

Supreme Court of Vermont  
Office of State Court Administrator

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**TO:** Senator Joe Benning, Chair  
Senate Institutions

**FROM:** Patricia Gabel, Esq., State Court Administrator

**RE:** Judiciary Response to Governor's Recommended FY 20-21 Capital Bill

**DATE:** February 28, 2019

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Dear Senator Benning and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Vermont Supreme Court, I write to provide the Judiciary's position on various capital projects either requested by the judiciary and/or requested by BGS on behalf of Judiciary-occupied buildings.

The Judiciary supports the total fiscal commitment made by the Governor toward the Next Generation Case Management System. This letter addresses that project in more detail, and it also addresses one item that was requested but not funded.

The Judiciary was not consulted regarding the structure and approach of the Governor's fiscal strategy regarding the following projects that were not funded, and we look forward to working with the Legislature to understand it better:

- Orleans courthouse(s) – future needs
- BGS request for Windsor courthouse improvements
- BGS request for renovation of Supreme Court Building

We are disappointed that they were not included in this capital cycle, but we understand that fiscal constraints required prioritization among Judiciary's requests. We look forward to addressing these items again, whether as part of a capital budget adjustment next year, or in the next capital budget.

The following items are addressed below:

- Next Generation Case Management System - *Governor recommended for funding*
- Barre security infrastructure improvements- *Governor did not recommend for funding*

**One-Time funding for the Next Generation Case Management System  
(NG-CMS): \$1,504,548**

The goal of this project is to provide online access to justice for the general public and the court stakeholders. This new system will provide better cybersecurity, more reliable storage and reporting of data, and provide greater efficiency in our internal work processes.

The Vermont Judiciary, recognizing that its legacy Case Management System is no longer able to support current and future organizational objectives and imperatives, has begun an initiative to select and implement a Next Generation Case Management System (NG-CMS). A well-designed, modern NG-CMS will drive and enable the transformation of the Judiciary's case management process from a paper-driven to an electronic-focused business model that will improve access to justice for our citizens, strengthen inter-agency communication, and enable more efficient court operations through faster court case initiation, more accurate electronic case files, and improved document availability and accessibility

Initial funding for the early phases of the Judiciary's NG-CMS project was appropriated by the Legislature in 2015. Additional funding for the project was included in Capital Bill appropriations in 2017 and 2018, with an anticipated final appropriation for completion requested in 2019. In addition to these Capital Bill appropriations, the Judiciary plans to utilize \$2.4M from the Court Technology Special Fund toward the total five-year acquisition and implementation cost of \$12.6MM. That leaves the unfunded balance at \$1,504,548. This request would represent the last capital request that is planned for this project.

The Judiciary has contracted with Tyler Technologies to implement its Odyssey® unified case management system in Vermont. Project execution is underway, with configuration and customization continuing throughout 2018 and training for Court staff to begin early 2019. We have developed a regional rollout plan, with the Judicial Bureau implementation leading in Spring 2019 and the first Trial Courts following several months later. These rollouts will continue through early 2021, when we will be fully transitioned to the new system.

**Barre Courthouse Security Renovations and Addition: \$800,000**

The goal of the project is to improve safety and security for state employees and the general public, improve control for in-custody defendants.



Statewide court operations were evaluated against the national standards in 2015. A report outlining the deficiencies were used as the basis for this project. The Washington County Criminal Court in Barre was identified as lacking the necessary safety controls suitable for a criminal court. The report recommended that the current detention center should be eliminated and replaced by a new detention center adjacent to a new sally port. It was determined that the current layout posed a serious threat to security and safety of judges and court staff.

The Barre Superior Court and State Office Building was built in 1982. The building is currently occupied by Judiciary on floors one and two; State's Attorney, probation and parole, and Department of Children and Family Services occupy the other two floors. The building has undergone many partial reconfigurations over the life of the building to meet occupant needs, but the building has never had a complete renovation. A feasibility study on the project was completed in 2019.

Renovations will include a sally port for proper in-custody defendant transport with improved control, contraband threat eliminations, and proper judicial process improvements. The addition will also include a reconfiguration of the first and second floors to provide improved circulation for state employees, the public, and in-custody defendants and address other security concerns. The renovation will provide more comfortable and efficient office space for state employees, more efficient planned courtrooms to meet the changing judicial trends.

Since the renovation is substantial, BGS would include HVAC and Energy Efficiency upgrades to provide proper air conditioning to the entire building. A small maintenance space addition to allow better maintenance of the building and to address code deficiencies would also be included.

The Judiciary thanks the Committee and the Legislature for its support of recent Judiciary-related projects, and we look forward to working with you to advance the items discussed above. Please feel free to contact us with any questions.

cc: Gregg Mousley, Judiciary Chief of Finance and Administration  
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