

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

BURKE TRIAL

Feds: Power used to extort

Prosecutors point to ex-alderman's greed in closing arguments

By Jason Meisner, Megan Crepeau and Ray Long
Chicago Tribune

Ed Burke, for years the most powerful alderman in Chicago, resident historian of the City Council, anointer of judges and head of the influential Finance Committee, sat back in his chair in a federal courtroom Wednesday as closing arguments in his landmark corruption trial got underway.

Across the room, Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane MacArthur made a sweeping gesture toward Burke, telling jurors they'd heard a "steady drum-beat of unlawful activity" over the past several weeks. And at the center of it, she said, "is this man."

Burke, dressed in a dark gray suit, green tie and his trademark ivory pocket square, remained expressionless.

That dramatic beginning was followed by more than three hours of MacArthur painting an excruciatingly detailed and unflattering portrait of Burke, the fallen 14th Ward power broker who for decades stood at the pinnacle of the old Chicago Democratic political machine.

Despite the polished veneer he presented to the public, Burke was corrupt to the core, MacArthur said, petty, fiercely protective of his own power, and constantly looking for a chance to line his own pockets.

"Mr. Burke's hand was out again and again, demanding money and benefits from the very people he was supposed to act on behalf of," MacArthur told jurors. "Ed Burke was a powerful and corrupt politician and this was his racket."

Arguments in the landmark racketeering trial are capping off a hot-button case that laid

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CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL

ALDERMEN REBUFF CPD ARBITRATION

Controversial provision would have let police misconduct cases proceed behind closed doors

Contract detail may end up in Circuit Court as FOP president promises 'war' with lawmakers



Ald. Jessica Fuentes speaks during a City Council meeting at Chicago City Hall on Wednesday. A new police union contract was approved, but a provision that would allow officers to conduct misconduct hearings in private was rejected by city lawmakers. **ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Sam Charles, A.D. Quig and Alice Yin
Chicago Tribune

Following Mayor Brandon Johnson's lead, the Chicago City Council on Wednesday rejected a provision in the city's proposed contract with Chicago police that would allow officers accused of serious misconduct to have their disciplinary cases heard behind closed doors while aldermen OK'd significant pay hikes for cops.

The 33-17 vote defeating the arbitration clause nixes a major part of a deal announced less than two months ago as a major political win by Johnson's administration with the union representing most of Chicago's police force.

The council's rejection, and its reasoning for it, will now head back to arbitrator Edwin Benn, who earlier this year voted for the arbitration clause and could send that same ruling back to aldermen within weeks. The battle could ultimately end up in Cook County Circuit Court.

In an unusual move at Johnson's request, the arbitration matter was voted on separately from the rest of the contract, including raises for rank-and-file officers totaling 20% over four years that was approved by the full council with no debate.

The lack of controversy over the financial aspect of the Fraternal Order of Police contract was another departure from how the council has acted in the past when

arguments would often erupt about the cost of policing.

But for this contract, the arbitration issue became the main point of disagreement.

The provision would allow officers accused of misconduct to remove their cases from the Chicago Police Board docket and instead have them decided privately by an outside third party. The closed-door option was part of an arbitration award handed down earlier this year by Benn during contract negotiations between the city and FOP.

The head of the FOP, John Catanzara, argued that the arbitration provision simply gave officers the

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RECORD RAISES FOR OFFICERS: The agreement provides for a more than 20% raise for CPD officers, on top of a one-time \$2,500 retention bonus. The mayor's office says the new provisions — including bonuses and 5% raises this year and next — would cost an additional \$60 million in 2024. An analysis by the Better Government Association found it "would be the largest package of raises for any of the city's employee unions in modern history."

A brighter future for rooftops

Illinois homeowners turn to solar power thanks to incentives

By Nara Schoenberg
Chicago Tribune

In his warm, dry suburban split-level, Nathan Gorr is far from the worst effects of climate change.

But even here, he said, the signs are accumulating. There was that heavy rain a few years ago — the worst downpour he'd ever seen. There are the federal disasters that Gorr, who works in mortgage servicing, tracks on the job: floods, storms and hurricanes.

There's even the joyful 2003 honeymoon photo of Gorr and his wife, Heidi, that sits on the kitchen counter. The place where the photo was taken — historic



Garrison Riegel, left, and Jared Salvatore carry a solar panel onto a roof in Schaumburg on Nov. 30. **TRENT SPRAGUE/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Lahaina, Hawaii — burned this summer in a deadly wildfire.

All of which brings Gorr, 46, to the shiny, black solar panels that workers are affixing to his roof.

"I feel like it's something that's making a difference," he said during an interview punctuated by the screech of a power tool.

"You know, the more people that see it, the more people will be encouraged to do it. Our neighbors are asking."

Driven by concerns about a

warming planet and encouraged by generous state and federal incentives, Illinois homeowners are turning to solar power like never before.

Residential solar is having its best year ever in Illinois, with 170 megawatts of power added in the first three quarters, compared with 125 megawatts in all of 2022, according to data from the Solar Energy Industries Association

Turn to Solar, Page 2

Climate talks yield 'historic' agreement

Nearly 200 nations say they'll move off fossil fuels, but loopholes for US concern advocates

By Seth Borenstein, David Keyton and Jamey Keaten
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Nearly 200 countries agreed Wednesday to move away from planet-warming fossil fuels — the first time they've made that crucial pledge in decades of U.N. climate talks though many warned the deal still had significant shortcomings.

The agreement was approved without the floor fight many feared and is stronger than a draft floated earlier in the week that angered several nations. But it didn't call for an outright phasing out of oil, gas and coal, and it gives nations significant wiggle room in their "transition" away from those fuels.

"Humanity has finally done

what is long, long, long overdue," Wopke Hoekstra, European Union commissioner for climate action, said as the COP28 summit wrapped up in Dubai.

Within minutes of opening Wednesday's session, COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber gavelled in approval of the central document — an evaluation of how off-track the world is on climate and how to get back on — without giving critics a chance to comment. He hailed it as a "historic package to accelerate climate action."

The document is the central part of the 2015 Paris accord and its internationally agreed-upon goal to try to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial times. The goal is mentioned 13

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Mayor defends camp process

Mayor Brandon Johnson on Wednesday stood behind his administration's attempts to house migrants in tent encampments before the winter, a week after Gov. J.B. Pritzker blew up plans for the first camp amid environmental fears. **Chicagoland**

New look for a Chicago icon

Chicago's Thompson Center will undergo a floor-by-floor gut rehab beginning early next year, but the building will retain its atrium while also opening up the base of the structure to retail, according to new renderings released by Google. **Business**

TODAY'S WEATHER



High 49 Low 35

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 16

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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