

Chicago Tribune



QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Reinsdorf hits Capitol, seeks cash

White Sox chairman making his pitch for new stadium

By **Jeremy Gorner**
and **Olivia Olander**
Chicago Tribune

SPRINGFIELD — Chicago White Sox Chairman Jerry Reinsdorf made his pitch for a new baseball stadium in Chicago's South Loop to Illinois legislative leaders at the state Capitol on Tuesday, describing the meetings as "very cordial" even as some rank-and-file lawmakers expressed skepticism about the idea of providing public money for a ballpark.

Reinsdorf arrived at the Statehouse a little after 3 p.m. in a large van with an entourage that included the developer seeking to

bring a ballpark to the vacant land known as "The 78" at Clark Street and Roosevelt Road.

He was greeted by Chicago Democratic state Reps. Nicholas Smith and Kam Buckner, whose South Side district is not far from the site where the White Sox want to make their home.

The team is expected to ask for about \$1 billion in public funding for the stadium, according to a report earlier this month in Crain's Chicago Business. But public funding for privately-owned teams has garnered little enthusiasm from Gov. J.B. Pritzker and some of his allies in the legislature's Democratic supermajority, and Reins-

sdorf's visit came a day before Pritzker is set to present a budget that needs to address a projected shortfall of nearly \$900 million.

"We haven't asked for anything," the 87-year-old Reinsdorf told reporters after leaving the office of Republican Senate leader John Curran, of Downers Grove.

"At an appropriate time everybody will speak up; now is not the appropriate time. We're not going to give out any internal bulletins."

Reinsdorf was equally noncommittal after an earlier meeting in House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch's office.

Turn to Reinsdorf, Page 5



White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf, right, walks between meetings in the Illinois State Capitol on Tuesday. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



VINCENT ALBAN/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

SUN AND SAND

Sergios Vogdanos plays fetch with his dog, Monkey, while another dog walks by Tuesday at Montrose Beach in Chicago. Unseasonably warm weather is expected to grace the city Wednesday, with the high in the 60s. February is poised to be one of Chicago's warmest in more than 150 years. A push of relatively colder air is expected to descend over the region Friday and Saturday, followed by more balmy weather next week. **Chicagoland, Page 2**

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
High 62 Low 43	High 52 Low 33	High 39 Low 24	High 40 Low 33

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 20

Opening for Russia seen along front

Zelenskyy says foe is taking advantage of aid delays to Kyiv

By **Hanna Arhirova**
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Delays in weapons deliveries from Western allies to Ukraine are opening a door for Russian battlefield advances, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says, making the fight "very difficult" along parts of the front line where the Kremlin's forces captured a strategic city last weekend ahead of the war's second anniversary.

Zelenskyy and other officials have often expressed frustration at the slowness of promised aid deliveries, especially since signs of war fatigue have emerged. European countries are struggling to find enough stocks to send to Kyiv, and U.S. help worth \$60 billion is stalled over political differences.

Turn to Ukraine, Page 10



Ukrainian soldiers work at their anti-aircraft gun position Tuesday in the Donetsk region. **ANATOLII STEPANOV/GETTY-AFP**

Mystery deepens in crypto hacking

Highland Park man accused in \$400M heist on failed FTX

By **Jason Meisner**
Chicago Tribune

By the time the FBI raided Robert Powell's luxurious Highland Park home three years ago, what agents saw as the red flags of fraud were everywhere.

The 23-year-old Powell was living alone on the North Shore despite having no legitimate income, according to federal court records obtained by the Tribune. He had a \$150,000 BMW in the garage but rarely went out. One day, a letter carrier found six grand in cash in Powell's mailbox. Powell allegedly told police it was how he paid his rent.

Federal investigators suspected Powell, originally from Elkhart, Indiana, was the leader of an elaborate cyber scheme that bilked PayPal users of more than a million dollars nationwide, according to an FBI search warrant affidavit filed in 2021.

Powell was also believed to be involved with a violent Indiana-based gang known as the "ChoppaBoyz," whose founding members were under indictment in a drug-related home invasion in South Bend and also were accused of robbing two of Powell's associates in Utah as they carried a quarter of a million dollars in fraud proceeds back to Indiana, the affidavit stated.

But the only charge that ever surfaced against Powell was a misdemeanor gun count filed in Lake County.

Until now.

Three years after the March 2021 raid, Powell, now 26, has been accused of helping pull off a much larger heist, one that seems ripped from the pages of some cybersecurity pulp thriller: The \$400 million hack of FTX, the failed crypto currency exchange headed by convicted fraudster Sam Bankman-Fried.

As the Tribune first reported, Powell was arrested at his home on Museum Drive last month on a federal indictment filed in Washington, D.C., charged with participating in a sophisticated "SIM swap" scheme with two out-of-state associates that allegedly siphoned at least \$400 million in virtual currency from a single company and millions more from other individual victims.

While the indictment referred to the company only as "Victim Company 1," the alleged hack occurred Nov. 11, 2022, the same day that FTX collapsed into

Turn to Powell, Page 4

Expectations not wavering

As Dansby Swanson enters Year 2 with the Cubs, his big-picture focus on winning has not changed. **Chicago Sports**



STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Uncommon warmth at show

The lovely little musical "The Band's Visit" gets an intimate staging at Writers Theatre. **Review in Arts & Living**

Comfort food with a twist

The new Ramova Grill and Taproom brings chili back to Bridgeport in Chicago. **Review in Food & Health**

\$4.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
176th year No. 52
© Chicago Tribune

