



Courthouse Security

BUDGET OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS:

The topic of courthouse security is an ongoing dialogue. Safety protocols over the years have included enhanced security in the courtroom including secure entry into court, judge and district attorney offices. In addition, courthouse wide measures were adopted including cameras and security buttons in certain offices.

Security planning receives direction and input from the Courthouse Security Committee including Court Officials, Law Enforcement, Maintenance, State Department of Corrections, and County Administration.

Incidents across the nation in public buildings have warranted re-examination and consideration of additional on-site preventive measures. Recent studies show a doubling of active shooter situations nationwide in schools, from 9 to 19 per year averaged over the past two decades (WSJ, 9/5/16).

In 2016 dialogue and discussion amongst departments has highlighted several issues:

- Need for Training; mace, security, active shooter, belligerent people.
- Continued testing of alarms.
- Sheriff Office entry area, glass replacement with paper security pass through.
- Concerns about unrestricted access to back office area, Human Services, Zoning and Child Support raised specific concerns.
- General Courthouse Safety Concerns

Directions: In our discussions with departments electronic door locks with fob entry has come up several times. At present the Sheriff's Office has an electronic card and fob reader system providing access to the Sheriff Office and Jail complex. The Courtroom and chambers have controlled access. In 2016 Human Services offices began securing back office areas with keyed locks.

A trend in schools sees a movement towards electronic door controls allowing school officials to lock all doors in active shooter situations. The Sandy Hook School Study Commission found that "an active shooter had never breached a locked classroom door" as the events generally unfold too rapidly to bypass secure doors.

Recommendations:

For the 2017 year the following security related topics are included in the budget:

1. Space Study: \$10,000 Examine if offices are located in the best places from a security, office efficiency and customer service perspective. This specific topic has come up as it relates to the Clerk of Court and Child Support Offices but a broader examination is warranted as well.
2. Card Reader Upgrade / Replacement in the Jail, Sheriff Office: \$33,000. Funds are included in the Capital Improvement budget to upgrade the 12-year-old card reader systems.
3. Security Measures: \$50,000. After the space study, consider what office moves and security upgrades should be considered. One security option would be to connect to the jail card reader system and work to electronically control doors in the courthouse. This could include constitutional offices, human services, etc.
4. Sheriff Office glass entry way for a more secure paper pass.