



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Phillip U. Fines, Judge
Georgia K. Sutton, Judge

Juvenile And Domestic Relations District Court

Kristie G. Compton, Clerk

COUNTY OF SPOTSYLVANIA

P.O. BOX 157
SPOTSYLVANIA, VA 22553
(540) 507-7676
(540) 582-2029 (FAX)

March 5, 2014

Memo To: Paul Trampe, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
Doug Barnes, County Administrator

From: Phillip U. Fines *PUF*
Georgia K. Sutton *KS*

RE: **New Judicial Center Space Needs Study: Proposed Expansion of the former Judicial Center (now District Courts) Building**

This memo is in support of improvements at the Judicial Center. We understand that the Board is contemplating a new Space Needs Study and the issuance of the necessary bonds to renovate and expand the District Courts Building.

The Juvenile Domestic Relations District Courts and the Clerk's office have both an existing, current need and an imminent need for expansion and reconfiguration. As a result of the recent Caseload Study, the General Assembly is finally recognizing the need for additional judges in the 15th Judicial Circuit and the existing courthouse facilities will NOT accommodate the increase in staff associated with additional judgeships.

Without the appropriate facilities, a difficult job becomes unnecessarily complicated. Thank you for your attention to this important matter so that Spotsylvania County can continue to provide high quality judicial services to its families.

CC: The Honorable Joseph J. Ellis (Circuit Court)
The Honorable Ricardo Rigual (General District Court)
The Honorable William F. Neely (Commonwealth's Attorney)

Commonwealth of Virginia

FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JUDGES

Harry T. Taliaferro, III
Gordon F. Willis
David H. Beck
Joseph J. Ellis
J. Overton Harris
Charles S. Sharp
Sarah L. Deneke
Michael E. Levy
Patricia Kelly

J. Peyton Farmer, Retired
Joseph E. Spruill, Jr., Retired
William H. Ledbetter, Jr., Retired
H. Harrison Braxton, Jr., Retired
Ann Hunter Simpson, Retired
John R. Alderman, Retired
Horace A. Revercomb, III, Retired
J. Martin Bass, Retired



David H. Beck
Post Office Box 1179
Spotsylvania, Virginia 22553-1179
(540) 507-7623
FAX (540) 582-7973

COURTS

Northumberland County
Westmoreland County
Spotsylvania County
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Caroline County
Richmond County
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Hanover County
Essex County
City of Fredericksburg

March 10, 2014

By Inter-Office Mail

Members of the Spotsylvania County
Board of Supervisors

and

Mr. C. Douglas Barnes, County Administrator

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors and Mr. Barnes:

As I have previously conveyed to you collectively, and to many of you individually, I greatly appreciate the foresight and perseverance of the Board of Supervisors and County Administration in recognizing the Court System's need for additional courtrooms and space for court related facilities and personnel. Your foresight and perseverance was evidenced by the construction of the new Circuit Court Building and the Public Safety Building, in 2010 and 2011. Given the general state of the national economy, at that time, it took great fortitude to proceed with those projects, but the Board and County Administration wisely proceeded, and based on the County's 2008 financial guidelines for fiscal discipline, the County received an AA+ Bond rating and realized approximately \$4.5 million in savings on interest payments for the County's taxpayers. Again, I commend you.

Now, to turn to the issues, currently at hand, it is necessary to remember that the original courthouse construction/renovation plan, that was developed following the citizens' passage of the 2005 Public Safety/Judicial Complex Bond Referendum, called for significant renovation of, and addition to the then existing Judicial Center: to convert it into one building, in an "L" shape, with the two existing buildings being joined by a new structure, to be constructed in the space used for judge and court personnel parking. This necessary and thoughtful and attractive plan was "put on hold" due to budgetary constraints at the time, while the new Circuit Court Building and Public Safety Building were being completed.

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The needs that generated the foregoing plan remain. It is my understanding that a new space needs study has been recently conducted. I am sure it will confirm what was already known in 2005, that is, that the District Courts, both General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations, and the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office have need for additional Courtrooms, lobbies, conference rooms and offices.

The reality of these needs, have been further and most recently confirmed by the Virginia Judicial Workload Assessment Study that was concluded in the fall of 2012. The results of that study are set forth in a Report dated November 15, 2013. This study was conducted by the National Center for State Courts at the direction of the Virginia General Assembly, pursuant to legislation passed at the 2012 session.

As set forth in the Report, following this state-wide study of all courts and based on comparable workloads throughout the Commonwealth, Spotsylvania County needs 1.6 General District Court Judges, and 2.5 Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judges. Translated, this means that the General District Court caseload in the fall of 2012 required 8 Judge-Days per week, and thus a minimum of two courtrooms and associated spaces, offices, and personnel. Likewise that the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court required 12.5 Judge-Days per week, and thus a minimum of three courtrooms and associated spaces, offices and personnel. (It is noted, that with our new Circuit Court Building, containing three courtrooms, Circuit Court has, thanks to your foresight, space for the needed 2.2 Judges, 11 Judge-Days per week, and space for growth to 15 Judge-Days per week).

The General Assembly, during its current session has, pursuant to this report, advanced legislation to increase the number of Judges in the 15th District, as follows: two additional General District Court Judges, and three additional Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Judges. With the Caseload Study Report, referred to above, Spotsylvania County will rightly be seeing an increase in the number Judges and of Judge-Days in both District Courts, if the General Assembly authorizes and funds the proposed additional Judgeships.

