



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.
C-17

For the meeting of: June 23, 2015

Date: June 9, 2015
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Phillip Smith-Hanes, County Administrative Officer *PSH*
Subject: Re-allocation of Unused Space on the Fifth Floor of the County Courthouse for District Attorney Programs

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors re-assigns the unused space on the fifth floor of the County Courthouse for use by District Attorney programs.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund

DISCUSSION:

In 1999, as part of the seismic retrofit project at the County Courthouse, the Board received information from staff indicating that the Auditor-Controller's office would eventually be relocated to the fifth floor of the Courthouse, along with the Clerk-Recorder's office. This plan was based on other plans to move Court Services to the first floor, replacing the space then (and now) occupied by the Auditor-Controller. Plans to relocate Court Services were subsequently abandoned due to cost, so the Auditor-Controller's office never relocated. In 2006, staff recommended (and the Board approved) evaluating a move of the Elections

Prepared by Phillip Smith-Hanes CAO Approval *Amy Nusen*
REVIEW: Auditor _____ County Counsel _____ Human Resources _____ Other _____

TYPE OF ITEM:
 Consent
 Departmental
 Public Hearing
 Other _____

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No. E-2
Meeting of: 5/9/06

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
Upon motion of Supervisor *Bass* Seconded by Supervisor *Sundberg*
Ayes *Sundberg, Fennell, Bohn, Bass*
Nays _____
Abstain _____
Absent *Lovelace*

and carried by those members present, the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: June 23, 2015
By: *Phillip Smith-Hanes*
Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board

Division to the unused space on the fifth floor. This was believed to have two principal advantages: allowing for greater supervision of Elections staff by the Clerk-Recorder's office and freeing up space at the Clark Complex to be repurposed for other county functions.

While both of those goals continue to be important, a subsequent evaluation of the space by staff determined that the fifth floor is not ideally suited to use by the Elections Division for a number of reasons, including:

- The physical size of the space would not permit Elections equipment to be stored on-site without significant modifications;
- The installation of entrance screening at the Courthouse would create difficulties for access by media and the public on election nights; and
- Changes in election laws are expected to result in more residents voting at the Elections office, which would be difficult to accommodate due to the two-elevator pathway to the fifth floor of the Courthouse.

During the time this evaluation was occurring, the District Attorney's Victim-Witness staff has been located in office space adjacent to the Courthouse that is leased. The cost of this space has risen faster than the grant funding that supports the operations of Victim-Witness services, resulting in a General Fund subsidy of the lease expenses. In addition, the Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) is housed in the same building with the Public Defender, resulting in potential conflicts between crime victims and alleged perpetrators.

The Clerk-Recorder and District Attorney have now agreed that the best solution for all parties concerned is to find a leased space in the downtown Eureka area that will fit the needs of the Elections Division better than the space on the fifth floor of the Courthouse, and to in turn use that space to house the Victim-Witness and CAST programs of the District Attorney's office. This recommendation furthers the long-term plan of the interdepartmental Facilities Task Force to centralize public safety functions in the Courthouse. At the budget hearing on June 8, your Board directed allocation of funding to begin the process of moving the Elections Division – which is reflected in the final budget being considered today in a separate item.

It is estimated that remodeling of the fifth floor will be necessary to accommodate Victim-Witness and CAST, but that this cost will be less than the long-term cost of either continuing to lease space for Victim-Witness or accommodating the Elections storage needs. The estimated time frame for remodeling is 12-18 months, so the District Attorney will be bringing a short-term extension of the lease for the current Victim-Witness space to allow the remodeling to occur. Public Works will also be returning to the Board with a detailed explanation of plans for future space utilization and cost estimates.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Approval of the recommended action has no direct financial impact, but is expected to result in expenditures (and potential budgetary requests) for the District Attorney's office. The proposed action is consistent with your Board's strategic framework, priorities for new initiatives, in that it provides core services in ways that safeguard the public trust through managing resources to ensure sustainability of services. It also advances the key goal for 2015-16 of streamlining the inventory of county properties.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Not applicable.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could decline to reassign the unused space. This would leave in place the direction from 2006 to determine the feasibility of moving the Elections Division to the fifth floor. This alternative is not recommended, as that determination has been made and the Board has already agreed to a budgetary request to begin the process of relocating the Elections Division elsewhere.

The Board could reassign the space to another department. This alternative is not recommended as the District Attorney's office is the only department located immediately beneath the unused space and has a need for space in close proximity to their main office.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.