



MINUTES
JUNE 14, 2018 - 5:00 P.M.

LAURENS COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH WELFARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES – HILLCREST SQUARE
CONFERENCE ROOM

ATTENDANCE - COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT- Committee Chairman David Pitts; Council Committee Members Garrett McDaniel and Keith Tollison.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE – Council Member and Chairman, Joe Wood.

COUNTY STAFF- Laurens County Administrator Jon Caime; Laurens County Clerk to Council Betty Walsh and Rob Russian, Director of Public Works.

LAURENS COUNTY DEPARTMENT HEAD ATTENDANCE – Carey Bolt, Veterans Affairs Officer and Lynn West, Director, Registration and Elections.

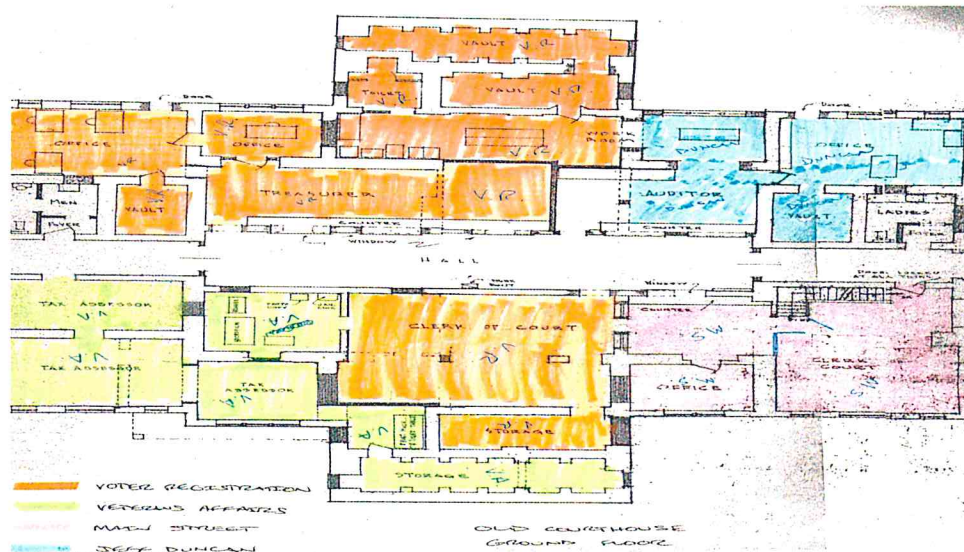
PRESS - No Press attending.

MEETING NOTIFICATION - The County Council Committee Members and media were informed of the meeting in a timely manner. Postings of the Agenda were posted in County facilities on their bulletin boards and also posted on the County Web Site

CALL TO ORDER – Committee Chairman Pitts called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. and asked for all to stand for the invocation and pledge of allegiance. Committee Chairman Pitts provided the invocation.

OVERVIEW OF OFFICE SPACE – Chairman Pitts asked for Mr. Bolt to address his concerns for office space. Mr. Bolt said, “I presently have two (2) employees in the Laurens County VA Office, other than myself and another manager that comes in from time to time. Office space within the Veterans Affairs Office is inadequate for employees discussing private matters with veterans and family and secure filing methods is not secure and with no room to expand. Storage for wheelchairs and walkers for our veterans is not sufficient. There is also not enough waiting room space for our veterans especially when they are in wheelchairs and other family members present. The City Fire Marshal during a recent inspection called my hand at several issues within our present office”.

