



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Chief Justice Workman tours, seeks upgrades to Cabell County Magistrate Court facilities

For immediate release

See <http://www.courtsvw.gov/public-resources/press/cj-column/Workman-Oct-Dec-2015.html> for related article by Chief Justice Workman for *West Virginia Lawyer*

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Margaret L. Workman toured Cabell County Magistrate Court facilities on Friday, Dec. 11, and met with magistrates, circuit judges, and members of the County Commission to discuss the need for security improvements. She was accompanied by State Court Administrative Director Steve Canterbury and Magistrate Court Services Director Janie Moore.

“Security needs improvement in the Cabell County Magistrate Court facilities,” Chief Justice Workman said. “We would like to see the county rehabilitate an existing building or build a judicial annex so the thousands of Cabell County residents who use the magistrate court facilities annually can do so in a setting that is safe,” Chief Justice Workman said. About 18,000 cases have been processed and disposed of in Cabell County Magistrate Court so far this calendar year.

While it is ultimately the judicial branch’s decision whether there is adequate safety and security in magistrate court facilities, counties are required to bear the expense over and above the amount they are reimbursed from the Magistrate Court Fund.

Chief Justice Workman said her meeting with Sheriff T.W. McComas resulted in some suggestions for interim improvements, and that she is hopeful the county commission will make more significant long-term improvements.

“I encouraged all the county officials to keep talking and exploring possibilities,” Chief Justice Workman said. “With the advent of family courts and increased magistrate court responsibilities, twenty-one other counties in West Virginia have moved in the direction of separate judicial annexes. Cabell needs to work towards that goal.”

Although Justice Workman’s tenure as chief justice will end December 31, she intends to continue to work on behalf of the Court to seek improvements in magistrate court facilities around the state that are unsafe or unhealthy.

“The magistrate court system is the workhorse of the state court system. More citizens interact with that branch of the judiciary than any other,” Chief Justice Workman

said. In 2014, West Virginia's 158 magistrates processed 318,366 cases, including civil, criminal and domestic violence matters.