

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

Date Posted: January 23, 2026

## NOTICE OF MEETING

Please be advised that the Richland County Facilities Planning Committee will convene on Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 4:00 PM in the Richland County Boardroom of the Courthouse located at 181 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, WI 53581.

Information for attending the meeting virtually (if available) can be found at the following link:

<https://administrator.co.richland.wi.us/minutes/ad-hoc-county-facilities-planning-committee/>

If you have any trouble accessing the meeting, please contact MIS Support at 608-649-4371 (phone) or [mis@co.richland.wi.us](mailto:mis@co.richland.wi.us) (email).

## AGENDA

1. Call To Order
2. Roll Call
3. Verification Of Open Meetings Law Compliance
4. Approval Of Agenda
5. Approval Of Minutes From The January 22, 2026 Meeting
6. Public Comment
7. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The Judge's Chambers And Family Court Commissioner's Office
8. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For Veterans Services Office
9. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The Child Support Office
10. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The Register In Probate's Office
11. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The Clerk Of Court's Office
12. Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The District Attorney's Office
13. Correspondence
14. Adjourn

PLEASE NOTE: That upon reasonable notice, a minimum of 24 hours in advance, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service contact Tricia Clements, County Administrator at 181 W. Seminary St., Richland Center, WI 53581 or call 608-647-2197.

A quorum may be present from other Committees, Boards, or Commissions. No committee, board or commission will exercise any responsibilities, authority or duties except for the County Facilities Planning Committee.

Derek S. Kalish, County Clerk

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

January 22, 2026

The Richland County Facilities Planning Committee convened on January 22, 2026, in person and virtually at 5:00 PM in the County Boardroom of the Richland County Courthouse.

**Call To Order:** Committee Chair Turk called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**Roll Call:** Committee Chair Turk conducted roll call. Committee members present: Steve Carrow, Sandra Kramer, Rod Perry, David Turk, and Marc Couey. Committee member(s) absent: Melvin “Bob” Frank, and Steve Williamson.

**Verification Of Open Meetings Law Compliance:** County Clerk Kalish confirmed the meeting had been properly noticed.

**Approval Of Agenda:** Motion by Carrow second by Kramer to approve agenda. Motion carried and agenda was approved.

**Approval Of Minutes From The January 6, 2026 Meeting:** Committee Chair Turk asked if there were any corrections or amendments to the minutes from the January 6, 2026 meeting. Hearing none, Committee Chair Turk declared the minutes from the January 6, 2026, meeting approved as presented.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The Sheriff’s Office:** Sheriff Porter reported the following regarding the current and future space needs, structural soundness, and safety of the Sheriff’s Office:

- The department functions in the current space as best as it can
- There is no room for growth and storage space is not adequate
- HVAC facilities randomly stop working
- There is a presence of rodents
- Water present in various areas within office
- Although the Sheriff’s Office and County Jail are two different things, they are still interconnected

Cory Beyer of Venture Architects noted that replacement parts for the current electrical and locking components are difficult to find and costly due to their age. Porter noted the inefficient use of space. Supervisor Carrow asked if the space needs are a problem now and Beyer noted that the space could be utilized more if reworked. Supervisor Perry noted the facilities in the Sheriff’s Office have needed attention for a long time, a new facility is needed, and something must be done until a new space is complete.

**Discussion Of Current And Future Space Needs, Structural Soundness, And Safety For The County Jail:** Jail Administrator Rupnow and Sheriff Porter reported the following items regarding the current and future space needs, structural soundness, and safety of the County Jail:

- Lack of space and difficulty in housing inmates with varying classifications
- Cells are not conducive to those with mental health problems
- Lack of storage space

## Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

- No programming and/or recreation areas
- Non-secure dispatch (control center)
- Outdated linear layout
- Access concerns with stairs and ADA compliance

