

## Item 25



# Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** December 18, 2012

**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Leslie Stricklan, AIA, Sr. Project Manager, FMD, 854-4778 *Leslie Stricklan*

**Dept. Head:** Roger El Khoury, M.S., P.E., Director, FMD, 854-4579 *Roger El Khoury*

**County Executive:** Leslie Browder, Planning and Budget, 854-9106 *Leslie Browder*

**Sponsoring Court Members:** County Judge Sam Biscoe

### AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Consider and take appropriate action on approval of space allocation of Room 118 at the Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse to the Civil Courts and approve funding for minor improvements.

### BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Facilities Management Department (FMD) met with representatives of the current officials occupying the Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse (HMS) - Civil Courts, Probate Court, Justice of the Peace Precinct 5, District Clerk and County Clerk to discuss the options for reuse of Room 118 which was vacated by the Law Library in 2012. A consensus was reached that the best use of this space would be for a "Multi-function / Hearing / Court Room" assigned to the Civil Courts, with shared use by the Justice of the Peace. Refer to attachment 1 for detailed description of proposed room reuse.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

FMD recommends that Commissioners Court approve the space allocation and improvement funding for the proposed use, which will serve functions with high public traffic, for which this ground floor location is ideal, and for which improvement costs are minor, as noted below.

### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

This space allocation will help the Civil Courts better serve the public, especially families and children.

### FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

New funding requested by FMD to make the improvements necessary for converting Room 118 into a multi-function / hearing / court room:

\$ 17,660 Construction  
\$ 25,200 Furniture  
\$15,180 Equipment – Sound amplification & assisted listening  
\$ 58,040 Total project funds requested from CAR Reserves

Please note that the Civil Courts have proposed to internally fund the Information Technology infrastructure and equipment costs for Room 118.

**ATTACHMENTS/EXHIBITS:**

1. Uses for Room 118

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

PBO – Leslie Browder, County Executive

October 12, 2012

## **USES FOR ROOM 118 – By the Civil Courts**

We are requesting the use of the space in Room 118 (which is 811 square feet) as a multi-purpose room to accommodate the following functions:

- 1) **Hearings Courtroom / Visiting Judge Courtroom** - To replace the hearing courtroom in 511 that is being taken over as a family court. (e.g., Hearings involve visiting judges assigned to individual cases in Travis County by the Presiding Judge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Administrative Judicial Region and visiting judges brought in to cover the docket when all the courtrooms are in use.)
- 2) **Protective Order Applicants** – Safe holding area where county attorney meets with applicants before protective order docket (Tuesday morning, Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning). Security solution for Sheriff's Office to provide them with the protection they need.
- 3) **CPS Children's Waiting Area** - For the CPS dockets. The CPS docket will increase from twice a week (50-60 families) to five times a week (125-150 families) in the December 2012/January 2013 timeframe.
- 4) **Family Law Waiting Area** – Lawyers and clients would frequently utilize the space for settlement negotiations.
- 5) **Judges' Conference Room / General Meeting Space** – To replace the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room (Room 418) for monthly Judges' Meetings, general internal meetings, technology meetings.
- 6) **Training / Continuing Legal Education Programs (Internal and External):**
  - a. Judges' Lunch Hour CLE each month.
  - b. Austin Bar Association's CLE in the courthouse.
  - c. Training/practice for attorneys to use the eCourtroom equipment (e.g, school finance, new technology, etc.)
- 7) **Overflow for High Profile Trials** – In trials that have a large public interest, we can have people watch the trial in this overflow courtroom via monitors.
- 8) **Judge-Ordered Mediations and Depositions** - Depositions or mediations ordered by a Judge in cases where security issues require parties to pass through security screening for weapons.