

Martin County Board of Commissioners  
Work Session  
January 17, 2017

The work session was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Schmidtke. Those present were Commissioners Flohrs, Mahoney, Smith, Schmidtke, and Belgard. Also present were Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, James Forshee, Auditor/Treasurer, Terry Viesselman, County Attorney, Jeff Markquart, Martin County Sheriff, Rod Halvorsen, KSUM-KFMC Radio, Jason Sorensen, Sentinel Newspaper, Julie Walters, Administrative Assistant, and members of staff.

Terry Viesselman, County Attorney, was present to open discussion regarding courtroom/courthouse security, noting the only way to make it safe is to have security for the entire courthouse – have one entrance with metal detectors at that entrance that everyone has to pass through. Sheriff Markquart had sent a survey out to the different sheriff's in our 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and it seems that the use of metal detectors at other counties is pretty much like we do...on an as needed basis.

Viesselman went on to note when the safety issue came up again we talked to various people and addressed it at a Department Directors meeting and some of the employees that work in this building have said that they should never have to feel unsafe when they are working and some of the department directors have commented upon the security issues that they've had to deal with in the building so I think everybody is concerned and feel that a committee should be formed to look into this issue, see what changes can be made, and at some point make recommendations to the Board.

Viesselman also noted people have expressed concern when all the prisoners come through the courthouse especially on Monday mornings when we have all of our special term cases and at one time we had twelve (12) prisoners in the courtroom at one time and that's not really a good situation. And often there are family members in the courtroom too and this is a lot of times where the danger comes from...other people that come in the courtroom. We talked about moving special term Monday mornings over to the Security Building where they'd just bring the prisoners up through the back and it's not such a long walk; however, there are some concerns about doing that, as that courtroom is small and cramped and the look of it doesn't have the same impact as when you're sitting in the big courtroom.

Viesselman noted what it's going to come down to is we can do things like have them remove their coats, search their bags, things like that. What I foresee is the committee that we're forming can gather suggestions from everybody and make a recommendation and get some help and guidance from you, the Board, in what you're looking at. Do you want to consider security for the whole courthouse or are we just going to focus on the courtroom because that would make a difference. A big element is going to be the cost because it is all primarily coming from the Sheriff's Office for added staff. There is a grant application, due March 31<sup>st</sup>, which would pay for some mechanical things.

Commissioner Mahoney inquired do you have security issues in your office too.

Viesselman answered yes. For a long time there have been times when we have sat there and worried and have been threatened that someone is going to come into our office upset...my office and my staff are primarily the prime targets so we do need security there. If you do that, I would recommend putting glass in and a lock in the door. If our office is not going to stay at our current location it doesn't make sense to spend that kind of money if we're going to be there short term. I know the Building Committee met and we talked about trying to get at least a two-year lease and by that time the county may know a little more about what they're going to do but there's no saying that we'll be here longer than two years either. I do have forfeiture money available that would cover the added security costs so there wouldn't be any expense to the county.

Viesselman noted I am concerned because my secretary, Karen, is up front and has to deal with them and there's many times when all three of us attorneys are gone and we'll get some people in the office that are threatening and it's not a good situation. Many times I've been there and I've had to come out because they are raising their voices and yelling at Karen and I think some of the department directors here see that at times at their windows; but I don't think anyone gets it as much as we do.

Schmidtke noted we did talk about forming a court/courthouse security committee at our Building and Purchasing Committee meeting last week. It will probably come down to where all the doors are locked and everybody comes through one door.

Higgins opened discussion on electronic locks.

McDonald noted he's had a conversation with Foty (Locks) and tried to get some lock prices because you guys wanted to get an idea per lock...and since they are fire door exits then there's a lot more things that have to be done in order to do a FOB in and FOB out.

Smith noted well for this grant round we're probably not going to have the whole picture done but we can have maybe something to start with that we can do short term and not too costly.

Higgins opened review and discussion regarding immediate office space needs and proposal for MIS Department Office including the county's Human Resource/Payroll Person and the F-M Joint Transit Director are going to flip-flop offices...in other words the Transit Director is moving to where the Mentoring Office used to be at Extension; and the Human Resource/Payroll Person will move down to where the Transit Director is now. We're looking at mid-February for that to occur. Higgins noted the bigger question is...as you know MIS has a third person coming in and currently has no room for an office for this person. In your agenda packet you'll find a drawing for consideration for use of a portion of the Court Administration storage area in the vault next to the MIS Office.