Mr. Rob Russian provided the Committee Members with a visual of the current occupied space at the Historic Courthouse as follows:



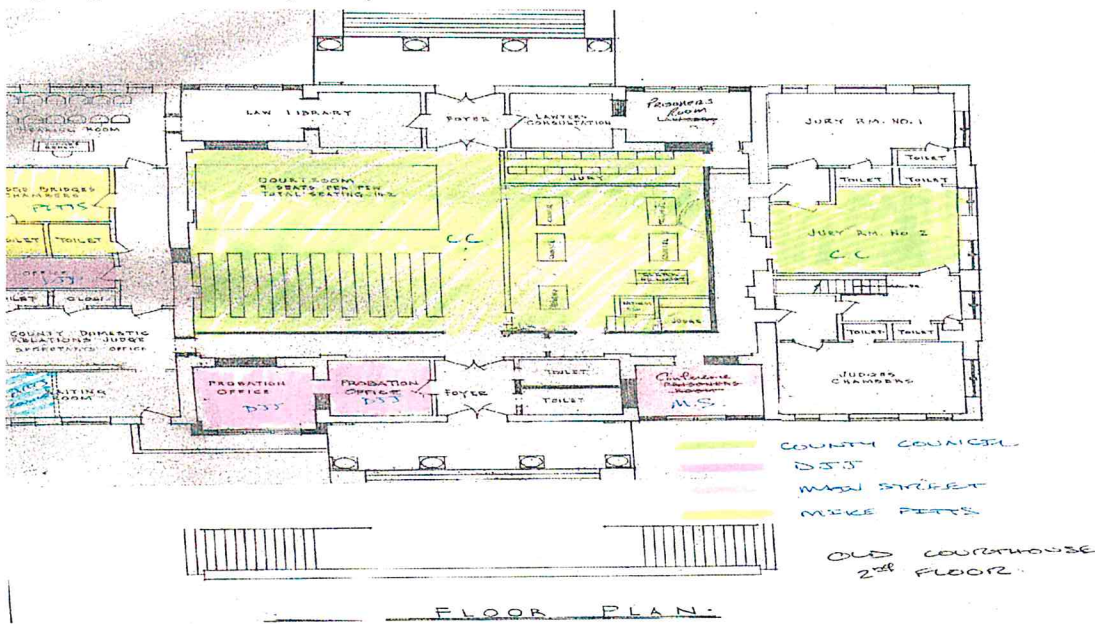
Approximate square footage of existing office space
Voter Registration and Elections = 1,740 and 870
Veterans Affairs = 1,112
Main Street = 764
Jeff Duncan = 800

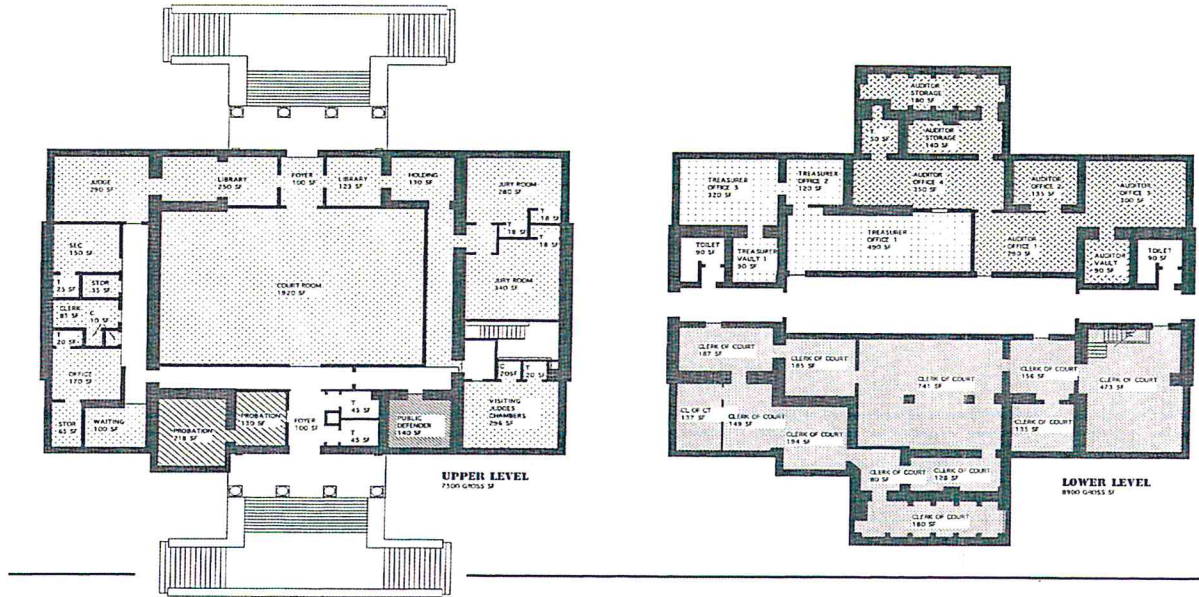
Mr. Russian reported, "Congressman Duncan is no longer in this space but has moved to a different location near the hospital. There is currently only one restroom on this floor in the main hallway. On the second floor there is not much occupied space. Several rooms that are occupied by the Registration and Elections Office has to be secured due to the storing of voting machines and computers. Representative Pitts and the Department of Juvenile Justice occupy several small offices and Council holds possession to the old courtroom and the Jury room. Main Street uses some of the much smaller offices as storage. The second floor does have handicapped access by means of the elevator that supports a bare minimal usage. It is considered more of a lift than an elevator. The second floor is really considered minimally accessible for the handicapped. There is an interior staircase that is very narrow".

