

Municipal Court Bid Omissions

By Judge Janet Dyar Welch

A site has been identified, the building has been purchased, and plans have been drawn up. The Municipal Court project has been sent out for bid. Bids are due June 15th. This article discusses some important items purposely omitted from the bid package.

Furniture, communications and technology equipment are not part of the bid package. The Court and Law Director's staff have completed a comprehensive inventory of all furniture and office equipment. This includes everything that is not nailed down such as: desks, tables, chairs, file cabinets, printer carts, book shelves, computer equipment, calculators and so forth.

The furniture that is still in decent shape will be moved and used in the renovated facility. For instance, jury chairs, counsel tables, several desks and chairs, file cabinets and shelving are among the items being moved.

The deputy clerks desks are, by and large, junk. They were not designed for computer work which leads to other problems. Some desks have broken parts and are well over thirty years old.

Those desks will be replaced with units that address the ergonomic needs of the employee, are thoughtfully designed with sound deadening panels, and have drawers that work. These units are widely available through commercial furniture suppliers and are found in offices throughout the area. Some secondhand units are available through excess federal property sources. The cost to the court is limited to the expense of moving the property. A local professional moving company will move these items when they become available to us.

We intend to assemble some units now and dispose of the old desks. This saves storage and permits the staff to evaluate the suitability of the units.

The new facility will not be ready for almost a year. Purchase decisions on other necessary furniture are being delayed until construction contracts are awarded and the cost of financing is a bit more predictable.

The Court staff is continuing to investigate other cost savings to furnish the facility. For instance, the park style benches that came with the building will be used for seating in the public areas. The County Commissioners gave the Court a section of molded plastic seating that will work well outside the prisoner elevator. Marietta College gave library shelving from the old Dawes Memorial Library to the City. A number of those shelves are reserved for Court use.

The current Supreme Court security standards impose screening requirements applicable to people who enter new or renovated justice facilities. Chief Probation Officer Dale Willson has contacted State and Federal officials to establish eligibility for used equipment in good working order.

The Clerk and the City IT Department arranged demonstrations by various communication systems providers. The present system is basically obsolete and replacement parts are expensive. The specifications are now being drafted for final approval, then bidding.

Computer hardware is updated on a capital replacement schedule adopted last year. Some new items will be required but the cost will be paid by the Court Computer Fund.

At every turn, the Court and Law Director's office have worked to limit the purchase of new furnishings and equipment. We will continue to do so.