



Alamance County Board of Commissioners

ACTION ITEM AGENDA ITEM

MEETING DATE: 4/17/2023

DATE SUBMITTED: 4/11/2023

FROM: Heidi York

DEPT: County Manager's Office

AGENDA TITLE: Resolution In Support of An Additional District Court Judge & Public Defender's Office

TO: Alamance County Board of Commissioners

ISSUE/ACTION REQUESTED:

Approval of resolution in support of an additional District Court Judge and a Public Defender's Office.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE OF REQUEST:

Alamance County is scheduled to get an additional District Court Judge bringing the number of District Court Judges to five along with a Public Defender's Office. Commissioner Turner directed staff to prepare a resolution for the Board to consider for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval.

ATTACHMENTS: Resolution

John Paisley, Jr., Chairman
Steven Carter, Vice-Chair
William T. "Bill" Lashley
Pamela Thompson
Craig Turner

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
124 West Elm Street
Graham, NC 27253-2865

County Manager
Heidi York

County Attorney
Rik Stevens

Clerk to the Board
Tory M. Frink, MMC, NCMCC



RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN ADDITIONAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE AND PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

WHEREAS, Article IV of the North Carolina Constitution provides that the North Carolina General Assembly shall divide the State into local districts for the holding of Superior and District Courts, and shall provide and preserve an efficient allocation of judicial resources; and,

WHEREAS, the last comprehensive reforms to the judicial and prosecutorial districts were made by the General Assembly in the 1960s, with only occasional piecemeal changes being made in the last fifty years, resulting in an unbalanced distribution of judicial resources; and,

WHEREAS, Alamance County's population has grown substantially in recent years and continues to grow, causing a significant and predictable increase in caseloads of Judicial District 15A's four District Court Judges; and,

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts reported in July 2022, that the four existing District Court Judges for Judicial District 15A had the highest workload among all judicial districts in the State, and that Judicial District 15A needed, at that time, 4.89 District Court Judges to effectively accomplish its work;

WHEREAS, the number of criminal, civil, child and family court cases filed in Judicial District 15A's District Courts continues to increase, thereby exceeding the number of cases that can be promptly and efficiently heard by the current number of District Court Judges; and,

WHEREAS, the number of attorneys in Alamance County available for court-appointed representation of defendants charged with serious crimes is precariously low, creating an unsustainable workload for attorneys willing to defend these individuals and increasing the risks for appeals; and,

WHEREAS, the Alamance County Board of Commissioners wish to ensure adequate representation of all individuals who face the deprivation of their liberty, to ensure efficient operations of the criminal courts, and to ensure that justice will be properly served;

THEREFORE, should the State see fit to fund a fifth District Court Judge and a Public Defender's Office, the Alamance County Board of Commissioners is hereby committed to providing adequate space to support the additional needed Judge and Public Defender's Office.

Adopted this the _____ day of _____, 2023.

John P. Paisley, Jr., Chairman
Alamance County Board of Commissioner

ATTEST:

Tory Frink, Clerk to the Board