Jail Administrator Rupnow noted while a jail is not statutorily required, housing at other facilities is costly and capacity varies, and that remodeling the current facilities may equate to additional components being brought up to code in the process. Chief Deputy Wallace noted that the current setup presents challenges for EMS to provide care if/when needed and that the shared elevator also poses various problems. Supervisor Carrow asked if the capacity of the jail could be reduced, and Sheriff Porter noted they are moving people as they need to. Supervisor Couey stated that if something needs to be done to make it easier to update and be in an improved condition, it needs to happen now as a new facility is cost prohibitive. Beyer noted that it would be a minimum of 3 years before a newly built facility could be occupied and that there's a need for capacity of working ability. Brief discussion of timeline followed. Supervisor Turk noted the financial constraints of building a new facility and Sheriff Porter noted that unknown cost variables may also be present. Supervisor Perry asked where transports go, and Sheriff Porter reported that neighboring facilities are helpful with this aspect. Supervisor Kramer asked if a joint facility has been considered and Sheriff Porter answered it has. Supervisor asked about the approximate cost for a new facility and Beyer reported approximately 30 million dollars for a jail only. Brief discussion on cost followed. Citizen Shirley Welte noted concerns about employee safety and felt that it was an understated concern. Sheriff Porter briefly reviewed other safety concerns.

**Discussion & Possible Action – Review Of Small And Large Courtroom Layouts:** Administrator Clements asked if the committee desired a full presentation on the small and large courtroom layouts or if the information already available was enough to conclude that the layouts are unsafe for all and should be placed towards the top of the priority list. Supervisor Couey agreed and noted they should be moved to the top of the priority list. Supervisor Carrow noted there are many things in addition to just floorplan issues. Administrator Clements reported minor things have been addressed and will continue to be completed as they can. Brief discussion followed regarding courtroom safety. Motion by Couey second by Kramer to confirm that the courtrooms and associated areas need safety, structural, and space changes that should be designated as a priority. Motion carried.

**Discussion & Possible Action – Set Future Meeting Date(s):** Future meeting dates outlined in meeting schedule already approved.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Future Agenda Items:** Items indicated on approved schedule.

**Adjourn:** Motion by Kramer second by Couey to adjourn. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM.



Derek S. Kalish  
County Clerk

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

## Needs Assessment Discussion Notes

Department: Family Court Commissioner

Meeting Date: January 29, 2025

### **Space Needs**

Space is adequate for Family Court Commissioner's Office.

### **Safety Needs**

My office is situated so that the door to my office opens into the only waiting area and entrance to the courtroom. This is also the route to bring inmates from the jail to and from the courtroom. This area can be crowded, especially before the child support calendar. I have had to wait while sandwiched between people who are being wanded by the security officer and those that are waiting to be wanded by the security officer. Two times when I left my office, I have encountered a prisoner being brought into the courtroom. When the area is congested, I have to ask people in front of my door to move, so I can get into my office.

### **Structural Needs**

Location of office poses security risks for Family Court Commissioner

Secure internet connection

Phone

Needs Priority Ranking: Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_3\_\_\_\_\_ Space Needs

\_\_1\_\_\_\_\_ Safety Needs

\_\_2\_\_\_\_\_ Structural Needs

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## Needs Assessment Discussion Notes

Department: \_Judge's chambers and off-bench work area\_\_ Meeting Date: \_\_January 29, 2026\_\_

### **Space Needs**

The judge's chambers and off-bench work space have adequate square footage.

(This does not include space needs related to the courtrooms, public waiting areas, the court reporter office, the court commissioner office, the attorney meeting rooms/witness rooms, the jury room and bathrooms, the law library, the judicial assistant office, and the clerk offices.)

### **Safety Needs**

There are numerous alarming safety concerns. It is not wise to reduce those concerns to a public writing or talk about them in detail in a public forum. These concerns are laid out fairly well in the Security Assessment that was completed by Tammy Johnson and disseminated privately to the committee. The court would invite any committee members to a tour of the areas to learn more about these concerns or answer questions. Please contact Trish or Jenny Laue to set up a visit.

