

From: Sturdivant, Ed

Sent: Tuesday, July 02, 2013 3:44 PM

To: Hebert, Robert; Meyers, Andy; Prestage, James; Patterson, James; Morrison, Richard

Subject: Juror Payment Process

Commissioners' Court,

I have been working on revising the Juror payment process over the past year with the Treasurer and District Clerk due to the inefficiency of issuing checks for small amounts. The issues we are currently encountering are:

1. 21% of juror payments never clear due to the inconvenience of redeeming a \$6 check by the juror.
2. There are currently 10,700 outstanding juror checks totaling \$91,600 that my staff must account for each month. This number grows by 200 checks/\$1,800 per month.

I was working on a cash-pay jury process patterned after Williamson County, but I encountered issues that could not be overcome with the Treasurer and the District Clerk. JP Morgan Chase offers a debit card payment solution with a proposed fee of \$2/card. This solution would be turn-key; we simply send them a file each week and they issue and mail the cards to the jurors. We currently incur direct expenses of \$0.91/check. There are indirect costs that I could include but these costs would not be avoided if we move away from issuing checks. The County can take advantage of the uncleared check balance by authorizing the voiding of all outstanding jury checks that are older than a certain date. This would benefit general fund, but would require a large work effort to void each check due to the volume. If the Court is interested in providing a more efficient manner for jurors to redeem payment as well as eliminating the administrative hassle of large volumes of outstanding checks, the debit card payment process would be a solution.

I need your input on the direction you would like to go since there is a budget impact of about \$24,000/yr if you choose the debit card solution. The options are:

1. Stay as we are. Authorize the voiding of outstanding juror checks older than a certain date (6 or 9 months) and place funds in general fund. Initial benefit of \$80k to general fund and \$1800/mo thereafter. Juror payment redemption would continue to be 79% with increased workload on Auditor's Office for voiding process. I will not ask for more staff if you choose this option.
2. Authorize debit card solution at an additional cost of \$24k/yr with a 95%+ juror payment redemption rate (based on Chase statistics). This would allow use of staff resources in Auditor's Office and Treasurer's Office for other purposes other than managing juror check payments and large counts of outstanding checks.

I've asked the County Attorney's Office to delay working on the contract until I hear back from all of you. Please advise.

Thanks,
Ed