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MEMORANDUM

TO: Sheriff Neil Godfrey
Moore County Sheriff's Office

FROM: Edmond W. Caldwell, Jr.
Executive Vice President and General Counsel
North Carolina Sheriffs' Association

DATE: March 24, 2016

RE: Courthouse Security Committee Meeting Summary

On February 4, 2016 at 2:00 p.m., the Moore County Courthouse Security Committee met in the Grand Jury Room located on the second floor of the Moore County Courthouse. Melinda Stevens, Court Security Consultant for the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association, facilitated the training event and meeting that lasted until 4:30 p.m. In attendance were:

Stephen A. Bibey – District Court Judge, Judicial District 19-B
Paul W. Brady – Sergeant, Moore County Sheriff's Office
John A. Conway – Major, Moore County Sheriff's Office
Don W. Creed, Jr. – District Court Judge, Judicial District 19-B
James Furr, Captain, Moore County Sheriff's Office
Neil Godfrey – Sheriff, Moore County
Susan A. Hicks – Clerk of Superior Court, Moore County
Shaun Ingram – Probation Officer, Moore County
Bobby Lake – Director of Property Management, Moore County
Wayne Vest – County Manager, Moore County
James M. Webb – Senior Resident Superior Court Judge, Judicial District 19-B

At the meeting, Melinda Stevens introduced the Courthouse Security Committee to the *Courthouse Security Manual*, published by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association with funding from the Governor's Crime Commission. This 107 page document addresses in detail the "best practices" that all courthouse complexes should adopt to maximize the

security of those individuals attending court or for those visitors attending the other county offices that are located in the courthouse building. The Courthouse Security Committee engaged in extensive dialogue as the strengths and security gaps were explored that related to the specifics of the Moore County Courthouse.

The Moore County Courthouse has several security strategies and procedures currently in place that follow the "best practices" as outlined in the *Courthouse Security Manual*. These are:

- Exterior signage leading to the courthouse building is clear, making it easy for the public to find the facility.
- The exterior lighting around the courthouse building is sufficient to discourage attacks and/or assaults against individuals and vehicles.
- Both entrances into the courthouse are equipped with a magnetometer (walk-through X-ray).
- Security screenings are conducted by deputy sheriffs under the direction of the sheriff, and all members of the public entering the courthouse are screened.
- There is an excellent working relationship between the judiciary, the clerk's office and sheriff's personnel occupying the building, all committed to safety and security in the courthouse.
- The jury deliberation rooms are in restricted areas away from the public with blinds on the windows and access to restroom facilities.
- Signs prohibiting smoking on Moore County property are prominently posted allowing for smoke free access into the building in accordance with current state statutes.

The Moore County Courthouse houses the criminal and juvenile divisions of the clerk of courts office, as well as probation on the lower level. All other divisions of the clerk of courts office and two district courtrooms are located on the first floor of the courthouse building. Two superior courtrooms, the grand jury room and more offices used by probation are located on the second floor. Holding cells and judges' offices are located behind the courtrooms on the second floor. Entrance to the courthouse may be made on the lower level at the rear of the building or on the first floor at the front of the building.

On January 8, 2016, Melinda Stevens toured the courthouse building with Sheriff Neil Godfrey and Deputies Paul Brady and James Furr. Melinda Stevens returned to the Moore County Courthouse on February 4, 2016, to continue the courthouse assessment. Visits were made to the various offices in the building to examine the

facilities, observe operations and speak with employees to discuss any security issues or concerns they might have.

Observations from the tour conducted, discussions with the Courthouse Security Committee and feedback from the Physical Security Checklist were used to form the recommendations listed in this report.

The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association courthouse security evaluation is intended to serve as a basic physical audit of each county's courthouse safety and security procedures. This audit is not comprehensive and may not contain all possible safety and security defenses. The most notable security gaps from the assessment are:

EXTERIOR

Parking

- **Current Status:**

There is no secure parking located on the courthouse property. There is reserved parking located on the east side of the building. These spaces are used by judges, the clerk of court and some attorneys. Some of the signs for these spaces denote the title for whom they are reserved, while others are only designated by a letter of the alphabet. This reserved parking area is not fenced or gated to prevent entry by unauthorized persons.

Recommendation:

When funding permits, signs denoting titles should be replaced with signs displaying alpha or numeric indicators only. Also, explore the possibility of securing the parking area with fencing and controlled access entry.

- **Current Status:**

There are no closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras to monitor or record activities on the exterior areas of the courthouse or the parking areas located around the courthouse building.

