



STATE OF DELAWARE
THE COURTS OF THE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET, 11TH FLOOR
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

WILLIAM F RICHARDSON
CHIEF MAGISTRATE

TELEPHONE: (302) 577 - 6001

POLICY DIRECTIVE NO. 91-132

TO: ALL JUSTICES OF THE PEACE, STATE OF DELAWARE
ALL CLERKS OF THE COURT, JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS

FROM: WILLIAM F. RICHARDSON *WFR*
CHIEF MAGISTRATE

DATE: MAY 29, 1991

RE: REDUCTION OF OPERATING HOURS AT JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
COURTS 2, 4, 10 AND 15

As most of you know, because of the economic difficulties confronting our State, Chief Justice Christie was recently asked by the Budget Director to prioritize all of the vacant positions throughout the different courts for possible elimination in the Judiciary's overall F.Y. 1992 budget. The Chief Justice made some very difficult decisions resulting in a prioritized list based upon which the Justice of the Peace Courts will lose all of the 20 current vacancies we have accumulated this year due to attrition and the hiring freeze in addition to 12 remaining vacancies created as a result of the Early Retirement Option. The elimination of 32 out of 219 Justice of the Peace Court positions, which represents 15% of our total work force, will set our Courts back 10 years to the personnel levels of F.Y. 1982

when we had approximately 150,000 fewer case filings than are anticipated for F.Y. 1992.

It is of paramount importance that all 19 of the Justice of the Peace Courts remain open and operating. To accomplish this with such severe personnel shortages and still be able to serve the public, police, victims, corrections, etc., the Justice of the Peace Courts will have to reduce operating hours in those courts that are currently open for 16 hours per day. The unavoidable alternative would be to close several courts completely. Fortunately, only 4 of the 19 Justice of the Peace Courts throughout the State will be effected by this change in operating policy.

Accordingly, the hours of operation of the Justice of the Peace Courts of the State of Delaware shall be as follows:

1. Justice of the Peace Courts 3 (Georgetown), 7 (Dover) and 11 (Hares Corner/New Castle) will continue to operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

2. All other Justice of the Peace Courts will be open for 8 hours per day, 5 days per week, as they are now.

3. Justice of the Peace Courts 2 (Lewes), 4 (Seaford), 10 (Prices Corner) and 15 (Penny Hill), which are currently the State's only 16 hour courts, will now be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. These courts will be open from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

I hope that this change in the Justice of the Peace Courts' hours of operation is only temporary and that the services offered by these courts can be expanded again when we

receive funding for the necessary personnel. Until then we must all do the best we can with our diminishing resources.

WFR:jp

cc: The Honorable Andrew D. Christie
The Honorable William T. Allen
The Honorable Henry duPont Ridgely
The Honorable Robert H. Wahl
The Honorable Robert D. Thompson
The Honorable Alfred R. Fraczkowski
Keith Brady, Esq.
Michael J. Rich, Esq.
Thomas W. Nagle
Edward G. Pollard
Anna A. Lewis
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