



COUNTY ATTORNEY
Fort Bend County, Texas

DRAFT

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Date: February 24, 2015

To: Commissioners Court

CC: Kent Edwards, Director of Human Resources
Pamela Gubbels, Director of Finance & Investments

From: Roy Cordes, Jr.

RE: Request for Additional Sr. Litigation Coordinator Position

We respectfully request the Court to authorize an additional support position in the County Attorney's office. We propose the position be staffed as a Senior Litigation Coordinator, grade 9.

Background.

Since 2006 this office has added two new positions:

1. An assistant county attorney in our family law division in 2007.
2. An administrative secretary supporting our general counsel and litigation divisions in 2008.

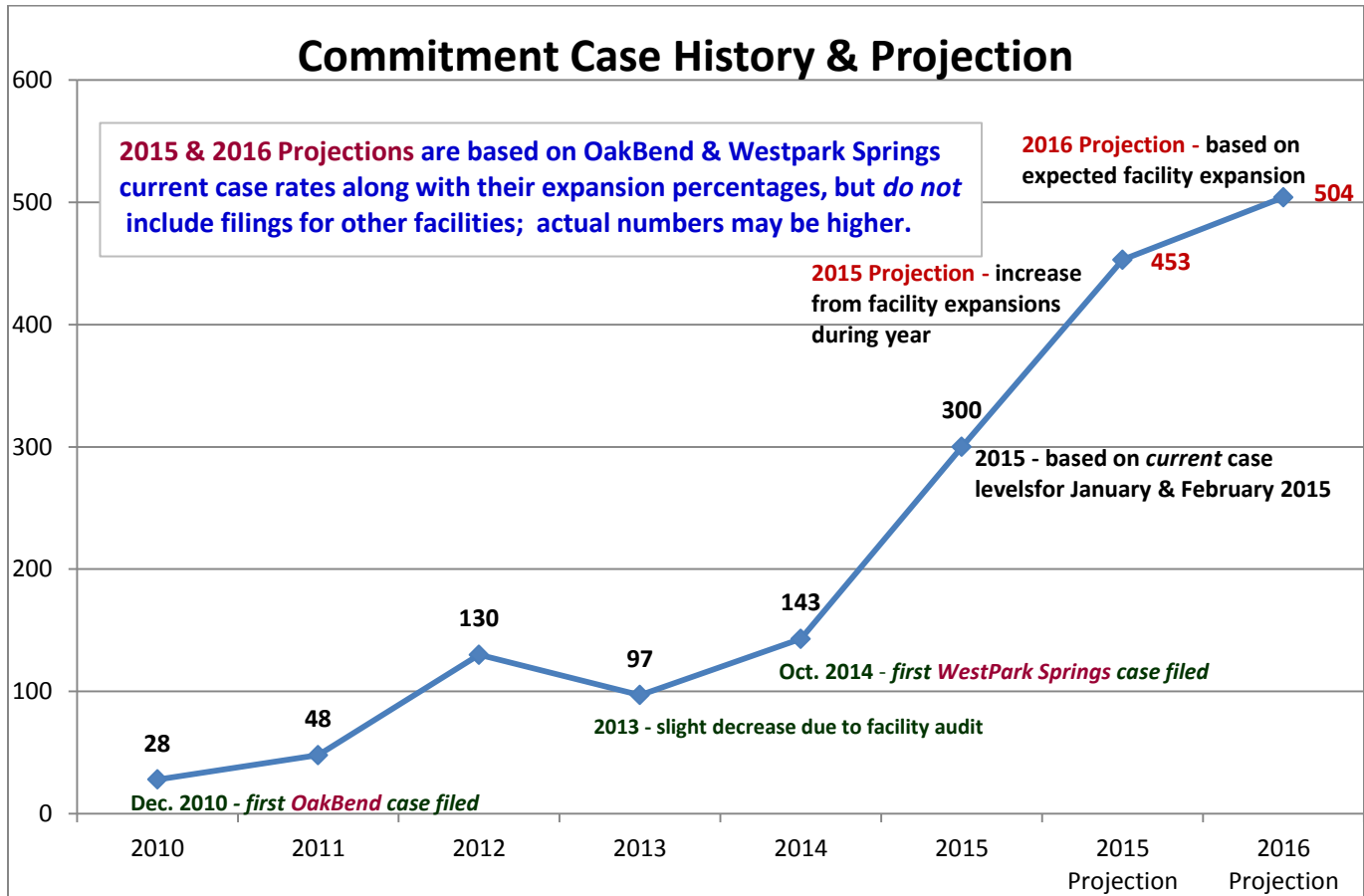
The County's rapid growth between 2008 and the present has resulted in an increase in requested support from this office. Until very recently this office has been able to effectively manage this increase in requested support and perform its statutory obligations. This office has a statutory obligation to represent the State in the mental health commitment process, which is paper-intensive, time-consuming, and may on occasion be complex. In 2006 the office processed 6 mental health commitment cases and in 2010 the office processed 28 mental health commitment cases.