McDonald reviewed the drawing and noted we did talk with Connie (Belgard) over the years about the vault space and we were able to use a little bit of for storage. But now with the addition of a staff person, we're looking at segregating off part of that vault area to be used for MIS. I believe Connie (Belgard) and Scott (Higgins) have had some conversations about cleaning up some of that area relocating some file storage to an unused office over by the

Probation offices with Probation then relocating some of their file storage to current Probation office areas. There is another office over there where Court Administration could free up more storage from the vault, about a third to half of that room where we would erect a wall to segregate Court Administration storage and MIS office. Originally we were thinking about putting a door from the hallway into the vault area but that's a big deal to cut through that wall and through all of that original marble...so I wouldn't have an issue putting that wall up with a door inside. Court Administration could still come through but that area would be secured off with a keyed entry system. The rest of the drawing has to do with the layout of the room. We'd leave the servers and a lot of that stuff where they're at now as it would be expensive to move all that stuff with all the fiber circuits and phone circuits. So it will make more sense just to partition that off and put a wall across there...segregate that...keep the noise and everything over in that area of the room...move my office over as you come into the front room and then in the back room where we take over the vault area we'll create the two offices and a work area for the two techs. We'd have to do some work with the heating and air conditioning on trying to get that balanced out. Right now there is no heating or air conditioning per se back in the vault area...the thermostat is up in our area but very seldom do we ever run the heater because the equipment puts off enough heat throughout the winter that the furnace really never ever kicks in and the air conditioning runs most of the time. The big thing is to free up the space and move the contents in the Court Administration vault area to make room for the additional MIS person.

Mahoney inquired are the courts always going to have storage in that room or is there going to be a point where you can get (it cleared out).

Connie Belgard answered I've asked the District office because imaging is you know we're putting funds toward imaging, well it kind of depends on the coffers and you know the state with the budget you don't have money to always do those things. So, we're not adding to it right now because we're filing things electronically so we're not adding to our storage needs...but until we can get documents imaged we need the files. I let them know our courthouse is really in a crunch right now and whatever funds can be allotted towards our imaging I would like.

Higgins noted this will just address our immediate needs. I know Probation has concerns with anytime you lose space, but to make this work that's what we need to take a look at. I don't know Nancy if you've had a chance to look at what's in there...

Nancy Johnson noted yeah in the hallway, I suppose we could put it all in the highway I mean we don't have any extra space...you're just taking away our storage space and our file room to give more space and file room to other people.

Higgins noted so I've asked and I've talked with Julie (Grunewald) and she couldn't be here today to look at it. I know you have a couple conference room and reception area and how many file cabinets are in there?

Johnson noted we've already lost that other office that we also had that is going to go to Victim Services as well.

Johnson inquired what about that office space out front that the screener/collector utilized? I don't see anybody in that office. It seems underutilized.

Connie Belgard noted we actually discussed whether we could turn that into our conference room (attorney conference room) I know we have the one in the back but that's by chambers so we're trying to utilize some of the space that we already have in that respect.

Higgins noted the Board is fully aware that space is a need and this is why we're looking at different options.

Schmidtke noted the Commissioners and the Building Committee been through this so many times in the last few months trying to figure out space needs. We're just short and the big picture might be megabucks, we might be building a building, but for now we've got to make this work and if everybody's got to get a little tighter, then we're all going to get a little tighter together.

Higgins noted at this point we've got to have everybody work with each other to accomplish our needs. It seems to be the best viable approach at this point to get the office space for the MIS Department.

Connie Belgard noted I've tried to do whatever I could do to help along the way I mean we used to actually have both offices you know where Steve (McDonald) is now we used to have that storage too and so we've tried to accommodate or work with people the best that we can too.

Higgins noted Doug (Borchardt) is here and I know he's talked with the Personnel Committee a little bit about the Building Technician position and will share with the committee some of the concerns as to why a second building technician is needed.

Borchardt noted since I started 3 ½ years ago we've had three (3) buildings that we have to take care of and none of these buildings are in real good shape. We have seven (7) total buildings right now...we do have thirty-four (34) secure rooms that we have to vacuum that MRCI isn't allowed to get into and they should be vacuumed I would say at least once a week and I mean if they're getting vacuumed once a month they're getting lucky. Four (4) bathrooms that we clean are in secure areas and we do the collecting of the garbage and recycling. But just with all these buildings and the shape that they're in...even sometimes changing a lightbulb can be a chore...you can't get the lens cover down or the latch breaks on it or you go to plug the light in and the clip and the end breaks...everything is getting old. Just changing a lightbulb can be an adventure sometimes. But, and then we have four (4) lots...we have the security building, the boulevard, 117 North Main, and then we have a lot on North Orient and a lot on Dewey Street that we mow and weed and sidewalks and take care of and so everything is just kind of spread out and it's hard to get any momentum going on a project with two guys. You're sitting there doing a project and then it seems like the guy in charge his phone rings every time he turns around and he's got to go check something out or put a fire out somewhere or go meet a contractor and let him in to a secure area or talk about a bid on something but I don't think you realize how much time that in itself takes. You can't gain momentum built up on a project...you've got people leaving and you know I'll be right back and then you're sitting here you had two guys working and now you have one guy working and then you've got another