Recommendation:

When possible, CCTV cameras should be installed and monitored.

BUILDING

Doors, Windows and Other Openings

- **Current Status:**

There are alarms on the doors of the courthouse that are designated as emergency exits. Use or attempted use of these doors will trigger a noise alarm indicating that the door has been accessed. However, there are no

intrusion alarms installed on these exit doors or the doors used for routine access to the courthouse building.

Recommendation:

All courthouse doors should be equipped with an intrusion alarm system activated when the building is closed. These alarms should notify the sheriff's office when any door is breached. The courthouse is routinely used after hours by probation officers to meet with their clients. Therefore, key card activated locks should be installed to allow access by authorized individuals only. Key card access will also provide entry and exit records for all after-hours access to the courthouse building.

- **Current Status:**

Metal detectors are currently in use at both entrances to the courthouse. There is additional X-ray equipment available for the screening of bags and packages at the main entrance located on the first level of the courthouse, but not on the lower level. There are also hand wands available for secondary screening purposes. Often only one uniformed deputy mans the metal detector at a time. Attorneys and others known to security personnel are allowed to circumvent the screening process.

Recommendation:

It is optimal to require all individuals coming into the Moore County Courthouse enter through a screening checkpoint and pass through a metal detector. X-ray equipment should be installed for the screening of bags and packages at the lower level entrance. If possible, there should be two uniformed deputies conducting security screenings to provide for an accurate and consistent screening process.

- **Current Status:**

There is currently no mandatory screening procedure for clients admitted to the building after hours by employees of the probation office.

Recommendation:

Hand screening wands have recently been provided to probation personnel by the Moore County Sheriffs' Office. A policy outlining after hours screening requirements should be implemented to ensure that all individuals entering the courthouse building are adequately screened.

Communications

- **Current Status:**

The courthouse does not have closed circuit television (CCTV) capability for either the exterior or interior of the building. Also, there is no telephone network with "all-call" capability for building employees to use in the event of emergency.

Fire Alarm

Recommendation:

When funding permits, CCTV cameras should be installed around the exterior and interior of the courthouse building. It is optimal to have these cameras monitored at all times. Explore the feasibility of a speaker, radios or "all-call" telephone capability that could be used if building evacuation is necessary. Place signage within the courthouse displaying telephone numbers to contact for emergencies.

Public Areas

- **Current Status:**

There is not a written security plan that includes routine searches of all public waiting areas and bathrooms. There is also no routine inspection of the exterior of the courthouse to look for contraband and weapons that could be hidden or disposed of near the perimeter of the building.

Recommendation:

Develop a written security plan that includes routine searches of all public waiting areas and bathrooms. In addition, routine inspections are needed around the exterior of the courthouse building to observe or detect any issues.

- **Current Status:**

There is not a sufficient security barrier between the public and employees of the clerk of court office, particularly on the first floor where public traffic is high. This creates safety and security problems for both employees and the large amounts of cash that is held in these areas.

Recommendation:

Install counters and hardened glass partitions to provide for greater security for employees within the clerk of court office and for the security of the funds collected on both the first floor and lower levels.

- **Current Status:**

There are currently duress alarms for use in the clerk of court office, probation office and on the judges' benches within the Moore County Courthouse. However, there are some areas within the clerk's office and in the judges' chambers that do not have duress alarms installed.

Recommendation:

Duress alarms should be installed at the clerk's station within the courtrooms and in the secure areas behind the courtrooms. They should also be installed in all areas of the clerk's office where there is public access. This allows for a rapid law enforcement response to issues or emergencies.

Courthouse Procedures

- **Current Status:**

There is no written policy defining those items considered to be contraband and not allowed within the courthouse building. There is also no written policy outlining security screening procedures for those entering the courthouse.

Recommendation:

The Moore County Courthouse Security Committee should adopt a written policy outlining those items considered contraband. Signage listing these items should be prominently displayed at all building entrances. Policy should be adopted outlining who will submit to the security screening process upon entering the courthouse.

- **Current Status:**

There are no written security procedures for the courthouse. There is an "understood" policy for fire evacuation drills, but no procedures for handling bomb threats. There are also no procedures for situations involving an "active shooter" or other crises that may require employees and the public to shelter in place.

Recommendation:

An emergency procedures manual should be developed and issued to all personnel within the courthouse. Standard operating procedures containing medical emergency and contingency plans (high profile trials, fire alarms, bomb threats, and active shooters), as well as routine day-to-day operations (SOPs) need to be established and then written for the courthouse security personnel. All policies should be consistent with the county's continuity of operations plan (COOP), with a clear chain of command structure in place to be reviewed and updated annually.

