

Being mayor isn't easy, especially this year

Our job — in good times and bad — is to come together and work together in good faith to develop solutions, build partnerships and deliver results for our communities.

By Letters to the Editor | Nov 22, 2020, 4:58pm CST



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot speaks during a press conference at City Hall Wednesday morning, July 15, 2020. | Pat Nabong/Sun-Times

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Since COVID-19 first arrived in Chicago in January, thousands of our fellow residents have lost their lives, our economy's been knocked on its back and thousands are out of work. And while everyone has been hurting, the pain has been hardest on our Black and Brown communities who were already struggling to begin with.

In the coming weeks, the Chicago City Council will vote on whether to approve Mayor Lori Lightfoot's budget. We hope they do. Not because we love the budget — we don't — but

because we also understand that it's making the best of a terrible situation.

In order to balance this budget, the mayor and her team had to close an astronomical \$1.2 billion gap. She could have done that many ways, but she chose the path where pain is shared. Where the choices are realistic and fiscally responsible. And, most of all, one that keeps our city on a long-term path of equity and opportunity.

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Case in point, despite everything, Mayor Lightfoot still built a budget that includes a \$7 million investment in ongoing economic recovery efforts. It includes an additional \$1.7 million to support youth programs. It has a \$10 million investment in funding for housing and homelessness prevention, and also has an additional \$52 million in 2021 in CARES funding for homelessness and housing assistance.

This is all on top of funding for violence prevention and mental health, domestic violence reduction and more resources for those experiencing the trauma of gun violence.

Like most people, we are not happy about the proposed property tax increase. No one ever is. We also need to see more investments in community-based programming for young people, but it is easy for us to say what should happen without all the information. We have to recognize that members of the public don't have all of the information necessary to make these difficult decisions.

At the end of the day, we're all in this together, even if we work at it in different ways. Our job — in good times and bad — is to come together and work together in good faith to develop solutions, build partnerships and deliver results for our communities.

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This year there were public budget hearings in which both our organizations participated. Now we have all year to publicly explore options to support city services and citizen needs

in the face of what could continue to be a challenging economy.

While this budget may not be what we'd hoped for — not by a long shot — it certainly does that.

Karen Freeman-Wilson, president and CEO, Chicago Urban League

Dorri McWhorter, CEO, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago

Selfish leaders

The selfishness shown by a leader who refuses to actively participate in the transition that we all know is inevitable is frustrating beyond belief. Making decisions for themselves to the detriment of the community as a whole makes you wonder if all they ever were concerned about was their power, their pride and, of course, their wallet. It demonstrates that they were never a leader, just a narcissist.

You can decide on your own if I am referring to Donald Trump or Michael Madigan.

Don Anderson, Oak Park

When communities change, sometimes names change

Though I am as far removed from the cancel culture as one can be, I truly respect the changing of the name of Douglas Park to Douglass Park, plus the manner and efforts that were taken to do this.

The students at Village Leadership Academy are to be applauded for initiating this change. Communities have a right to honor those members who they see fit to be remembered through the naming of public venues.

When communities change, sometimes the names need to be changed. This is progress, and this progress has a process. Good job, students!

Edward Fee, Orland Park