



## **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER MINUTES JUDICIAL BUILDING PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**August 25, 2011**

The Cassia County Board of Commissioners met this day with Paul Christensen and Bob Kunau, Board Members; Joseph W. Larsen, Clerk of the Board, and Kerry D. McMurray, County Administrator, present.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman of the Board, Bob Kunau called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Kunau referred to the placement of the judge's bench in the Jerome facility as a concern and indicated that centering placement would serve the courtroom better. He also recommended the witness box at ground level for handicap accessibility. Fifth Judicial Trial Court Administrator, Linda Wright indicated that a ramp could also be appropriate. He also addressed the need for a separate hallway for prisoners to always be segregated from the public. With prisoners locked up in the proposed sally port area in the southeast portion of the facility may allow that. He also indicated that it may be impossible to have the defendant and the jury separated as well.

Further discussion included that the jury and the public should be separate. Movement from the courtroom to the jury room and jury restroom should also be separate from the prisoners. Linda. Soundproofing was discussed as an issue with the jury room and the jury restroom. Kunau stressed that we may need to rely on an architect for the appropriate design.

Public Defender, Dennis Byington also referred to the necessity of soundproofing to inhibit the jury from hearing legal argument.

Attorney William A. Parsons expressed his opinion that we should work directly with an architect and forget the Jerome judicial facility.

Clerk of the District Court, Joseph W. Larsen expressed the need for a common area for clerks and to perhaps incorporate partitioning between work stations.

The number and size of courtrooms was discussed as an important first consideration. The courtroom structure should be appropriately placed and good visuals within the courtroom were stressed. Additional needs were discussed which included a room for the defender, a consultation room near the courtroom, adequate lobby space for people attending court, and the need for separation for both the defendant witnesses and the prosecution witnesses. It was also suggested that we get general ideas to the architect and then work together with them.

Wright indicated that small hallways are a problem on law and motion days in Twin Falls. Parsons said that an architect is needed who has courtroom experience. He indicated that Ada County has a good layout and suggested that we should inquire as to who their architect was.

Kunau said that the front of the building would need to be redone. There is approximately fifteen (15) feet west of the building adjoining the alleyway that could be utilized to gain more space. Wright stressed appropriate placement of the entry, foyer, and security area. Deputy

Prosecuting Attorney, Blaine Cannon indicated that a decision on whether to have three (3) or four (4) courtrooms is the main consideration at this point. Civil, Criminal, and visiting judges could demand a need to have a fourth courtroom.

Judges offices and an adjoining chamber meeting area were discussed. Commissioner Christensen asked Wright about the population base needed to necessitate another district judge. It was inferred that a judge could be brought from Minidoka County when needed.

Larsen suggested that there be a hierarchy of priority of what occupies the new judicial building starting with the courtrooms and expanding out from there with that priority list.

Parsons again mentioned the Ada County judicial building and suggested that a selected architect can help arrange and position those who should occupy the court facility. He indicated that the architect selected from the County's previous attempt at building a new courthouse was very good to listen. He said that most importantly they need to be someone who has courtroom experience.

Administrator McMurray has presented a request for qualifications in the architecture community of those who may wish to be considered to be the architect. They have been asked to provide previous projects and experience related to this type of architectural work. He indicated that finding who will do the best job is paramount and once you make a preliminary selection, you should then inquire their costs. Kunau stated that an architect with experience in renovation versus new construction is important.

We need to see what the best utilization of space is with the facility. Support poles should not be a huge issue with the layout. We need to see if after talking to an architect there is enough room for the public defender's and/or prosecutor's office.

McMurray has already received information from some architects and he asked for their contact information. Fifth Judicial Judge Michael Crabtree talked about getting information out as they do for Public Works. McMurray will prepare a draft for review of the committee members. Following selection of an architect, we then should establish priorities of placement.

Larsen suggested the possibilities of housing archived court records in an area upstairs and for records that need to be accessible to the clerks located near the clerk's area. Ceiling height is a consideration as to whether storage could be possible above the center of the facility.

Kunau reiterated that what is done must be done within our financial constraints.

Citizen Casey Anderson expressed the need to look for the facility to last 50 to 75 years into the future. Doing it right is more important than doing it cheap. He indicated that the City of Burley building inspector previously estimated a \$2 million cost for proposed renovation for that building as a library facility. The County budget for remodeling the facility is about \$1.2 million.

McMurray indicated that once requests are sent out to architects, it is about four weeks to open and put proposals together for consideration.

### **RECESS**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m. for the Judicial Building Planning Committee until further notice pending search for and consideration of an architect.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE AT TODAY'S MEETING**

Patty Justesen, Treasurer; Sheriff Randy Kidd, Cassia County Sheriff's Office; Laurie Welch, The Times News; Renee Wells, The Voice; Kari Merrill, Weekly News Journal; Deputy Shannon Taylor, Cassia County Sheriff's Office/Court Security; Blaine Cannon, Prosecutor's Office; Judge Rick Bollar, Magistrate Judge; William A. Parsons, Attorney; Linda Wright, 5<sup>th</sup> District Trial Court Administrator; Dennis Byington, Public Defender; Casey Anderson, citizen.

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED:**

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph W. Larsen, Clerk

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Kunau, Vice Chairman