- **Current Status:**

The Moore County Sheriff's Office has recently initiated training employees of the clerk's office on shelter in place procedures. However, to date, there has been no safety training for any of the occupants in the courthouse building.

Recommendation:

Annually train all courthouse employees, judicial officials and other building occupants on emergency procedures and expectations. Initial training in safety procedures should be included as a part of new courthouse employee orientation.

- **Current Status:**

There are no safety drills being completed for courthouse employees and the public.

Recommendation:

Annually conduct the following safety drills: fire, evacuation, medical emergency and active shooter. Document and debrief after each exercise for those authorized.

- **Current Status:**

There are no periodic security discussions involving judges, attorneys or other building occupants.

Recommendation:

Meet periodically, either formally or informally, to discuss security issues. The Moore County Courthouse Security Committee would provide an excellent venue for this activity. After each meeting, disseminate information, perhaps in the form of meeting minutes, to all employees. Keeping everyone informed of the emergency procedures in place in this courthouse is critical.

- **Current Status:**

There is no standard operating procedure (SOP) outlining a strategy to document security concerns or issues in the courthouse.

Recommendation:

Establish a courthouse procedure to document suspicious incidents and/or illegal activities. When these activities occur, employees should report them to the court officers who either take an incident report or document the situation by memo. Share these reports at future Courthouse Security Committee meetings and keep them on file.

- **Current Status:**

Mail and packages are delivered to various offices in the courthouse building without being centrally screened.

Recommendation:

Available X-ray equipment should be used to implement incoming mail procedures, to include the screening of boxes and packages, at the security checkpoint prior to being distributed to the respective offices. Individuals responsible for screening and sorting the mail should have specific training on detecting suspicious packages and letters.

Courtrooms

- ***Current Status:***

The judge's bench in some of the courtrooms is either open on both ends or open only into the witness box exposing the judge to a possible attack from the public, a witness or a prisoner.

Recommendation:

Install either a gate system on the side of the judge's bench areas where the witness stand is located or place another obstacle there, such as a bookcase. The gate, if used, should swing out towards the in-custody defendants and witnesses. In addition, a court officer should stand near all in-custody defendants while they are within the witness box. During recess, the gate could be secured to prevent access to the judge's bench areas by unauthorized individuals.

- ***Current Status:***

The judge's bench platforms are not reinforced with hardened or bulletproof material.

Recommendation:

Reinforce the judge's bench platforms with bulletproof material to provide an area in which the judge can safely shelter in place.

- ***Current Status:***

There is no written policy concerning who can be armed inside the Moore County Courthouse.

Recommendation:

The Moore County Courthouse Security Committee should develop a specific written firearms policy addressing who should be allowed to be armed in the courthouse, i.e., on-duty officers, off-duty officers, judges and other court officials, as authorized by law.

- ***Current Status:***

There are no written emergency evacuation procedures for prisoners, judges, jurors, other employees or the public.

Recommendation:

Develop an emergency evacuation policy for the courthouse building that includes procedures for prisoners, judges, jurors, spectators, other employees and the public. Once the policy is adopted, drills to test its effectiveness should be implemented as indicated earlier in this report.

Judges' Chambers and Related Office

- ***Current Status:***

The judges' chambers off of the courtrooms do not have duress alarms.

Recommendation:

All judges' chambers should have duress alarms installed that notify the court security personnel when activated.

- ***Current Status:***

Currently it is unknown whether there are judges or other court officials who are armed while they occupy the bench within the courtrooms.

Recommendation:

Judges and others permitted by law to carry a concealed weapon at the bench per G.S. § 14-269.4(4b) should be briefed on safe gun handling and the bailiffs should know who is armed and where their firearms are located at all times. Develop a safety plan outlining the security expectations in the event there is an emergency in the courtroom.

Attached is the full assessment completed by the Courthouse Security Committee members. Listed below are the major recommendations:

1. The courthouse should be equipped with a closed circuit television (CCTV) system for the building and perimeter. Assignment of staff to monitor the system in real time would greatly enhance security and provide for a more rapid response to emergency situations.
2. A key card access system should be installed on the exterior doors for use by all employees and occupants of the Moore County Courthouse. The same system should be installed on all interior doors to control access to restricted areas.
3. Duress alarms are needed in all of the courtroom areas and offices that are occupied within the Moore County Courthouse. This allows for extra coverage and the ability to contact the sheriff's office when issues or emergencies arise that require a law enforcement response.
4. Establish an incident reporting system whereby security incidents are reported to the sheriff's office and documented and then shared with the Moore County Courthouse Security Committee at their meetings.
5. Systematic safety training should be conducted annually for all staff occupying the courthouse building to reinforce procedures for active shooters, bomb threats, hostage situations, etc. In addition, conduct an orientation training session for new employees.

