**Minutes: Court Facilities Improvement Advisory Committee**

Beryl Levine Conference Room and Phone conference

**January 20, 2023**

**Members Present**

Sally Holewa, Chair, State Court Administrator

Shannon Holter, Burke County Commissioner representing counties with a population of under 7,500

Chad Peterson, Cass County Commissioner representing counties with a population of over 7,500

Seth Thompson, representative of the State Bar Association

Karen Karls, State Representative

**Members Absent**

Angela Carlson, Hettinger County Commissioner representing counties with a population of under 7,500

**Others Present**

Sara Behrens, Staff Attorney

Dion Ulrich, Accounting Staff

Scott Johnson, Unit 1 Court Administrator

Chris Iverson, Unit 2 Court Administrator

Donna Wunderlich, Unit 3 Court Administrator

Carolyn Probst, Unit 4 Court Administrator

Sandy Fossum, Richland County Auditor

Beth Didier, Barnes County Auditor

Judge Michael Hurley

Tina Powell, McHenry County Clerk of Court

Jason Flack, Comstock Construction

The January 13, 2022 meeting minutes were previously approved by the ad hoc committee of Rep. Karls and Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson moved to confirm the approval, seconded by Mr. Holter. Motion carried.

Ms. Holewa provided the background of the committee and reminded the members that we are looking for the request to be court-related and a necessary improvement or addition to the court. If a motion is made to approve the request, it is a motion that it meets both factors. We can always bifurcate the factors if needed. Twenty-five percent of the funds must be allocated to counties under 7,500. Counties must pay at least 25% of the amount and may request a grant for the other 75%.

Introductions were done as we have a couple new members.

The balance today is $600,175.49. The requests total $1,126,123.14. Mr. Peterson asked to confirm that the balance does not include the Richland County funds from the previous round. Mr. Ulrich confirmed.

Past Grant Update

Barnes County made changes after the grant due to debate over who was moving into the space. They have asked for an extension. Ms. Didier explained that the project has not started but the plans have been finalized. The space will be utilized by the clerks and judges. Mr. Peterson asked if they are still comfortable with the amount. Ms. Didier stated that anything over the grant approved will be paid for by the County. Mr. Thompson moved approval of the extension, Mr. Peterson seconded and the motion carried.

Sargent County returned its grant as the planned carpeting project was opposed by the State Historical Society.

Richland County is asking for an extension for another year. The project has not started. They are in the process of finishing the design and development. The plan is for bidding to occur at the end of March 2023. Mr. Flack stated the first project was shelved as the price escalated due to COVID. The design is taking so long because there is not much extra room in the old courthouse and they have to figure out where to put the equipment. Ms. Fossum stated another factor was the loss of the county shop. They are just finishing the new shop and getting new equipment.

Mr. Peterson expressed frustration over the amount of good those funds could have done in this past year. Mr. Thompson asked if the County will move forward with the project whether the extension if granted or not. Ms. Fossum stated they would. They are using ARPA funds to cover what the grant does not cover. They are still looking at an entrance project as well due to an incident last spring. Mr. Peterson asked how comfortable Mr. Flack is with the current numbers. Mr. Flack is comfortable that they can do the project for the bid as of today.

Ward County is seeking a short extension. They are installing panic buttons and wiring and they are not quite finished in November of 2022. Ms. Probst explained that the contractors will be there on January 30 to complete the project. Mr. Peterson moved to grant the extension, Mr. Thompson seconded and the motion carried.

Once Rep. Karls joined, the Richland extension request was taken up. Mr. Thompson explained he is leaning towards denying the request. The shop fire was discussed last time they sought an extension of another project. Mr. Peterson noted that the county was fully insured and the delay was only equipment which they borrowed from Cass County. Mr. Thompson moved to deny the extension. While it is a difficult decision, it did impact a lot of other projects. Rep. Karls seconded.

Mr. Peterson asked about partially funding. Staff clarified that the amount cannot be changed at this point. Ms. Holewa noted that the letter granting the request states that absent good cause they must start within four months. Mr. Peterson asked if they can reapply. Mr. Thompson stated that they could apply again next year. Ms. Holewa clarified that they could not apply for reimbursement of the project.

The motion to deny the extension carried.

With the Richland County amount being put back in, the amount is $1,250,675.48. Mr. Peterson asked if there are ever years where money is carried over. Mr. Ulrich explained that the requests are typically more than the amount available. It was noted that there would be sufficient funds now to fund all requests this round.

**Review of 2023 Grant Proposals (19th Round)**

Ms. Holewa stated that we will begin with McHenry County as Ms. Powell is present. It will be assumed that the motion is for the full amount of the request unless stated otherwise.