Continuing Mr. Russian said, "I know there is talk of trying to accommodate Main Street in another location on the Square. They do not pay any rent nor do they help with any of the utilities. The only person that paid any rent was Congressman Duncan".

Mrs. Walsh added that the rent paid by Congressman Duncan was five hundred dollars (\$500) a month. And, stated that the Laurens County Delegation used to receive monies from the County many years ago. The Delegation asked for office space in return of the monies paid to them.

Councilman Pitts said, "I know we are not here to discuss the whole Historical Courthouse to be extremely challenging, use but, at some time, a Council, and it may be us, that will have to address a multi-million dollar expense to renovate the fast deteriorating building". Mr. Russian said, "Starting next week, an Architect will be here to start that process. You will note the thickness of some of the exterior walls; this is due to expansion and add ons over theyears. These were initially exterior structured walls. To renovate is going to be extremely costly".

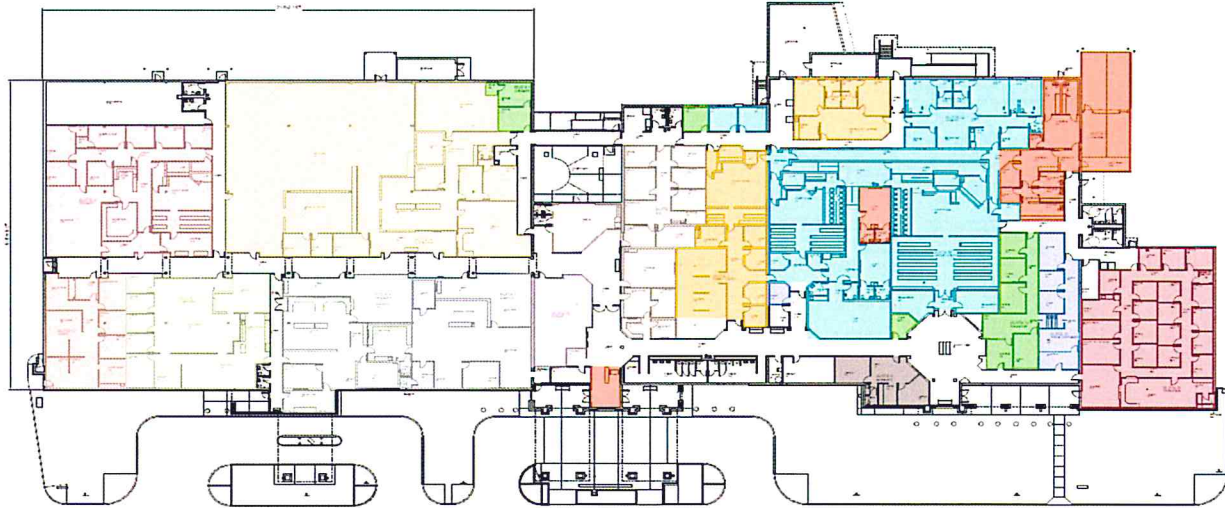




Councilman Pitts asked Mr. Bolt what his opinion actually was. Mr. Bolt replied, “I had earlier asked for the space that Representative Pitts is in now and he agreed that he would move down to my location. The entrance to this area could be the reception area with the other offices satisfying the need for privacy with the veterans. I was told that that was a no-go situation. I have since been told that Duncan’s Office and Main Street was a possibility”.

