



Pierce County Wisconsin

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Administrative Coordinator

Jason Matthys

May 1, 2023

To: Finance and Personnel Committee

From: Administration

Re: Courthouse Facilities – Needs Assessment Recommended

Finance and Personnel Committee Members,

Since the planning for the new Jail and Sheriff's Office in 2013, there has been ongoing discussions internally as it relates to both the current and future status of the existing Courthouse. Since that time there have been growing concerns with increased judicial caseloads, inmate transports to and from the Courthouse and Jail, adequate office space and overall security of the current and aging facility. And although the County and staff have taken prudent steps over time to address many of these issues and concerns, the current Courthouse facility is not sufficient to accommodate the needs for a safe, functional and efficient judicial facility. The needs of the Circuit Court alone, with the increased need of adding a 2nd Circuit Judge is hamstrung by the existing facility's inability to expand and accommodate for additional staff and courtrooms as well as the ability to mitigate the safety of court participants and jurors, to the extent we should, without expected significant renovation costs that would only address a handful of existing issues.

Following the most recent County Board meeting in April, 2023, it was suggested that further consideration should be given to exploring options to address the security and space needs of the County's Circuit Court and affiliated departments that currently occupy the County Courthouse, and to also consider the construction of a new Courthouse for court related functions to be attached to the new County Jail as suggested in the master plan for the Law Enforcement Center. We need to consider the future needs of a courthouse facility which addresses space needs, security and safety, while taking in to account the best interests of the citizens and taxpayers of Pierce County.

In order to effectively review and consider the various options, it is suggested that this Committee consider the formulation of a Judicial Facilities Planning Adhoc Committee pursuant to §4-21 (l) of the Pierce County Code. Any County Board or citizen member that is appointed by the County Board Chair to serve on this committee should be authorized to receive a meeting per diem consistent with County Code §4-50. The purpose of this Adhoc Committee should be to conduct a Judicial facility needs assessment and work to provide a recommended resolution to the County Board and to carry out any final direction by the County Board of Supervisors.