County Applications – Populations of less than 7,500

**McHenry County**

Grant Request: $110,890.41

Project Description: They would like to remodel the courtroom and jury room. Jury room would be made larger and a bathroom added.

Judge Hurley explained the issues with the facilities being very old. Ms. Powell also noted that the current jury room cannot fit a twelve person jury, particularly with social distancing. Mr. Thompson noted that looking at the past grants, McHenry County’s requests have been quite modest. Ms. Powell believes the last was in 2015 for an HVAC system. Mr. Johnson stated that they have hired JLG and have been working on planning this for two years. Other than cosmetic, the building has been relatively untouched since 1907. Ms. Powell commented that the historical society has approved of the plans.

Ms. Holewa asked if the projects could be separated if needed. Ms. Powell stated the top priorities would be the jury room and bathroom.

Mr. Thompson moved to tentatively approve, seconded by Mr. Holter and the motion carried.

Rep. Karls moved to reconsider the tentative approval. Mr. Thompson seconded and the motion carried.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded the full grant request of $110,890.41.**

**Bottineau County**

Grant Request: $7,430.25

Project Description: They would like to purchase a height adjustable workstation with 2 monitors and a side table for clerk’s office.

Mr. Johnson explained that they have been working to enhance security which as decreased workspace. They are also asking for an ergonomic workstation for a deputy clerk.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $7,430.25.**

**Cavalier County**

Grant Request: $10,050.00

Project Description: They would like to replace the lighting in the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $10,050.00.**

**Divide County #1**

Grant Request: $3,975.00

Project Description: They would like to replace the walk-through security scanner.

Ms. Probst explained this is for the courtroom door. The current scanner is no longer functioning.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $3,975.00.**

**Divide County #2**

Grant Request: $3,635.00

Project Description: They would like to install security cameras in court-related space.

Ms. Probst explained this is only for the cameras in the court areas.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $3,635.00.**

**Grant County**

Grant Request: $3,067.50

Project Description: They would like to update storage in their vault and allow for locked areas as it is shared with other offices.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $3,067.50.**

**Hettinger County #1**

Grant Request: $15,942.28

Project Description: They would like to put a false ceiling in the courtroom and replace the benches and jury chairs and replace the lighting in the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $15,942.28.**

**Hettinger County #2**

Grant Request: $1,513.39

Project Description: They would like to purchase a new computer.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $1,513.39.**

**Hettinger County #3**

Grant Request: $434.23

Project Description: They would like to purchase flags for the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $434.23.**

**Hettinger County #4**

Grant Request: $4,431.06

Project Description: They would like to install a new air condition in the deliberation room.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $4,431.06.**

**Total for Hettinger County Grant: $22,320.97**

**Logan County #1**

Grant Request: $7,777.12

Project Description: They would like to replace the carpet in the jury room and courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $7,777.12.**

**Logan County #2**

Grant Request: $21,425.25

Project Description: They would like to replace the room divider in the jury room.

Ms. Iverson explained that the current room divider is an accordion style and is falling apart and nonfunctional.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Rep. Karls and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $21,425.25 contingent upon the County submitting a sketch and an updated bid.**

**Logan County #3**

Grant Request: $2,112.00

Project Description: They would like to purchase 4 computer ports for the clerks’ office.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $2,112.00.**

**Logan County #4**

Grant Request: $1,836.75

Project Description: They would like to purchase a laptop, docking station and Microsoft Office for the clerks’ office.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $1,836.75.**

**McIntosh County**

Grant Request: $295.90

Project Description: They would like to purchase a paper shredder and two exit signs.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $295.90.**

**Oliver County**

Grant Request: $8,902.68

Project Description: They would like to replace the windows in the clerk’s office and judge’s chambers.

Sally noted that the updated amount is following a count of windows that are court facility windows. The original amount included windows from the states’ attorney and sheriff’s offices.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $8,902.68.**

**Ransom County**

Grant Request: $16,617.06

Project Description: They would like to install exit lights on the 3rd floor for the courtroom and offices and a retractable ladder on the outside of the clerk of court office for fire exit route.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $16,617.06.**

**Rolette County**

Grant Request: $23,136.00

Project Description: They would like to re-upholster the seating in the courtroom, jury room, and on the hallway chairs and replace the jury seating in the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $23,136.00.**

**Sargent County**

Grant Request: $86,821.57

Project Description: They would like to replace windows and interior glazing panel annealed glass brown frame with mini blinds in the clerk of court office, courtroom, jury room, and court storage room.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thomposn and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $86,821.57 contingent upon validation of location of the windows.**

**Towner County**

Grant Request: $3,345.00

Project Description: They would like to replace pew cushions in the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $3,345.00.**

**Wells County**

Grant Request: $73,187.81

Project Description: They would like to replace windows in the courtroom, jury room, men’s bathroom, and clerk of court office.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant of $73,187.81 contingent upon more detail of location being submitted.**

County Applications – Populations of more than 7,500

**Cass County**

Grant Request: $54,134.00

Project Description: They would like to create a jury deliberation room on the third floor of the courthouse.