### **Structural Needs**

Access to the judicial assistant is difficult and raises safety and efficiency concerns.

(This does not include structural needs related to the courtrooms, public waiting areas, the court reporter office, the court commissioner office, the attorney meeting rooms/witness rooms, the jury room and bathrooms, the law library, the judicial assistant office, and the clerk offices.)

Needs Priority Ranking: Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_\_\_2\_\_\_ Space Needs

\_\_\_1\_\_\_ Safety Needs

\_\_\_1\_\_\_ Structural Needs

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# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

## Needs Assessment Discussion Notes

Department: Veterans Service Office

Meeting Date: 29JAN2026 1600hrs

### **Space Needs**

Our offices space needs are currently satisfactory. Addressing reasonable future growth; if Madison Vet Center starts Outreach Counseling Services again our office would again need access to a private meeting room.

### **Safety Needs**

Our offices safety needs are currently satisfactory.

### **Structural Needs**

Our offices structural needs are currently satisfactory.

Needs Priority Ranking: Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_\_\_3\_\_\_ Space Needs

\_\_\_2\_\_\_ Safety Needs

\_\_\_1\_\_\_ Structural Needs

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

## Needs Assessment Discussion Notes

Department: Child Support

Meeting Date: January 29, 2026

### **Space Needs**

- Private office space for the current two (2) full-time employees.
  - Both FTE employees currently share a workspace with privacy dividers. Separate offices would be the ideal situation.
- Front Counter/Reception Area
  - Our current front counter/reception area does not offer much space. It is challenging to navigate a wheelchair or stroller into this space. We must have multiple points of security to be compliant with federal guidelines so any access from the front counter/reception area to the interior office space must be secure/locking.

### **Safety Needs**

- Front counter/reception area redone with more structural soundness with passthrough tray and security glass

### **Structural Needs**

- Section of front counter with reduced height for wheelchair access
- Increase size of reception/front counter to accommodate strollers/wheelchairs as well as the general comfort of participants coming into the office.
- Sound-proofing between offices. We are a confidential office, and we can hear the going-ons from the back office of the Clerk of Court so the assumption is that they can hear us.
- Windows that are not drafty. During the winter months, we have the heaters on high to counter the cold air blowing in through the windows. Windows that open. The latches and cranks on most windows are broken.



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Needs Priority Ranking: Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_\_\_2\_\_\_ Space Needs

\_\_\_3\_\_\_ Safety Needs

\_\_\_1\_\_\_ Structural Needs

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Needs Assessment Discussion Notes as of 1/26/2026

Department: Register in Probate / Judicial Assistant  
Juvenile Clerk

Meeting Date: January 29, 2026

**Space Needs for Register in Probate/Judicial Assistant and Deputy Register in Probate**

The existing space that we have is adequate for our current needs.

We need to be located in close proximity to the Judge's chambers/office and need private accessibility to the Judge. We also need a private meeting space for Judge and Staff which includes access to computers for reviewing cases.

**Safety Needs**

We don't have a secured area to meet face to face with the public.

Safety could be further addressed by scanning all individuals at the entrance.

**Structural Needs**

Improved efficiency in serving the public which may include adding a work station closer to the service window. This would affect the layout of the office. The public also needs some area for presenting their documents.

A Private work area that could also be a meeting space.

Needs Priority Ranking: Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_\_\_\_3\_ Space Needs

\_\_\_\_2\_ Safety Needs

\_\_\_\_1- Structural Needs

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

## Needs Assessment Discussion Notes

Department: CLERK OF COURT

Meeting Date: 1/29/26 at 4 p.m.

### **Space Needs**

#### **Clerk of Court office needs:**

Front office needs space for service counter and at least three workstations. These stations must be ADA compliant, as does the entry to the office. This area needs to be locked and secured, accessible only to staff via fob or keypad. Office has a cash drawer which must be properly secured.