The results of the Caseload Study, of necessity, also reflect the heightened workloads demanded of all of the respective Courts' staffs, the Commonwealth's Attorney and his staff, and the Sheriff and his personnel, most especially the Court Security detail.

Further, as I know you understand, the Judicial Complex is not just for judges, lawyers and court personnel rather it serves the entirety of the public. Citizens have their own civil cases, or they are called as witnesses in civil and criminal cases, or they serve as jurors in civil or criminal cases; or they have business with the various clerk's offices in the conduct of their personal affairs. In each of these situations the safety and security of these law-abiding citizens is a proper and significant concern.

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I ask, as you have done in the past, that you carefully consider and responsibly move forward with construction and renovation of the District Court Buildings including the Commonwealth Attorney's Office. As you have always acknowledged, public safety and a securely established Judicial System are core functions of every governmental entity.

Finally, you should take pride in Spotsylvania's Judicial Complex, you and your predecessors have thoughtfully planned an aesthetically attractive complex, compatible with its beautiful rural surroundings, and architecturally respectful of the County's historic buildings and history.

I greatly appreciate your time and attention to these facts as you consider the County's Capital Improvements Budget.

With my great respect,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David H. Beck". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

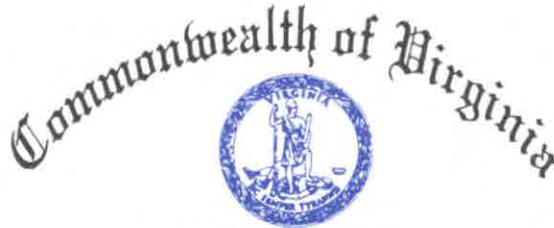
David H. Beck, Judge

DHB:cdd

cc: The Honorable Joseph J. Ellis
The Honorable Ricardo Rigual
The Honorable Phillip U. Fines
The Honorable Georgia K. Sutton
William F. Neely, Commonwealth's Attorney
Roger Harris, Sheriff

COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY
William F. Neely

VICTIM/WITNESS PROGRAM
Kathy Settle, Director
540-507-7675



Spotsylvania County
Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney
Spotsylvania Judicial Center
9111 Courthouse Road
P.O. Box 2629, Spotsylvania, VA 22553
(540) 507-7650 • Fax (540) 582-3291

DEPUTY C.A.
John C. Bowers
Thomas G. Shaia

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MEMO TO: Paul Trampe, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
Doug Barnes, County Administrator

FROM: Bill Neely *WFN*

RE: **New Judicial Center Space Needs Study: Proposed Expansion of the former Judicial Center (now District Courts) building**

DATE: 2/27/14

As you will recall, in 2005 the voters approved a Bond Referendum which included building a new Circuit Court Building, a new Sheriff's office and expanding and renovating the Judicial Center building (now called the District Courts building). As I understand it, the authorization to use such construction bonds will expire if they are not issued by 2015.

To the Board's credit, it then authorized bonds to build a new Circuit Court building and a new Sheriff's (Public Safety) building, but the Board delayed the renovation and expansion of the District Courts building that houses my office, which prosecutes over 16,000 criminal cases annually, until a Space Needs Study was conducted.

Such a study has now been performed and it confirms the need to expand and renovate this 1994 District Court building, in part because my office space is "maxed out" as are both the General District Court's clerk's office and the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Clerk's office.

Further, as you may recall the Virginia Supreme Court nearly 5 years ago determined that Spotsylvania County needed 3 new judges – one for each level of court – which judgeships were not funded by the General Assembly for several years. (Indeed, you will also recall that Stafford County, which has a similar population and court caseload has for years had essentially double the number of judges allocated to Spotsylvania). Finally this year the Governor put funding for 25 new judges into his 2015 budget and it appears that this budget will pass the General Assembly, as both Houses appear to have approved new judicial funding. 5 of the 25 new judges are allocated for the 15th circuit / district which includes Spotsylvania.

This new judicial funding should mean that Spotsylvania will finally receive **3 new judges effective 7/1/14** – one for each level of court. This means, I submit, that the Board should promptly approve the new Space Needs Study and issue the necessary bonds to renovate and expand the District Courts building in FY 2015. This will ensure that both my office and the District Courts will be in position to continue to best provide continued criminal justice and public safety.

cc: Judges Ellis, Rigual & Fines – Circuit, General District and JDR Court

SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Office of the Sheriff
Sheriff Roger L. Harris
Post Office Box 124
Spotsylvania, Virginia 22553
Phone: 540-582-7115 • Fax: 540-582-9448

To: David Ross, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
Doug Barnes, County Administrator

From: Lieutenant E.L. Scott

Date: February 27, 2014

Re: New Judicial Center Space Needs Study

By means of this memorandum, I am in full support of the Proposed Expansion of the former Judicial Center (Auxiliary Court). With the approval of three additional Judges the current building which would house two of the additional courts is ineffective due to lack of space and antiquated security areas.

As Lieutenant in the Court Services Division of the Sheriff's Office my concern is greater with the lack of personnel to meet the future needs of this proposal. Currently, this division has worked a total of 1,226 days (2013) in the current Circuit, General District and Juvenile Domestic Relations Courts. With the additional three Judges it would be essential to increase the personnel by nine (9) to adequately handle security concerns. With the additional case loads, there would also be additional prisoners utilizing this building. The Sheriff's Office would be responsible for staffing the security desk full-time as well as staffing the three additional court rooms. Additionally, deputies would also be needed to safely move prisoners from the holding cells. With the current amount of personnel these tasks could not be done.

On behalf of the Sheriff's Office, I thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to working with the board on any questions or concerns.