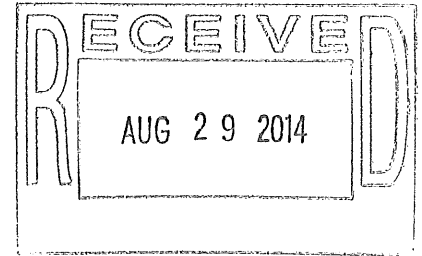




State of North Carolina
General Court of Justice
Judicial District 30B



BRADLEY B. LETTS
SENIOR RESIDENT SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

285 N. MAIN ST., SUITE 3300
WAYNESVILLE, NC 28786

PHONE: (828) 454-6512
FAX: (828) 454-6490

August 29, 2014

TO: Jackson County Commissioners
399 Grindstaff Cove Road
Sylva, NC 28779

Re: Jackson County Justice and Administrative Building Security

Dear Commissioners,

We have discussed courthouse security in the past months in conjunction with the Needs Assessment published by Heery International. At the presentation of the Needs Assessment I left with the impression it was agreed by everyone the Jackson County Justice and Administrative Building (hereinafter referred to as "courthouse") lacks a minimum level of fundamental security safeguards to adequately protect all individuals involved in court proceedings. The overall lack of security has been of paramount concern to me for some time. There are four separate entrances into the courthouse and the only security measures currently employed are metal detectors located in the foyer of the courtrooms on the second floor. The use of these magnetometers is even more limited because they are only operated on days when court is in session. The general public and employees are potentially at risk due to a lack of minimum security standards at the courthouse.

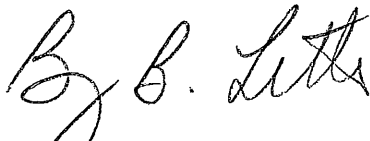
Effective January 1, 2015 one entrance shall be mandated for the public entrance which will be appropriately monitored at all times with a fully functioning metal detector. I suggest the one public entrance be placed at the Court's entrance at the front of the building. The three other current entrances located throughout the building shall be reworked as emergency exits only and fitted with panic bars and alarms to prevent a person exiting the building from allowing a member of the public to gain unsecured access to the building. The selection of the secured entrance at the Court's entrance is simply a suggestion. An alternate entrance is acceptable, however, whichever entrance is ultimately selected shall be monitored by a sworn law enforcement officer and a metal detector shall be used at all times when the entrance is open Monday through Friday and any additional times when after-hours meetings such as Commissioners' Board Meetings occur. Separate secure entrances may be allowed with limited access by key card or other means for employees of the courthouse.

In addition to one entrance I also suggest the time is advantageous to update the outside cameras to cover all parking areas and all entrances and exits of the building. I also propose an officer inspect the surroundings of the courthouse, inside and out, on a daily basis. I would encourage the Sheriff's Department to consider contacting the North Carolina Sheriff's Association and invite them to perform a Security Assessment of the courthouse as part of this security realignment. This assessment reviews the interior and exterior grounds of the courthouse and provides objective recommendations. Contact information for the North Carolina Sheriff's Association is: P.O. Box 20049, Raleigh, NC 27619, Telephone number: (919) SHERIFF.

After my prior requests for improved security over the past six years the minimum requirement of one secured entrance is no longer negotiable. I request a detailed plan for implementation of these minimum requirements be submitted for my review no later than December 1, 2014. One secure entrance shall be required effective January 1, 2015.

It remains my sincerest desire to resolve this matter in a direct, open and amicable manner. The judges of this district have long recognized a constructive partnership between the courts and local government is necessary to deliver justice and the rule of law to our communities. I wholly expect this partnership to continue in an atmosphere of cooperation and congeniality. It is my belief you share the same security concerns and understand we all seek to avoid unpleasant enforcement proceedings against the Jackson County Commissioners which would visit unfounded accusations of governmental-judicial dysfunction upon county leadership. I thank you for your kind attention to this most serious matter. Your full cooperation is both appreciated and expected.

Sincerely,



Bradley B. Letts
Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
Judicial District 30B

cc: Jackson County Manager
Jackson County Attorney
Jackson County Sheriff's Office
District Court Judges' of the 30th Judicial District
Jackson County Clerk of Superior Court