



Court Facilities Capital Review Board

Hon. Norman St. George
Chair of the Board

Tina Fernandez, Esq.

Hon. Brad Hoylman-Sigal
NYS Senator

Hon. Charles D. Lavine
NYS Assembly Member

Hon. Willis Stephens Jr.
NYS Assembly Member (Ret.)

Mindy Jeng
Interim Counsel to the Board

Court Facilities Capital Review Board Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The April 29, 2025, Court Facilities Capital Review Board meeting was held at Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 4, 19th Floor, Albany, New York at 12 noon. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George at 12:04 p.m.

Members in Attendance: First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George, Assemblymember Charles Lavine, Senior Legislative Counsel Jonathan Weinberg (Board member designee representing Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal), Tina Fernandez, and Willis Stephens Jr.

Others in Attendance: Mindy Jeng (Interim Counsel to the Board); Justin Barry (Executive Director of the Unified Court System (UCS))

Agenda Items:

1. Introduction

Judge St. George opened the meeting, and the Board members and other attendees introduced themselves.

2. Approval of January 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Judge St. George moved to approve the January 28, 2025 meeting minutes. Assemblymember Lavine seconded. The Board unanimously voted to approve the January 28, 2025 minutes.

3. Counsel's Report & Update on Capital Plan Solicitations

Ms. Jeng gave a summary of the progress made since the last Board meeting. In November and December 2024, the UCS sent out capital plan solicitation letters to 14 priority political subdivisions. These were cities and counties that had either chronic problems or had past or ongoing capital plan that needed Board approval. Since the January meeting, UCS sent out 63 additional capital solicitation letters that listed the critical deficiencies within those courthouses. There were 42 remaining political subdivisions that did not receive a letter because their facilities were suitable and sufficient and not in need of capital work.

14 Priority Political Subdivisions

Of the 14 priority political subdivisions, two had capital plans approved at the January Board meeting. Three more plans are up for Board vote in the April meeting. Ms. Jeng gave an overview of the remaining cities and counties.

The City of Albany continued to engage with the UCS, and they are in discussions with Albany County to relocate to a mixed-use facility. The City of Schenectady has not responded to continued communications from UCS and is addressed later in the Board agenda. While the City of Buffalo has one of the worst court facilities in the state, a new Administrative Judge, Judge Amy Martoche, is in place in the Eighth Judicial District. The First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge recommends giving Judge Martoche 60 days to establish a relationship and communicate with the interim mayor and to engage the city. The City of Auburn is still engaging with the UCS. They are looking to lease new court space. A recent lease negotiation fell through due to high costs.

Niagara County was also continuing to engage with UCS. They provided a list of past and future capital improvements. The City of Lackawanna responded to UCS's solicitation letter by saying that they were focusing on the renovation of their City Hall and could not address the court facility. The UCS will continue to engage with them. The City of Rye has a plan for renovating its court facility but does not have an acceptable plan for swing space. They are considering looking at a new facility altogether. Dutchess County is engaged in a HVAC renovation project. Ms. Jeng indicated that they may submit a capital plan amendment related to that project soon. The Chief Clerk in the Poughkeepsie City Court is in discussion with the city about potentially swapping office space with the police department to address some of their space issues.

63 Secondary Political Subdivisions

Ms. Jeng noted that the capital plan solicitation letters sent out to the 63 political subdivisions listed their deficiencies, such as insufficient space, leaking roofs, and insufficient heating and colling. Twenty-two of the political subdivisions were due to respond by April 21, 2025. UCS is still engaging with them and providing them with their historical capital plans. Another 41 political subdivisions are due to respond on May 28, 2025.

42 Suitable and Sufficient Political Subdivisions

Ms. Jeng highlighted that there were 42 political subdivisions that did not receive a capital plan solicitation letter because their facilities were deemed suitable and sufficient.

4. Board Discussion and Action Items (Vote)

a. Steuben County – Approval of Capital Plan Amendment

Ms. Jeng shared that Steuben County submitted a capital plan amendment related to its past capital work. In 2017, the court determined the need for additional judicial chambers, an additional visiting judge's office, attorney client conference rooms, and other additional space. Steuben County completed capital work to move county offices out of the County Office Building and into a newly constructed Annex. This allowed the Surrogate's Court, Family Court, Supreme Court, and County Court to move more functions into the County Office Building and one consolidated space. The capital project was completed from 2019 to 2021, and it increased the footprint of the courts by 7,357 square feet, now occupying a total of 33,058 square feet. The project also added a 63-space parking lot. The project scope conformed to building codes and ADA accessibility standards. The Seventh Judicial District, OCA's architectural team, and Executive Office are satisfied with the capital work that was completed. Steuben County paid for the \$9.6 million project out of its own general fund balance. They are not seeking interest aid.

After a review by the Board, a motion was made to approve the amendment by Ms. Fernandez. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weinberg and unanimously approved by the Board. The Board signed the certificate approving the capital plan.

b. City of Middletown – Approval of Capital Plan Amendment

Ms. Jeng shared the capital plan amendment for the City of Middletown. Since 2014, the courthouse has needed additional space to accommodate a new full-time judge appointed by the Legislature. In 2017, the City purchased a vacant federal courthouse. At the time, they did not have sufficient funds to proceed with renovation and construction. The City now has sufficient funds and can proceed with the project. The renovated courthouse will have two courtrooms and two judges' chambers. The City is utilizing its own funds, and it is not seeking state interest aid. The Ninth Judicial District, OCA's architectural team, and the Executive Office have approved the city's project plans and are satisfied with the planned work. They have begun construction and are looking to complete it by December 2025.

