies to overhaul and expand our online appeals system in 2020, just prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This new online appeals system provided the first meaningful product launch from the Tyler contract in its five-year existence. It helped ensure public safety, provide a continuation of government services, and maintain the County's commitment to fiscal responsibility.

We could not have foreseen the disruptive effects of the pandemic. But if the Assessor's Office and the Bureau of Technology did not launch a new online appeals system in 2020, the CCAO could not have transitioned to a remote environment which would have potentially exposed the public and our staff to a deadly virus when vaccines were not yet available.

The CCAO and BOT then launched iasWorld's Phase 1 in October 2020 - the first move off the County mainframe in decades. Though we moved forward with this launch, we knew other property tax offices, including the Board of Review (BOR), were continuing to use the mainframe. A parallel set of systems for handling data needed to be maintained.

The most significant delays on this project were due to the need to export the data from the new CAMA system into the old mainframe so that the results, including all property characteristics, could be shared with the Board of Review in their preferred appeals processing system.



The CCAO, BOT, and the Board of Review (BOR) have been in ongoing discussions since June 2020 about the migration of property and assessment data through Tyler's CAMA system so this data could be used by BOR to conduct their appeal process of the 2021 triennial reassessment of Chicago.

Despite the work of the CCAO and BOT to find alternate solutions for the data needs of the BOR, little progress was made from October 2020 to September 2021 – when my office was ready to begin transmitting township data to BOR for the 2021 reassessment – on an interface that would allow the BOR to continue using the mainframe. It was only after the CCAO, Tyler Technologies, BOT, and BOR began holding daily meetings late in the process that significant progress was made in the transmittal of data to the BOR.

Despite the difficulties inherent in any project of this size and scope, I am pleased to report that our office began transmitting township data to the BOR in November 2021. We completed our internal appeals work by January 2022 and completed the transmittal of township data to BOR in April of 2022. I am grateful to my staff who worked seven days a week for many months to ensure we could transmit the data through the legacy interface.

While this data transmission occurred later than we normally complete assessments and appeals, I think we can all agree that this was not a normal year and those involved in the project anticipated potential delays due to its complexity.

Please see the attached timeline which provides further detail on my office's work on this project over the past three-and-a-half years. This timeline documents the many meetings, emails, and communications between my office, the BOT, the BOR, and Tyler Technologies.

Much like the interconnected work of the Cook County property tax system, the implementation of Tyler's iasWorld CAMA system is a shared responsibility of the County's Bureau of Technology, the Assessor's Office and the Board of Review.

It is my belief that we can all complete our responsibilities to ensure payment of Tax Year 2021 property tax bills by December 2022, a delay of approximately four months from the typical due date. Delivery by this date will ensure minimal disruption to taking districts and taxpayers can include that year's property tax payments on their income tax filings in 2022.

I am also confident that despite the late start to Tax Year 2022 assessments, we can deliver assessments and appeals on time this year so that tax bills for calendar year 2023 will be delivered on-time as well.



The new CAMA system will yield advantages for the County for years to come. Our current mainframe is too expensive, too inflexible, and too fragile to maintain. It is now well beyond its useful life. Over the past three and half years my office has worked diligently to create a modern and transparent assessment system. Going forward we will continue to work with all offices to find solutions to these complex, but solvable problems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fritz Kaegi'.

Fritz Kaegi
Cook County Assessor