

November 9, 2011

Mayor Devine and
Members of the Common Council
West Allis City Hall
West Allis, Wisconsin

Re: Renovations to the Police Court Center

Dear Mayor & Common Council Members:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Municipal Judge, the Police Chief, and myself. 2009 ACT 402 made significant changes to the law regarding municipal court operations. Part of the changes included requiring that the Municipal Court be separate and distinct from the Police Department and that the court personnel be in separate areas from the police department personnel. This Act took effect on January 1, 2011. As part of the effort to comply with the Act, city staff has been working to come up with a plan to better utilize space at the Police Court Center and to make other needed changes. To that end we have developed the attached draft plan for your consideration.

The proposed plan will move the Municipal Court Clerks from the police department area and establish them in a separate municipal court area. In addition, the municipal court clerks will have a separate window for municipal court transactions. The Clerks' offices will be created by utilizing two rooms that have had little function and using several closets. One of the former Clerks rooms will be converted into a room to be utilized by the City Attorney for pretrial conferences. This will eliminate utilizing the Judge's chambers for that purpose. The rooms used by the City Attorney's office for pretrials will also be used for storage space by the Clerks. In addition, while these required renovations are going on we thought it would be a good time to make other needed improvements to the courtroom. The traffic pattern in the courtroom with one opening has never been functional. A second opening with a gate will be provided for more efficient and safe courtroom operations. In addition, the current bailiff stand (which was originally supposed to be a witness stand but never worked out) will be eliminated and instead a movable witness stand and a movable bailiff stand will be provided. Currently, witnesses are required to stand at a podium. Witnesses will now be able to sit at the witness stand in compliance with the ADA. The Court Clerk's window will also be ADA compliant. The poorly functioning audio and recording system will be replaced with a wireless system and new carpeting is proposed throughout the courtroom area due to both the age and wear of the original existing carpeting and the renovations. In addition, miscellaneous other alterations and office furnishings will be needed.

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Ed Lisinski, Plan Reviewer has been instrumental in preparing draft plans and specifications for this project. He is currently working with an architect to obtain a cost estimate and more detailed plans and specifications. The architect has made an initial estimate of \$155,000 for the project. In discussing this matter with the Director of Public Works, his Department will not be able to undertake these renovations in the tight time restrictions. Therefore, outside contractors will have to be hired. We urge that you approve this project to bring the City in compliance with the law and to bring court and police center operations into a greater state of safety and efficiency.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Post
City Attorney

Cc: Judge Murphy
Chief Jungbluth
Ed Lisinski

Enclosures
SEP: kp
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