



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 15, 2016

Judge Denies Summary Judgement on City's Jail Lawsuit

SPRINGFIELD, MO – On Dec. 13, 2016, Judge John D. Beger, of the 25th Judicial Court of Missouri, denied the City of Springfield's motion to issue a partial summary judgement in their lawsuit against Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott and County Commissioners.

The City filed the lawsuit in the Greene County Circuit Court in July 2015 with hopes to clarify the Sheriff's contractual requirements in regards to housing Springfield's municipal inmates. This week's order delays a decision until a trial is held.

"We are grateful to Judge Beger for his careful consideration in this matter," said Greene County Presiding Commissioner Bob Cirtin. "Maintaining a solvent and efficient criminal justice system is something the County Commissioners and the Sheriff are passionate about."

The law enforcement sales tax (LEST) approved by voters and adopted in 1997 allowed for the establishment and operation of the Greene County Justice Center in which municipal detainees could be housed. As part of the agreement, municipalities would receive portions of the tax revenue based on a population-dependent funding formula. The City currently receives close to 60 percent of the tax revenue.

In April 2015 as the jail continued to exceed capacity, Sheriff Arnott stopped accepting municipal inmates, invoking Missouri statutes. Springfield then filed its lawsuit.

"The LEST agreement did not account for the changes in population, economy and criminal justice system that have occurred here in the nearly 20 years since the tax passed," Cirtin said. "It is clear the agreement needs to be reassessed to accommodate for the realities we are facing today. We look forward to exploring ways we can partner with the Sheriff and City to strengthen our criminal justice system."

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