Vault space is needed for records and exhibits that are not scannable. We have this now and must have a vault if renovations or a new building is considered.

Private office space is needed for the Clerk of Court.

An office meeting space, separate from the front office, is needed. This currently exists within the Clerk of Court's workspace which is located within one of the two storage vaults.

The public access stations (one for case records and one for legal research) are presently located in the hallway with open access. The present area is rather small. Ideally, there would be two separate stations – one for the public which is generally using the case record access station, and one for attorneys and other who wish to use the legal resource station. By statute, a county must provide a legal resource area such as a law library or online access. Richland County is navigating towards the latter. Adequate space is needed for both stations. Both must be wired to electricity and internet. Neither should be located within a private staff area. Both stations must be ADA compliant.

#### **Environmental needs:**

- Fresh air.
- Heat/cooling that works.
- Air filtration that works.

Presently, there are often long periods of time when either the heat or cooling systems are out of order.

- Easy-to-maintain, non-carpet flooring. This will help reduce dust and allergens.

Presently, the CCAP Server is located inside the firesafe vault. Ideally, it should be in its own secure, firesafe area, with plenty of air circulation. The present location is firesafe but the proximity to the staff area creates constant noise (buzzing).

### **Safety Needs**

- Staff hallways that are separate from the public. These hallways should be locked and secured by fobs.
- Adequately-sized service window; not a service window that doubles as a staff entry door.

Duress alarms at every desk/work area in every office area and every courtroom. Duress alarms in every vault.

Audible PA system. Present system is not audible within the offices. Only audible in the hallway. Clerk of Court office cannot hear the PA within the office.

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

Department: CLERK OF COURT (page 2 of 3)

## **Structural Needs**

See Safety Needs.

The present entry door that doubles as a customer service window is inadequate. The window in it is not large enough to use as a proper workspace for addressing customers' needs at the window. Rather than having this as a service area, the Clerk of Court office needs a full-sized SERVICE WINDOW that is not connected to an entry/exit door.

The service window should be large enough so that customers, arriving at the window and trying to do their business together, are able to all stand in front of staff and be seen and worked with at the same time. The present window allows only one person to stand in front of and work with staff.

On the staff side of the service window should be a counter that is large enough for the Clerk of Court staff to have a computer, screen, scanner, and adequate work space.

The window should have bullet-proof or bullet-resistant glass with an open space at the bottom of the glass for documents to be passed through. It will also need a speaker in the window so that customers can hear staff and staff can hear the customers.

The entry/exit door(s) to the office should be made of durable material that cannot be kicked or smashed in. It needs to have a fob or other type of keyless entry (code, etc).

By creating a proper service window, replacing the inconvenient service door/window that's in place now, more space will be created within the office and the "traffic" flow will be improved for staff. Presently, staff are constantly trying to stay out of each other's way and running to and from the service door/window to assist customers. Since there's no work area at the service tray of the door/window, staff are going back and forth repeatedly between the door/window and their desks. The office has been arranged to maximize the space needs of this current system but it is still extremely inefficient and requires staff to constantly turn their backs on customers in order to go back to their desks in the course of providing assistance.

**Needs Priority Ranking:** Please rank the needs in order from least to most important (1 is most and 3 is least).

\_\_\_\_3\_\_ Space Needs

\_\_\_\_1\_\_ Safety Needs

\_\_\_\_2\_\_ Structural Needs      (Note: Safety and Structure go hand-in-hand with this request.)

# Richland County County Facilities Planning Committee

Department: CLERK OF COURT (page 3 of 3)

## **Additional Clerk of Court Notes:**

In addition to the needs noted for the Clerk of Court OFFICE, the Clerk of Court would like to make sure the following considerations are included in any future plans for building or renovation:

### **Needs of Richland County's Citizen Jurors**

Unlike court staff and case litigants, Citizen Jurors do not choose to take part in the court system. They are summonsed and ordered to appear. They have no control over the amenities available to them.