6. The Moore County Courthouse Security Committee needs to assist in the development of a written policy outlining who can access the restricted areas behind the courtroom.
7. The Moore County Courthouse Security Committee needs to assist in the development of a written policy outlining the items of contraband not allowed within the courthouse and obtain the necessary authority via judicial order, ordinance or other means to provide for the enforcement of this policy.
8. Increase the safety and security of the counters and areas of public access within the clerk of court's office.
9. Develop and implement written courthouse security policies and standard operating procedures included as part of the overall courthouse security plan.

The next step for the Courthouse Security Committee should be to review this summary, carefully look at the current gaps and begin to prioritize what items/activities need to be addressed by critical function and ease of implementation. Those items that can be changed quickly should become part of the short-term plan. Those items that require substantial funding should be included in the Committee's long-range plan.

The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association appreciates the opportunity to have been a part of this process for your county. Please contact the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association if you or any members of the Committee have any questions concerning this report.

Photos

1. There are limited security barriers between the public and employees in the clerk of court office. The counter upstairs is open on both ends allowing for unauthorized access by the public. There is no glass partition at either counter to provide protection and limited access to areas where cash drawers are located.



2. The cash drawer within the clerk of court office is easily accessible from the back. There is no duress alarm located in this office space.



3. The judge's bench is open to the witness stand in both the civil and superior courtrooms. These openings should be secured with gates that swing outwards in the direction of the defendants or witnesses.

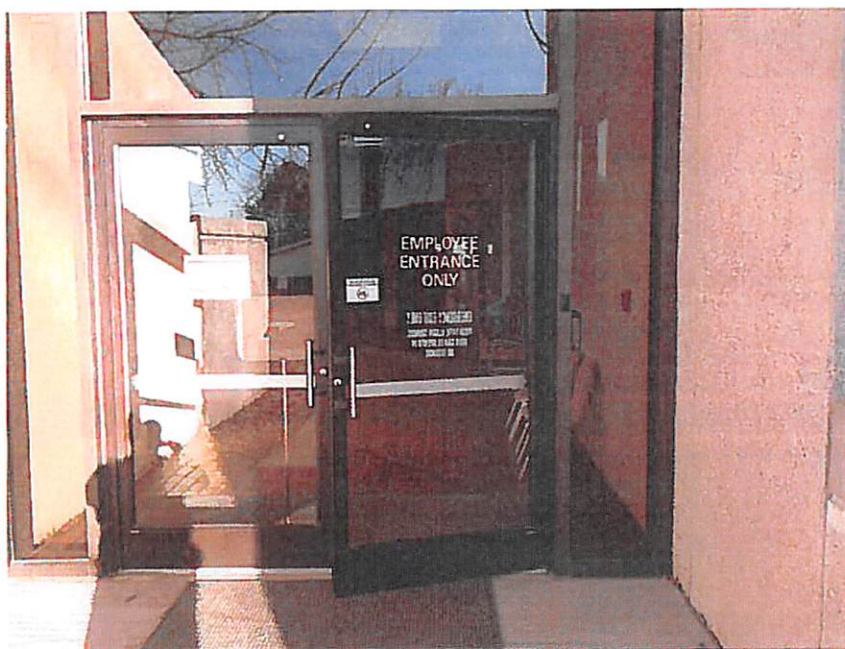


4. There is no X-ray equipment for the screening of bags and packages at the lower level entrance to the courthouse. If possible, there should be two uniformed deputies conducting security screenings to provide for an accurate and consistent screening process.



5. None of the exterior doors are equipped with intrusion alarms for notification of a breach of the building after hours. This issue is complicated by the fact that the building is accessed after normal business hours for use by employees of the probation office. A controlled access keycard system would provide both the necessary access and required security for both exterior and interior doors.





6. Restricted parking for judges and other courthouse personnel is not secured by fencing or controlled access gates. Parking in this area is in some instances, marked with signage designating the position of the individual assigned to that space. This exposes the identification of judicial officials and others courthouse personnel. Therefore, signs using only numeric or alpha identifiers are preferred, like the ones pictured below.

