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**MEMO**

TO: County Commission  
FROM: Robert W. Wilson  
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Subject: Commission Space Utilization Discussion

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Planning for a secure courtroom in the current Information Technology suite and the related issue of where to relocate the IT office has led to a space need conversation that now requires Commission direction.

Commissioner Peterson, as Commission and Building Committee Chair and Commissioner Grindberg, as IT Department Portfolio Commissioner have worked closely with my office, reviewed office layouts and building blueprints, and met with architects and department heads to understand the space-related opportunities and challenges Cass County should consider now and into the future. The result of this review and numerous conversations is the recognition of two options moving forward. Each option represents a unique approach to how future Courthouse and Annex space discussions and planning would proceed.

**Option I:**

This option would renovate the currently unutilized secure juvenile detention area on the first floor of the Annex Building into an area that will accommodate current and future IT Department needs. Additional needed remodels would be minor and relate to reconfiguring a corridor for ease of department access without impacting Juvenile Court offices and personnel. The benefit of this option is it would be the quickest and most cost efficient to accomplish.

Future campus-wide space needs could then be evaluated without leaving the IT Department in an interim location for an extended period of time.

**Option II:**

An alternative option begins with the perspective that the current layout of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Annex Building is not efficient. The first priority would be to identify the Cass Human Service Zone Divisions with the most walk-in traffic and relocate those offices to the Annex 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Next, this option would move the County IT department and State's Attorney's Offices to the Annex 2<sup>nd</sup> and a portion of 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

Those actions then provide the County with additional opportunities:

- It frees space in the Courthouse for the County to approach the 2025 Legislature with the potential to collaborate on future courtroom planning and funding.
- Collaboration with Juvenile Courts to identify a suitable space for relocation that anticipates future needs.

- Allows the county to review the future needs of other departments located in the Courthouse and Annex and plan for growth – taking into account additional space available in the recently acquired RDJ Building.

Challenges with this option include additional cost, complexity and length of time to fully review and implement.

There is no suggested motion with this item. On Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> my hope is the Board would provide general direction as to which option staff should pursue. Commissioners Peterson, Grindberg, several others and I have met with representatives from TL Stroh Architects and discussed these options. A better understanding of which general option the Commission favors will allow potential legislative conversations to be significantly more effective and will provide me a clearer understanding of the potential scope of service I can communicate to TL Stroh.