The increase in mental health commitment cases beginning in 2010 through 2014 were the result of:

- addition of a senior care mental health unit in OakBend Medical Center in 2010; and
- addition of a new mental health hospital, Westpark Springs (mental health & substance abuse treatment for adolescent through senior ages), which opened mid-October, 2014.

The office is experiencing a rapidly expanding mental health caseload driven by the increase in mental health facilities in Fort Bend County. OakBend Medical Center's Senior Care Unit is undergoing expansion of 50%, from 16 to 24 beds and is near completion. Westpark Springs is a 72 bed facility that opened in October at reduced capacity. It has now qualified for Medicare and is expected to expand its

service population as early as the end of February, including qualification for acceptance of Medicaid. Once those expansions are complete, mental health case filings will likely exceed three times the number of cases filed in 2014. The table below does not include any cases from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or any new facilities such as one in Katy that has contacted our office.

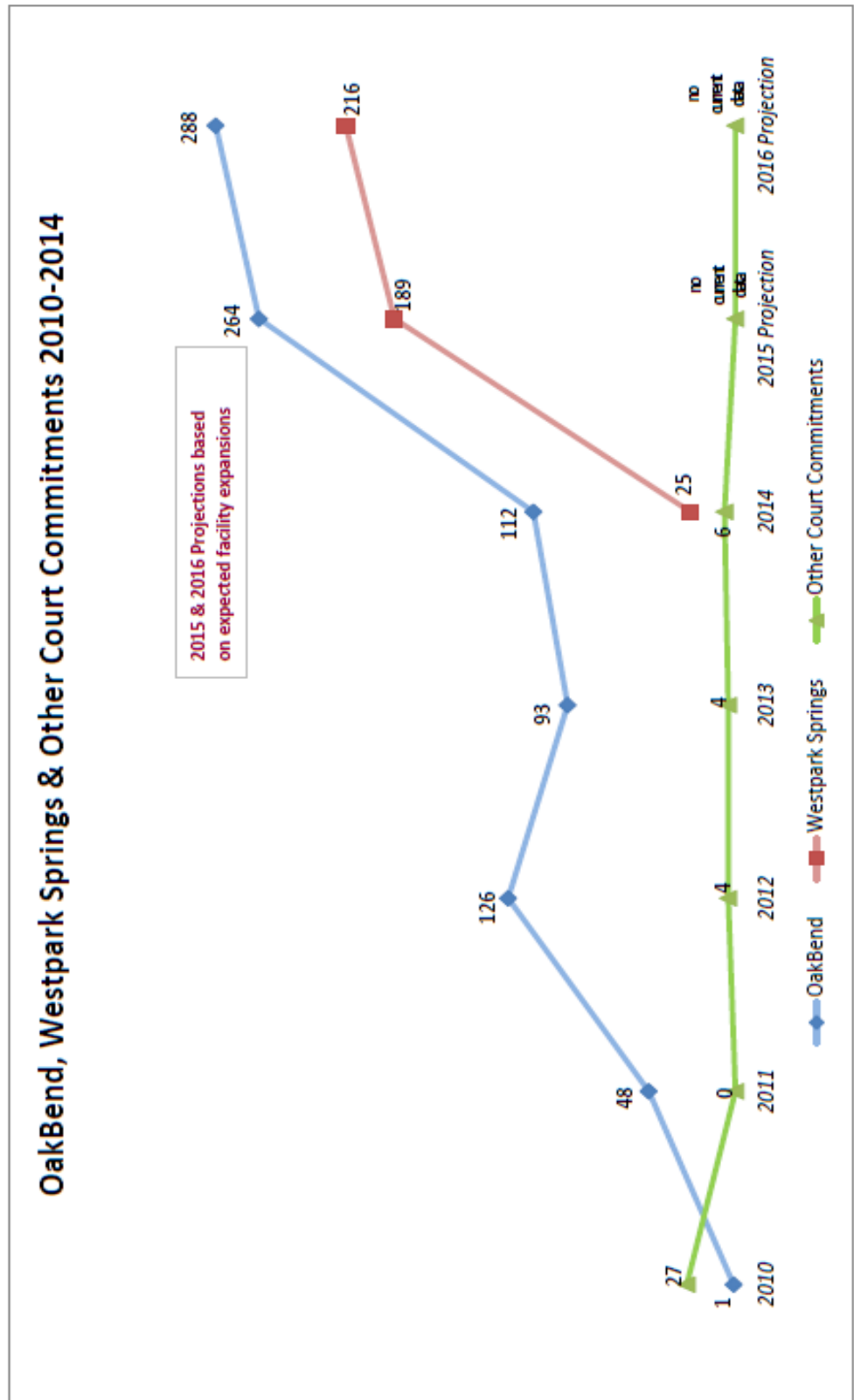


Justification.

Mental health court cases require skilled support for efficient and accurate preparation and processing of documents, as well as communication with attorneys, hospitals, courts, and the public. Generally each case requires an average of 5 hours of support staff time and a few case are beginning to require up to 10 hours of support staff time. The 143 cases processed in 2014 required approximately 715 hours of support staff time. Our current support staff and a temporary support person with specialized skills in mental health commitment cases working 40 hours per week for 3 months processed the cases.

An increase in case load from 143 to 453 at an average of 5 hours per case would require an additional 1,550 hours of support staff time. It is possible our estimate of new cases may be low. The office processed a record 13 new mental health commitment cases during the week of February 15. In addition to mental health cases, civil litigation cases have become increasingly time-consuming, along with new and/or expanding mobility projects moving forward, which will result in more property acquisition/condemnation cases. An increase in support staff time will need to be devoted to those cases as well. Therefore, we request the addition of 1 Sr. Litigation Coordinator position to our workforce, to assist our office by managing the increasing mental health caseload, along with new and expanding civil litigation.

Skilled administrative support has become even more crucial to the efficient operation of this office to ensure deadlines are met and associated case file paperwork is accurately and effectively managed in order to assist our attorneys with their increasing workload and to continue to provide timely and effective legal services to all County departments.



OakBend Senior Care Unit

2015 & 2016 Projections: Calculations based on current OakBend case levels along with upcoming facility expansion percentage; actual numbers may be higher.

2016 OakBend Projection - Calculated at 24 cases per month for 2016 Calendar Year

288

264

2015 OakBend Projection - Calculated at 16 cases per month for January - March & 24 cases per month for April - December (due to increase in facility capacity)