Ms. Fernandez made a motion to approve the capital plan amendment, and Assemblymember Lavine seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board. The Board signed the certificate approving the capital plan.

c. City of Mount Vernon – Approval of Capital Plan Amendment

Ms. Jeng discussed the capital plan amendment submitted by the City of Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon has dealt with roof leaks since 2014, which has led to stained ceiling tiles and caused damage to court files and resources. The City of Mount Vernon hired an architectural and engineering firm that conducted a study, which concluded that the roof needed emergency repair. The city contracted with two companies, Weathertight and NuVista, to conduct emergency roof repairs, which includes weatherproofing the building, adding insulation, and improving the structural integrity to mitigate water infiltration issues. The City of Mount Vernon will pay for the roof repair through the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds. The Ninth Judicial District, local court administrators, and the Executive Office recommend the approval of the project. Ms. Jeng shared that while the Mount Vernon City Court is still in need of further repairs to its HVAC system and elevators before it is considered a suitable and sufficient court facility, the roof repair project is necessary.

Assemblymember Lavine made a motion to approve the capital plan amendment, and MS. Fernandez seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board. The Board signed the certificate approving the capital plan.

d. City of Schenectady

Ms. Jeng shared that the UCS sent the signed Board certificate to the City of Schenectady after the January 2025 meeting. The certificate indicated that Schenectady had failed to provide a suitable and sufficient courthouse and that UCS would be moving to impose sanctions if the city did not provide a response within 60 days. The City of Schenectady had not responded to the communication, and the April 11 deadline had passed. Ms. Jeng indicated that under Judiciary Law § 39-a, the Chief Administrative Judge had to give city 30 days to request mediation before he can move to withhold state funds. Ms. Jeng shared with the Board a draft of the letter giving the mayor of Schenectady notice to request mediation of the dispute. The letter also contained an estimate of the amount of funds that would be withheld under the

statute. UCS' architectural team estimated that a facility that could accommodate four judges and staff would cover approximately 22,240 square feet. The Office of General Services' rate for construction/renovation work in the City of Schenectady is \$600/square foot, which comes to a total of \$13.344 million for an adequate court facility.

The Board reviewed the proposed letter to Mayor McCarthy and voted to approve sending the 30-day notice with the estimate of the amount to withhold. Ms. Fernandez moved to approve the proposed letter, and Assembly member Lavine seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

5. Update on New York City Capital Work

Mr. Barry shared with the Board an update on current and future capital work in New York City. Mr. Barry sent letters to the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice in 2023, 2024, and 2025 indicating UCS' priorities. The Harlem Community Justice Center (Harlem CJC) is one of the top priority items for UCS. There are two ongoing capital projects at the Harlem Court: a façade and roofing project at a cost of \$40 million and a ceiling restoration project that will cost \$1.4 million. Mr. Barry showed the Board some photos of the completed ceiling work. The Harlem CJC is also the subject of planned future projects including an energy upgrade project (\$20 million), elevator refurbishment (\$3.5 million), fixing the parking lot (\$1.2 million), and fixing the gate (\$600,000). Mr. Barry shared that the Chief Judge's working group on the future of the Harlem CJC is meeting and will propose different ideas for the use of the facility. There will be further renovations in the future.

Mr. Barry also shared that the Bronx Family Court/Criminal Court facility at 900 Sheridan Avenue is one of the top priority facilities, as communicated to the mayor's office. Mr. Barry referred the Board to the letter detailing the issues with the facility including insufficient space, leaks and flooding, broken elevators and escalators, and the lack of accessibility for disabled court users. Mr. Barry stated that UCS hopes that New York City will conduct a capital scope development plan for a new facility for the Bronx Family Court.

Mr. Barry communicated to the Board that New York City was in the process of designing a new Staten Island Family Court facility that will contain 8 hearing rooms and 8 courtrooms. The renovation and expansion will consolidate Family Court operations. Swing space construction will begin the summer of 2025, and the new site construction will begin May 2026. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2030. New York City is also in the process of renovating a new Civil Court facility in Brooklyn at 210 Joralemon Street. The Civil Court will move out of its current leased building at 141 Livingston. The project cost is estimated to be \$250 million, and the project is slated to be completed in 2027. Mr. Barry showed the Board photos of a renovated court room.

Mr. Barry stated that New York City was also performing work on 60 Centre Street, the New York County Supreme Court – Civil Term. Phase 1 of the project will cost \$103 million and entails rehabilitation of the roof, façade, and addressing the water that runs through the basement of the building. The exterior work project will begin in the fourth quarter of 2026. Phase 2 of the project involves upgrading interior spaces, improving building circulation, renovating courtrooms and offices, upgrading mechanical systems, and improving ADA accessibility. Phase 2 of the project will cost \$390 million.

Before the meeting concluded, Mr. Stephens asked about the status of Buffalo City Court, and Judge St. George shared that UCS will be giving the new Administrative Judge, Judge Martoche, an opportunity to communicate with the interim mayor of Buffalo before any further forceful action was taken.

6. Next Meeting Date

Judge St. George stated that the next meeting will be held in late September.

A motion to adjourn was made by First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge St. George. The motion was seconded by Assemblymember Lavine. The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.