project and you've got tools in one building that you've got to take over to another building and then bring them back and it's just so time consuming with everything so spread out and plumbing is a disaster in the jail and the Building Committee has been through Human Services and that building can be a nightmare at times. Every time you turn around something is breaking or plugging up or clogging...with these older buildings nothing is an easy fix.

Schmidtke noted years ago when Mel (Sukalski) retired that's when we made a decision to just go with the two and try it and we never heard nothing from these guys before Doug (Borchardt); but it just went on and on but if you really watch close you can see how behind they're getting. They keep this (courthouse) in pretty good shape.

Borchardt noted we have carpets that haven't been shampooed in 3 ½ years that I've been here and all exterior windows haven't been done in 3 ½ years and stuff that should be done to these buildings aren't getting done.

Belgard inquired if MRCI was here when Mel was here?

Higgins noted yes.

Schmidtke noted and then we added three (3) buildings and still didn't bring anybody else on so now they're so far behind it will take a year to catch up.

Borchardt noted if a third person is bought on just having someone come in at 6 a.m. in the morning and work till 3 p.m.; have someone come in at 8:00 a.m. and work until 5 p.m. and then have one person be a floater...even snow events right now it's unbelievable all the sidewalks we've got to take care of. It used to be where STS would have 6-8 people...they'd get them out of jail and help you out. Now if you get 2 or 3 you're doing good. A couple weeks ago we didn't have anyone get out and help. You've got all these sidewalks and stuff that have to be cleared by 8 a.m. and then plus we do the sanding of the parking lots now...we've got more stuff to do than we ever used to have with more people and we just can't get ahead of the game you're just busting your butt just to keep floating.

Smith inquired about hiring some of that out you know the sidewalks and the parking lots.

Belgard noted we already hire out the parking lots with snow removal.

Borchardt noted with snow removal...not the sanding. So I think it's just a lot of stuff that builds up and I think to make things more efficient eventually you'd want a van like plumbers use and put all your tools in the van. So many times you start a project and have to go back to the courthouse to get this and go back to the courthouse to get that...you put all that stuff in a van and your tools are with you. If you've got to pack up quick and go catch a leak at Human Services or something and you head over there and you'll have most of your tools. But, it seems now like you spend a lot of time going from building to building getting tools. It's just real inefficient and nothing has really ever been on a maintenance schedule...on preventative maintenance. We've been waxing floors and should try and get carpets at least shampooed every so often and a lot of that stuff you can't really do when people are in the offices. Borchardt noted and then you have a guy on vacation for week and you've got one guy here all week...it

just adds up. Like I said you can't gain momentum going on a project. Someone gets called away or they have to go talk to someone or meet someone then you sit there trying to keep busy until the person comes back and just a lot of stuff like that. And MRCI, I like their organization...it's a good organization...but they do subpar work and that falls into our lap too if it isn't being done. Whether it's dealing with them or their supervisors or actually just doing it ourselves you know they have a cleaning lady at the library and oh what a difference that made. MRCI is good but they've been changing supervisors so much that nothing is ever consistent.

Schmidtke noted maybe we'd be better off giving them a donation and hiring a cleaning person to do all the cleaning work.

Smith inquired can you hire someone to do the shampooing of carpets.

Borchardt answered we could certainly do it cheaper. We spent \$1200 painting the VSO office...we could have knocked that out in a couple days...we wouldn't have done the courtroom or anything like that but simple paint jobs we can take those on too. Borchardt recommends hiring two people plus the supervisor position and then I'm not running around chasing things...then we've got three guys getting the project done faster and moving on. The buildings and this one in particular is not getting the attention it should be.

Higgins noted this is not something considered in the budget this year and we're bringing it up because of need and we've got a job posting out for the supervisors position that will close Thursday and so that's why I wanted to bring this up to you today to consider one person or two for the Building Technician position.

With no further business to wit, Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARTIN COUNTY, MN

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Dan Schmidtke, Board Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Higgins, County Coordinator