

18TH DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Regular Monthly Public Meeting

Date: May 26, 2026

Start Time: 12:30 PM

End Time: 1:54 PM

Location: Near North Branch Library, 310 W Division

Council Attendance

- **Chair:** Brad Kessler — Present
 - **Community Engagement:** Karen Kane — Present
 - **Nominating Committee:** Bob Johnson — Present
- Quorum:** Yes (2 of 3 required)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Kessler opened the meeting and confirmed quorum. The council welcomed Bob Johnson back after time away.

2. Approval of Remote Attendance

Not applicable. All councilors were present in person.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed. No additions or removals were proposed.

4. Approval of Past Minutes

- April minutes postponed due to time constraints.
- Will be approved at a special meeting later this month or at the next regular meeting.

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5. Public Comment (Two Speakers)

Speaker 1: Miriam

- Long-time Chicago resident, now in Streeterville.
- Discussed the **importance of mental health crisis response**, praising the CARE program's potential.
- Highlighted key benefits:
 - Frees police officers to prioritize criminal matters.
 - Provides timely mental-health support to individuals in crisis.
 - Helps reduce harmful or escalating behaviors.
- Raised concerns that CARE operates only during weekday business hours—**25% of the week**—despite crisis calls peaking in evenings and nights.
- Requested:
 - Future council discussions on CARE's performance.
 - Expansion of service hours.
 - Evaluation of long-term community impact and follow-through services.

Speaker 2: Sandra

- Resident near **Dearborn Parkway / North Avenue**.
- Reported a large, disruptive crowd of teenagers (~hundreds) leaving North Avenue Beach at 10 PM the previous evening.
- Noted police sirens, noise, and disorder; expressed concern for neighborhood safety.
- Cited a similar April 20 incident where teens leaving the beach were involved in a violent altercation at CTA.
- Reached out to Alderman Hopkins previously, urging action.
- Requested:
 - Increased police presence at beach exits and nearby streets.
 - A strategy to prevent youth disturbances as summer begins.
 - Attention to impacts on Gold Coast residents.

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- Council acknowledged concerns and will follow up with CPD leadership.
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6. Councilor Updates

Bob Johnson (Nominating Committee)

- Briefed attendees on his return following medical leave.
- Shared reactions to youth appointments to the CCPSA Commission.
- Voiced concerns about limited experience of youth commissioners influencing high-stakes decisions (e.g., Superintendent selection).

Karen Kane (Community Engagement)

- Provided updates on the nominating committee process.
- Emphasized the importance of resident surveys—encouraged attendees to complete the newly issued survey on CCPSA youth appointments.
- Clarified differences in required experience for adult vs. youth commissioners.

Chair Brad Kessler

- Discussed Council's advocacy positions regarding representation on the CCPSA.
 - Noted mixed views among North Side district councils.
 - Reconfirmed the Council's intent to elevate resident voices to city leadership.
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7. Presentation: CARE Program Expansion (Dr. Linda)

Dr. Linda, a long-time advocate and community leader, provided an update:

- **Mayor's Office announced full-city CARE expansion effective June 8.**
- CARE = Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement.
- A two-person team (mental-health professional + EMT) will respond to **non-violent wellness checks, mental-health crises, and emotional distress.**

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- The program includes:
 - Crisis de-escalation
 - On-scene assessment
 - Counseling
 - Referrals to services
 - Transportation when needed
 - 7- and 30-day follow-up
 - CARE calls are screened to avoid violent situations.
 - Expansion aligns with consent-decree requirements and national models.
 - Albuquerque's program was cited as a positive comparison (~50,000 calls expected this year).
 - Residents can request CARE via **911, 311**, or email **careprogram@cityofchicago.org** (72-hour response expected).
 - Council thanked Dr. Linda for her leadership and ongoing updates.
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8. Presentation: CTA Security Update (Kevin Ryan, Vice President of Security)

- Former CPD Commander Ryan reported major security enhancements:
 - **Doubling of security and CPD presence** on CTA since March.
 - Close coordination with State's Attorney Task Force targeting repeat CTA offenders.
 - Crime down significantly on the Red Line, including a **70% drop** from Roosevelt to Monroe.
- Public Transportation Unit and CPD teams deployed at high-traffic stations (Howard, Belmont, Division, Chicago).
- **ZeroEyes weapons-detection technology:**
 - Active at all CTA stations within city limits.
 - Detects exposed firearms.
 - Human analysts verify alerts.
 - Approx. **50% arrest rate** on confirmed firearm detections.

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- Private security (HK Knight) continues systemwide patrols; residents encouraged to report unprofessional behavior.
 - Enhanced camera network (~40,000 cameras) continues supporting investigations and real-time monitoring.
 - Station cleanliness emphasized as a key safety factor.
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9. District Update: Commander BFL

Commander provided a comprehensive safety report:

- **Teen gatherings (“trends”)** at North Avenue Beach
 - 350 teens present the previous night.
 - CPD allowed controlled dispersal to prevent spillover into neighborhoods.
 - Large-scale incident at 57th Street Beach involved 800–1000 teens.
 - Enforcement included bag checks for alcohol, weapons, and speakers; several arrests made.
 - **Vehicle-related crime**
 - Theft of Honda airbags (resold to body shops).
 - Organized crews stealing cars to commit other crimes.
 - Ongoing challenge due to pursuit policies.
 - **Construction van burglaries**
 - Major recent arrest recovered **\$100,000+ in tools** and two illegal firearms.
 - Crew using stolen car (tracked via GPS) arrested after attempting to flee.
 - **Summer strategy**
 - Increased lakefront presence.
 - Social media monitoring for large gatherings.
 - Additional resources deployed for bar-related nightlife activity.
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10. Final Announcements

- Next meeting: **June 23, 2026** (location TBD).

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- Working to schedule State Representative Kam Buckner for upcoming discussions on the Safe-T Act and electronic monitoring.
- Resident survey on CCPSA youth appointments released; council encourages participation.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at **1:54 PM**.