126

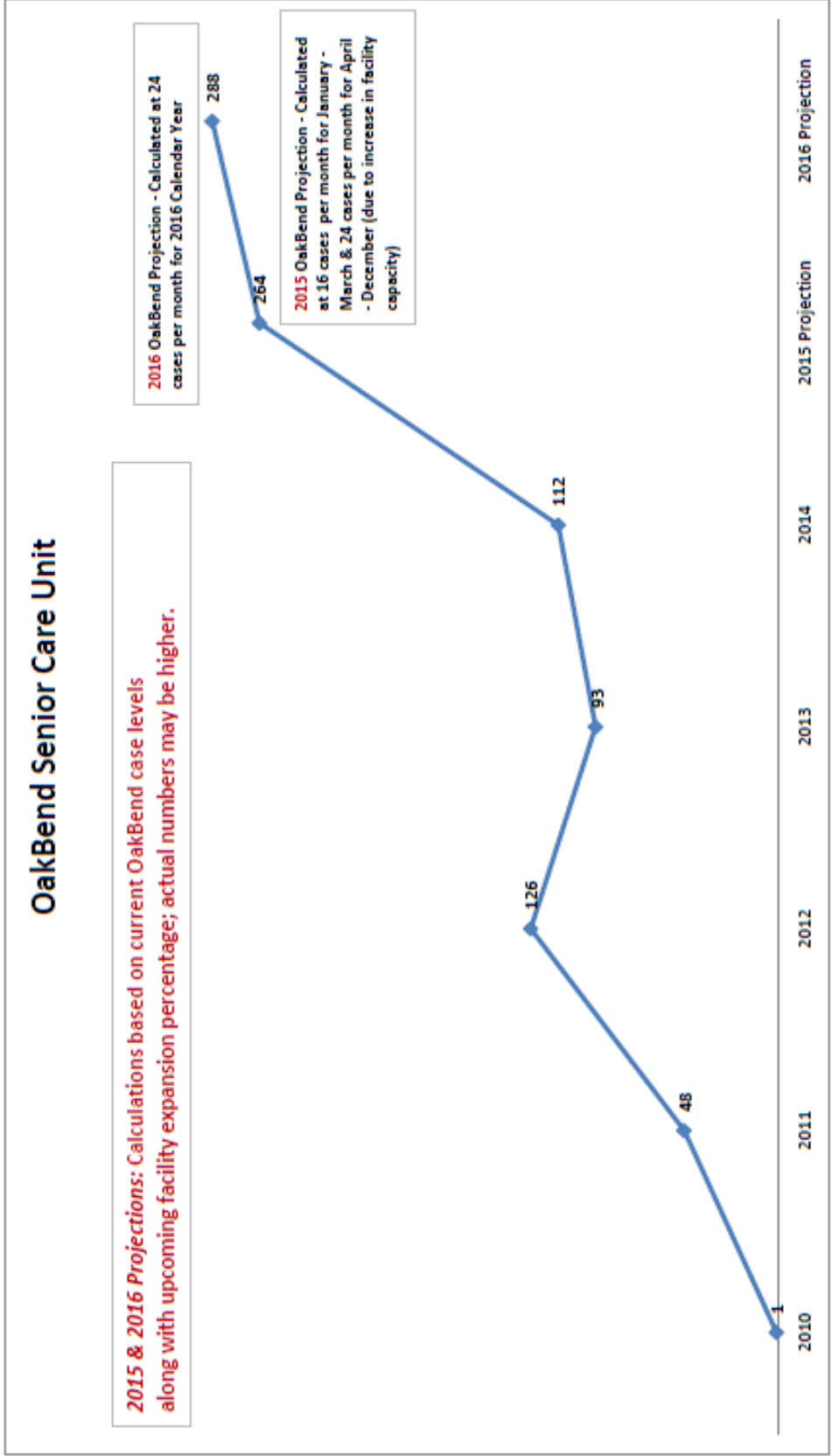
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93

48

1

2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 Projection 2016 Projection



Westpark Springs

2015 & 2016 Projections: Based on January 2015 case levels along with Westpark Springs expansion percentage (actual numbers likely higher)

2016 Projection - Calculated at 18 cases per month for 2016

216

2015 Projection - Calculated at 9 cases per month for January thru March & 18 cases per month for April thru December (due to increase in facility service population)

189

25

2014

2015 Projection

2016 Projection

