



**Department of the
Municipal Court**

Kristine M. Hinrichs
Chief Court Administrator

May 16, 2002

Aldерwoman Suzanne Breier
Chair, Public Improvements Committee
Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Aldерwoman Breier,

We are writing concerning File # 020232 "Resolution assigning a portion of the Police Administration Building (749 West State Street) to Municipal Court for use by Wisconsin Correctional Services". This resolution provides for the allocation of a portion of the space within the Police Administration Building (PAB) formerly occupied by the Traffic Bureau to the Municipal Court for use by our contractor, Wisconsin Correctional Service (WCS). This request is consistent with the opinion issued by City Attorney Grant Langley on May 9, 2002 stating that the authority for the allocation of space within the Police Administration Building, and all other City buildings, rests with the Common Council.

As you may know, the WCS Municipal Court Intervention Program provides Municipal Court Judges with financial evaluations and alternatives to jail or fine payments for defendants who are indigent, disabled, or in need of special services. WCS makes referrals to the appropriate social service agencies and treatment providers and supervises community service alternatives ordered by the judges for these defendants. These alternatives will ultimately reduce Milwaukee County Criminal Justice Facility and House of Correction populations and the City's cost of housing defendants in these facilities.

This need for space is long-standing. For several years the court has waited patiently with the expectation that our needs would be met when the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) moved large numbers of staff to the new facility on Lisbon Avenue. The court now seeks the allocation of a portion of the space on the second floor of the Police Administration Building (PAB) formerly occupied by the Traffic Bureau to the Municipal Court for use by WCS. Funding for any remodeling or retrofitting of this space was provided by the Common council in the 2002 Capital Budget. The need for this space is critical. Over the years, the court has moved our own staff and consolidated our operations in order to provide space for WCS - this space is inadequate and compromises the safety of court and WCS staff and of the public. It also completely compromises the confidentiality of the contacts between WCS staff and their clients. We ask that the Public Improvements Committee consider the following:

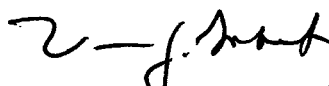
- Four WCS case workers share an office and see clients (simultaneously) in a space measuring 13' x 10'. This "office" provides absolutely no privacy for confidential client discussions, no waiting area, and does not provide for an ability to separate a client who may become unruly from other case workers or clients. This problem is often exacerbated when clients must be accompanied to court by children or other family members.
- Three other case workers share an office and see clients in a 10' x 10' space, again with no privacy for confidential client discussions, no waiting area, and no ability to separate unruly clients from others.
- Two WCS managers share a space in our lobby - barely 9 feet square. This space is enclosed by six foot-tall partitions that provide no relief from the noise and congestion generated by the hundreds of people who come into the court each day. In this space they see clients, make arrangements for treatment and other client-related activities, and try to focus on their management responsibilities.

The attached photographs illustrate the conditions under which clients are interviewed and evaluated. We have also attached copies of the 2002 Capital Budget request, an excerpt from the adopted 2002 Capital Budget that includes funding of this project, the space needs allocation for WCS prepared by DPW in 1999, and our most recent correspondence with Chief Jones regarding this matter.

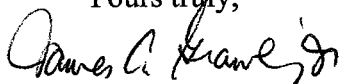
We have discussed our needs and alternatives to meet them with Chief Jones on many occasions. Every available space that the court has identified has been immediately allocated by the Police Chief to another purpose. Now, more than three months have passed since our latest letter to the chief - without a response. Instead, within the last two weeks, he has begun to retrofit the space we have requested for use by MPD, even though the authority to do so rests with the Common Council. Frankly, given the seriousness of our needs and the space that MPD has gained with opening of the new police facility on Lisbon Avenue, we do not understand the Police Chief's lack of responsiveness to the court. We certainly do not believe that he would expect or allow police department employees or command staff to work under conditions like this. The current conditions are not conducive to the positive resolution of the cases with which WCS is involved, do not protect the privacy of clients, and present serious safety issues for WCS and court staff, clients, and the public.

We will be happy to respond to any of the committee's questions concerning the court's needs or to provide a tour of our facilities for you and members of the Public Improvements Committee. We believe that our need is compelling and obvious and that this need can be easily met by allocating the space as the court has requested.


Yours truly,



VINCENT BOBOT
Municipal Judge
Branch One



For LOUIS B. BUTLER, JR.
Presiding Judge
Branch Two



JAMES A. GRAMLING, JR.
Municipal Judge
Branch Three

c: Alderman Michael D'Amato
Chief Court Administrator Kristine Hinrichs
Program Director Sue Eckhart, Wisconsin Correctional Services