Ms. Iverson explained that this is a separate project from a previous grant.

**It was moved by Rep. Karls, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously (Mr. Peterson abstained) that the county be awarded a grant of $54,134.00.**

**Grand Forks County**

Grant Request: $173,786.25

Project Description: They would like to enhance the front entrance security station of the courthouse.

Mr. Johnson explained this is the same security equipment that has been in use since they were able to install security following Judge Jahnke’s shooting. The new guidance is to add a command center. Cass County and Burleigh County have more enhanced setups than Grand Forks. He noted that the court occupies 80% of the building and has space on every floor.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $173,786.25.**

**Morton County #1**

Grant Request: $165,629.91

Project Description: They are seeking to update wallcovering, ceiling tiles, lighting, and carpet in both courtroom on the 3rd floor and the judge’s chambers, library, court reporters’ office along with moving doors for hallway access.

Ms. Wunderlich explained that the judges currently have to walk through the offices to get to the courtroom. They would be moving the doors to close off the office and make a new hallway.

Mr. Peterson asked how the county would rank the projects. Ms. Wunderlich stated that request #1 would be their primary request. Mr. Thompson noted that Morton County hasn’t submitted a request since the 13th round.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $165,629.91.**

**Mr. Peterson moved to table requests 2-4, seconded by Mr. Holter and motion carried.**

**Morton County #2**

Grant Request: $126,805.49

Project Description: They are seeking to remodel the jury room to allow jury to enter and exit without going through courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Rep. Karls and carried 3-1 that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $126,805.49.**

**Morton County #3**

Grant Request: $17,334.53

Project Description: They are seeking to update hallway wallcovering, ceiling tiles and lights on 3rd floor outside courtrooms and court offices.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Rep. Karls and carried 3-1 that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $17,334.53.**

**Morton County #4**

Grant Request: $13,051.79

Project Description: They are seeking to replace the ceiling tiles and lights in courtroom 200.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Rep. Karls and carried 3-1 that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $13,051.79.**

**Stutsman County #1**

Grant Request: $6,940.50

Project Description: They are seeking to replace the waiting room chairs and tables in the district court.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $6,940.50.**

**Stutsman County #2**

Grant Request: $10,403.67

Project Description: They are seeking to widen the stairwell entrance to the lobby/waiting room to allow for greater social distancing and safer flow of traffic to the clerk counter and through security, replace carpet, repair walls and paint, install sun control film on the windows, and add a shelf for public terminal.

**It was moved by Mr. Peterson, seconded by Mr. Thompson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $10,403.67.**

**Walsh County**

Grant Request: $8,250.00

Project Description: They want to pad the pews in the courtroom.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $8,250.00.**

**Ward County #1**

Grant Request: $7,198.00

Project Description: They are seeking to replace the heat pump in courtroom 101.

Ms. Probst confirmed that this is a heat pump in the main courtroom dedicated to that space.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Rep. Karls and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $7,198.00.**

**Ward County #2**

Grant Request: $58,811.00

Project Description: They are seeking to renovate courtroom 100 for better use of space and to provide a safer environment for the judge and staff.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $58,811.00.**

**Williams County #1**

Grant Request: $32,102.00

Project Description: They are seeking to renovate a private office for additional space for chambers and the jury room.

Ms. Probst explained that currently the jury has to go right by the judge whenever going in or out of the jury room. They’ve also had two incidents of jurors tripping and it is a very tight space.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $32,102.00.**

**Williams County #2**

Grant Request: $6,423.00

Project Description: They are seeking to replace the attorney chairs in the courtrooms.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Peterson and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $6,423.00.**

**Williams County #3**

Grant Request: $13,766.00

Project Description: They are seeking to replace and add shelving for case files and index books in the clerk of court office.

**It was moved by Mr. Thompson, seconded by Mr. Holter and carried unanimously that the county be awarded a grant in the amount of $13,766.00.**

Going back to the Morton County requests 2-4, Mr. Thompson stated he is in favor and moved to approve requests 2-4, seconded by Rep. Karls. Mr. Peterson would like to reserve some of the funds for next year. The motion carried 3-1.

Other Business

The Committee decided to meet only in January. A subcommittee to review the minutes was established consisting of Mr. Thompson and Mr. Peterson.