Councilman Wood asked to allow him to offer a suggestion and said, “I think that half of the Church Street Office would be an ideal set up for the Veterans Office. It has a new roof on it and has heating and air conditioning”. Councilman Tollison stated that the handicapped would not have that much access to the offices there. Mr. Bolt stated that he had initially spoke of Church Street being a possibility.

Administrator Caime stated that he would like to address some of the present issues at Hillcrest now coming forward and turned it over to Mr. Russian for explanations.



Mr. Russian said, “The Solicitor (green) is in need for more space. Logistically the space between some of the offices is not how it should be. Plus the Solicitor is planning to add another employee to these offices

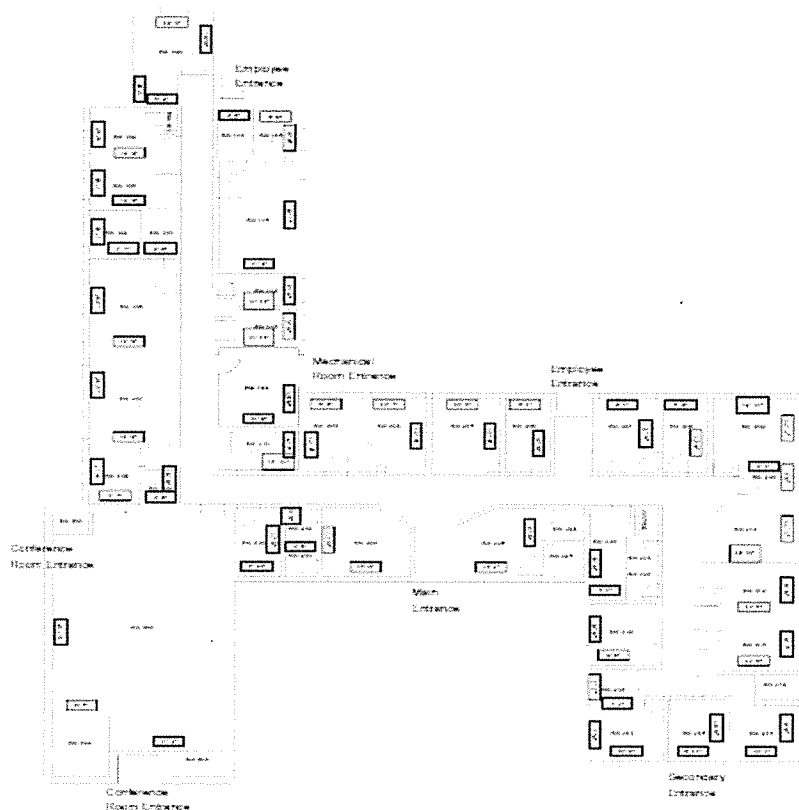
in Laurens County. The Public Defender and Family Court are in the same situation. The Public Defender and the Solicitor all need to be on the front side of Hillcrest. The idea that we are looking at

