

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2008**

The Justice Committee met on Tuesday, March 25, 2008 in the Committee Room, located on the second floor of the Administration Building beginning at 2:35 p.m. Mr. Banning, Committee Chairman presided.

Members Attending:

William B. Banning, Sr., Chairman	James E. Kinard, Jr., V Chairman
George H. Smokey Davis	Bobby C. Keisler
William C. Billy Derrick	

Also attending: Katherine Hubbard, County Administrator; Joe Mergo, Deputy County Administrator; Larry Porth, Finance Director/Assistant County Administrator; other staff members, citizens of the county and representatives of the media.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda was sent to radio and TV stations, newspapers, and posted on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the County Administration Building.

Solicitor's Office Update on Caseload (Goals 1,2) - Solicitor's Office - Rick Hubbard,

Deputy Solicitor – Mr. Hubbard presented an update on the Solicitor's Office caseload and the status on the current caseload management system. He reported that in 2004 Council approved six new case managers to assist the Solicitor's office in disposing of cases and at the same time a new case management system was instituted to help move cases. He reported at the end of 2004, the Solicitor's office had 9,400 cases pending and at the end of 2007 there were 5,900 cases pending with approximately 5,300 currently pending. Mr. Hubbard indicated that it was a sizeable reduction in the overall caseload. He said Lexington County ranks number seven out of 46 counties in the number of cases disposed as of last year and noted there has been a significant increase in what the Solicitor's office has been able to do with the additional case managers by allowing the more experienced staff to move the more violent cases. Mr. Hubbard provided the following statistics: Since March 13, 2008, 176 people have been moved from the jail by way of guilty pleas, this does not include trials, bond hearings or motions. Based on numbers from the Sheriff's Department, a year ago the jail inmate population peaked at 1,012 inmates and as of March 1, 2008, the number was down to 795 inmates. The Sheriff's Department also reported that General Sessions' cases are down to 407. The Solicitor's office currently has 348 cases in the jail and other cases are from the Family Court, the Magistrate Court, with 150 Federal inmate cases.

Mr. Hubbard reported there were problems with the new computer system that links the Solicitor's office with the Clerk of Court and the Magistrate's office. Mr. David Reynolds, with the Solicitor's office, gave details about the problems they are experiencing and how it is being resolved. Mr. Hubbard said the problem with the new system affects the ability to give the proper stats on cases between the linked offices, which have resulted in having to manually audit cases with the Clerk of Court's office to verify information.

Mr. Donnie Myers, Solicitor, stated a few years ago Chief Justice sent out case management orders

telling Solicitors how to run their docket and, based on those orders, it put a larger work load on the Solicitor's office. He said that in order to handle the additional work, they needed case managers and a computer system network linked to the magistrates. Solicitor Myers said they could not handle the additional work load or move the cases without the additional case managers and indicated that they were on track with the caseloads. Solicitor Myers suggested that a committee needed to be formed with the City of Columbia, Lexington County Council, Richland County Solicitor's office, Lexington County Solicitor's office, Law Enforcement/jail to investigate the problem of cases from the City of Columbia that end up in Lexington County. The County Administrator was requested to recommend appointees to form a committee on this issue.

For information only, no action taken.

Approval of Minutes - Meeting of February 12, 2008 – A motion was made by Mr. Keisler, seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the February 12, 2008 minutes as submitted.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Old Business/New Business – None.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy R. Busbee
Assistant to the Clerk

William B. Banning, Sr.
Chairman

Diana W. Burnett
Clerk