

**Upton County Board of Commissioners  
September 1, 2015 Work Session Minutes**

Call to Order

Chairman Blackston calls the meeting to order at 9:00 PM. All Commissioners are in attendance along with County Manager Jim Wheelless and County Attorney Heath English. The invocation was led by Comm. Ellington.

New Business

- a. Liz Hudson with Precision Planning gave a progress update.

**SCOPE OF PROJECT**

**I. PROGRAMMING**

- Interviews with department representatives
- Tours of existing spaces
- Preparation of spreadsheet of space needs

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN**

- Existing buildings to be renovated/expanded (historic courthouse, others)
- New centralized Justice Center

**III. COST ESTIMATING AND FINAL REPORT**

- Up to three potential projects estimated

**I. PROGRAMMING**

**A. HISTORIC COURTHOUSE**

Superior Court, Juvenile Court, DA's Office (partial), Court Sec.

**B. COUNTY ANNEX**

Clerk of Court

**C. COUNTY/CITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Probate Court

**D. DRAKE BUILDING**

Magistrate Court, District Attorney's Office

**I. PROGRAMMING**

**SPACE NEEDS:**

1. MAGISTRATE COURT: 4,794 sf
2. PROBATE COURT: 6,474 sf
3. SUPERIOR COURT : 9,207 sf
4. JUVENILE COURT: 6,612 sf
5. CLERK OF COURT: 5,049 sf
6. DISTRICT ATTORNEY: 5,403 sf
7. SHERIFF/COURT SECURITY: 1,373 sf
8. COMMON SPACE: 3,950 sf

Circulation Factor: 8,572 sf

Deduct Potential Shared Space: -1,660 sf

**TOTAL FACILITY: 49,774 sf**

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN**

**OPTION NO. 1: Historic Courthouse –renovation/expansion**

**OPTION NO. 2: Purchase/Renovation of Building in City Limits -TBD**

**OPTION NO. 3: New Justice Facility**

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN –OPTION NO. 1 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE –RENOVATION/EXPANSION**

**CHALLENGES:**

- SECURITY
- SPACE (14,000 Gross S.F. | 10,000 Usable SF)
- FUNCTIONALITY

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN –OPTION NO. 1 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE –RENOVATION/EXPANSION**

**Summary of Current SECURITY Challenges:**

- No Sheriff/Court Security office
- Multiple building entrances
- No dedicated path/stair/elevator for inmates, public and judges
- No permanent security screening
- No protection for courthouse staff (ex. Juvenile Clerks)
- Mixing of defendants, juries, witnesses
- No Juvenile “holding” (relegated to offices or corridor)
- No dedicated restrooms for inmates

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN –OPTION NO. 1 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE –RENOVATION/EXPANSION**

**Summary of Current SPACE Challenges:**

- Single Courtroom serving Superior, Juvenile and Jury Assembly  
(Oversized for typical proceedings)
- Single Hearing Room serving Grand Jury, backup for Juvenile Court
- No Juvenile “holding”
- No Jury Assembly Room
- No Sheriff/Court Security Office
- Space severely limited for:
  - Judges, Clerks and staff
  - District Attorney
  - Conference, Break, Restrooms and support space
  - Records storage

**II. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN –OPTION NO. 1 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE –RENOVATION/EXPANSION**

**Summary of Current FUNCTIONALITY Challenges:**

- Clerk of Court transferring files across the street in inclement weather
- Sheriff’s deputies transferring inmates from vehicles in the open, then up multiple flights of stairs in shackles
- Inmate holding not easily monitored
- Inmates sharing restrooms with court staff
- Witness room accessed only through courtroom

- **Poor acoustics in courtroom**
- **Potential jurors assembling on lawn or using courtroom, displacing**

**Juvenile and Superior Court**

**CONCEPTUAL DESIGN –OPTION NO. 2 RENOVATION OF BUILDING IN CITY LIMITS**

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- **40-60,000 SF Interior Space**
- **Location in City limits**
- **Minimum Parking: 200 spaces**

**COST ESTIMATING AND FINAL REPORT**

**Preliminary Cost Estimating**

**1. Historic Courthouse: \$2-4M interior renovation only**

**(Note: Majority of court-related problems not addressed)**

**2. Renovation of Existing (Warehouse type) Building: \$6-8M**

**3. New Central Justice Facility: \$10-12M**

**COST ESTIMATING AND FINAL REPORT**

**Next Steps...**

- 1. Confirm the concept design options to pursue**
- 2. Prepare a basic concept plan for each option**
- 3. Prepare Cost Estimates for each option**
- 4. Present final report with pros and cons**

A motion by Comm. Hudson with a second by Comm. Spraggins to amend the agenda for an executive session to discuss personal, the motion passed unanimously.

- Chairman and Comm. Wilder met with Salem VFD about a truck, and the Chairman feels they are behind the other departments and he thinks they should be brought up with the others. Trucks that will carry 1250 gallons are quoted around \$150,000. Lincoln Park does not have a facility for their needs. They don't have an adequate place to park their trucks. He would recommend looking for and purchasing property to build them a facility. Also look into purchasing equipment for county wide communication.

Commissioner Spraggins asked about a grant to purchase a truck for Salem Fire Department. Chairman stated that he grants are few now days. Comm. Ellington stated that the other Chiefs are willing to help Salem with a grant and added it may take 6 months to a year for this process. Comm. Wilder stated that they needed to look into grants if any there are available. Comm. Hudson asked can we give departments money with the intent on them using it for matching funds. It was explained that the money has to be held by the county until it is needed. There is about \$65,000 left per department after the extraction equipment has been purchased.

The board discussed writing a commitment letter to the volunteer fire departments. The money can be keep by the county for up to five years after the SPLOST ends. The money will be released to the departments when a purchased approved by the board is made.

- The board discussed the beer and wine ordinance. Comm. Hudson recommended adding 100 yard from a church, alcohol treatment center or school ground, campus or building. The distance from a church should be measured from front door of the sanctuary to the door of the building and the distance from a school building or alcohol treatment center should be measured property line to property line.

The board also discussed the distilled spirits ordinance. They decided the distance of 100 yards from a church to a building sealing distilled spirits measuring it door to door. The distance from an alcohol treatment center to the sale of distilled spirits should be 100 yards, measuring property line to property line. The distance from a school building, ground or campus to the sale of distilled spirits should be 200 yards measured property line to property line.

Chairman Blackston recommended making the distance 200 yards from each location.

- d. Chairman Blackston asked the board to think about the Waste ordinance where the home owner is being held responsible for the trash service and not the renter and they will discuss it at a later date.

A motion was made by Comm. Ellington with a second by Comm. Blackston to exit regular session into executive session.

A motion was made by Comm. Hudson with a second from Comm. Ellington to exit executive session back into regular session.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Chairman Blackston with a second from Comm. Spraggins to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 am.

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Chairman Rusty Blackston

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Commissioner Steve Hudson

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Commissioner Frank Spraggins

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Commissioner Lorenzo Wilder

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Commissioner Ralph Ellington

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Jim Wheelless, County Manager