Richland County's is the only courthouse this Clerk of Court has ever visited that does not have a separate, dedicated restroom facility or facilities (separate restrooms for men and women) for the Jury. Any building or remodeling MUST include plans for Juror restroom facilities.

Juror safety must also a priority in any renovations or building plans. As the population of this county ages, it is increasingly difficult for many Citizen Jurors to climb the steps to the upper row of the Jury box. Ideally, all jurors should be seated on one level, all with proper view of the judge, witness, and litigator tables.

In most courthouses that have been remodeled or newly-built, Jurors each have their own ipad or laptop or similar device. This is for review of electronically-retained exhibits and documents.

The Jury box in the courtroom needs to be ADJACENT to the Jury Room. Presently, Jurors are located on the opposite side of the courtroom with no swift access to the Jury Room. This is a safety issue as Jurors need access to a fast exit point in the event of emergency or active threat.

It is anticipated that other needs of the courtrooms will be articulated by the Judge, Family Court Commissioner, District Attorney, and Sheriff. The Clerk of Court supports those recommendations, presuming that none will take away from the safety, security, and space needs of the Clerk of Court staff who work daily in the courtrooms. Respectfully, the Clerk of Court asks to be included in any discussions that involve the needs and proposed modifications of the courtrooms, areas adjacent to the courtrooms, particularly including the Jury Room and amenities provided to our Citizen Jurors. Additionally, the Clerk of Court requests to be involved in all discussions regarding the location and features of the Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court work areas within the courtrooms and entrances/exits used by court staff.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** County Facilities Planning Committee  
**FROM:** Jennifer Harper, Esq., District Attorney  
**RE:** Space Needs Assessment  
**DATE:** January 23, 2026

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The Office of the District Attorney requires sufficient space that is functional, legally compliant both in theory and in practice, and safe for staff, victims, and the public.

The District Attorney's Office consists of two attorneys, two victim-witness staff members, and one legal secretary. In practice, the office functions as a small law firm. Our statutory duties are set forth in Wis. Stats. ch. 978, the Wisconsin and United States Constitutions, and applicable Supreme Court Rules. In addition, the office is bound by the requirements of Marcy's Law and Wis. Stats. ch. 950 regarding the rights of crime victims.

### 1. Sufficiency of Space

Before addressing the quality of the space, the quantity of space must be considered. According to Venture, the District Attorney's Office currently occupies approximately **976 square feet**. Venture assessed the office's required space at **2,548 square feet**. The conclusion is straightforward: the existing space is wholly insufficient to meet the operational needs of the office.

### 2. Functionality

The limited square footage has resulted in reduced functionality due to the forced division and overcrowding of work areas. The current layout interferes with confidential communications, victim-witness interactions, and compliance with victim-rights obligations. Additionally, the cramped conditions create environmental and operational inefficiencies inconsistent with the demands of a modern legal office.

### 3. Safety

The extremely limited office space raises serious safety concerns. At present, it is unclear whether the office is compliant with applicable fire codes. A particular concern is the large, immovable central structure ("battleship") located in the main office area, which significantly impedes access to the sole entry and exit. In the event of an emergency evacuation, this obstruction would present a serious hazard.

Emergency personnel have also expressed concern about access to the interior of the office during a medical emergency due to the confined layout. Workstations further encroach into walking paths, exacerbating restricted movement and increasing risk during emergencies.

Additionally, the electrical infrastructure is outdated and inadequate for the technological needs of a small law firm. Combined with the limited space, this creates a potential environmental and safety hazard.

#### **4. Security**

The security needs of the office have been reasonably addressed. The installation of a secure door with a pass-through tray has eliminated unfettered public access to the interior of the office. This improvement is appreciated.

#### **5. Short-Term Opportunities**

#### **6. Long-Term Needs**