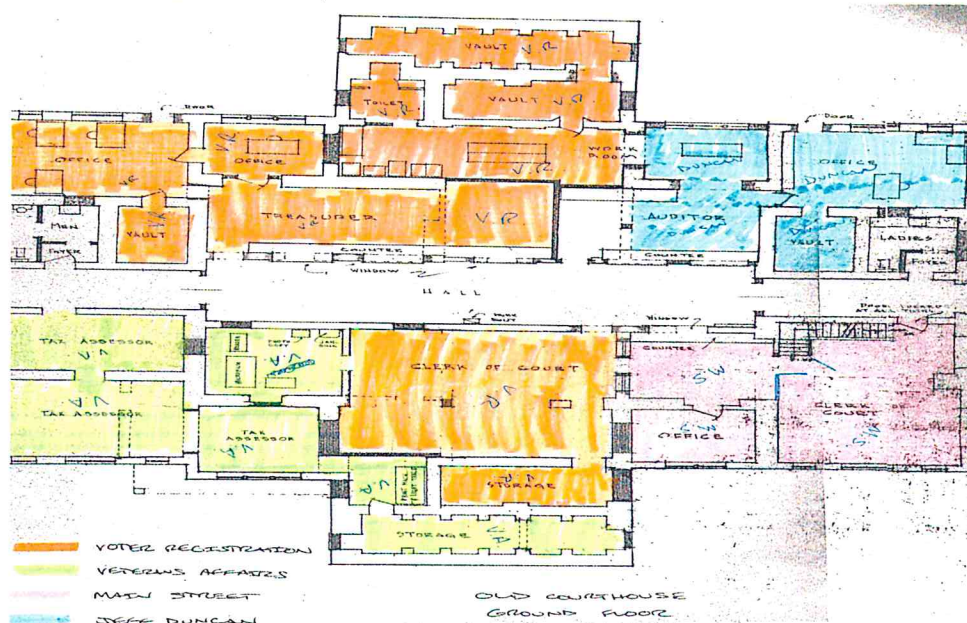
right now is to move Probation and Parole (purple color) out of this building. They presently have five thousand (5,000) square feet of office space. Probation Parole is not against moving to the Church Street Offices. Our plans are to allow them to visit the facility and to determine what renovations would need to be done. Church Street being at seventy five hundred (7,500) square feet; six thousand (6,000) of office space and one thousand five hundred (1,500) in conference room. Carpet, HVAC and painting are about all that is needed and in the one hundred thousand dollar (\$100,000) cost range. Church Street also allows for them to have a reception area and a waiting room area”.

Councilman Wood asked if they really needed that much room. Mr. Russian replied that they do have fourteen (14) employees that need privacy to meet with their paroles.

Administrator Caime added that a lot of the parolees are using this as a means of leaving the building and are letting others in which is a security issue for the Administrative Offices. Mr. Russian added that it is a high traffic office and that they are really not a court functioning office.

Church Street Office Space





Councilman Tollison led the conversation back to the discussion of the Veterans Affairs Office space asking if using the former offices of Duncan and Main Street would be sufficient for the VA Office. Mr. Russian noted that it would then allow him to have one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet.

Mr. Russian asked for consideration towards moving Representative Pitts to the office vacated by Congressman Duncan and that it would allow him outside access or, the corner office upstairs.

Councilman Pitts noted that the Committee should have either visited these offices or held the meeting at the Historic Courthouse to better understand the layout of the rooms.

Mr. Russian asked Council to look at the floor plan and said, “What if Main Street swapped with Main Street simply because of storage space. And VA secure these offices across the hall for storage and allow Representative Pitts to move to this corner office”.

Mr. Bolt said, “The bottom line here is security for all. The Elections Office and my office have computers with sensitive data, social security numbers as well as the cabinet files. There is also a security issue for the voting machines and computers”.

Councilman Wood stated that there are a lot of empty offices in the Hillcrest Administrative Offices and asked why could not the County accommodate Representative Pitts in this building”.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION:

- 1.) COUNCILMAN PITTS made the MOTION for the County Administrator to make contact with Mr. Jonathon Irick, Main Street Director, to find other means of office space by December 31, 2018. COUNCILMAN TOLLISON SECONDING; VOTE 3-0.
- 2.) Representative Pitts is to be contacted and asked what he needs as to office space.

ADJOURNMENT – Committee Chairman Pitts adjourned the meeting at 5:55 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Betty C. Walsh
Laurens County Clerk to Council