

Another delay in construction for Middlesex County courthouse

The long-stalled Middlesex County courthouse got another setback yesterday when a protest halted the award of a "winterizing" contract.

The project has been idle since April when the original general contractor, Gevyn Construction Co. of Mamaroneck, N.Y., was discharged by the county commissioners. Cost estimates, originally \$18 million, have risen to at least \$27 million.

Yesterday, a contract was to be awarded for \$4,387,000 to the lowest of three bidders, Franchi Construction Co. Inc. of 425 Watertown st., Newton.

But moments before, the commissioners' general counsel, attorney R. Robert Popeo, told them not to make the award because a protest had been entered by the second lowest bidder, Jefferson Co. Inc. of 75 First st., Cambridge.

Jefferson, who had bid \$200,000 more than Franchi, claimed Franchi had neglected to include its own bid for masonry work as well as that of its subcontractor.

The project will now be re-advertised and bids opened Nov. 20.

John F. Dever Jr., chairman of the commissioners, said the work covered by the contract will be of a permanent nature and represents a resumption of the East Cambridge project.

"I don't know where they picked up 'winterizing,'" he said. "None of this work will have to be undone."

The work includes scraping rust from bare girders, retreating exposed girders already sprayed with asbestos, running electrical, heating and plumbing conduits to the top of the 21-story building, pouring floors, setting up precast concrete walls and putting on the roof.

The contractor will be allowed 120 working days to complete the work. At approximately 20 working days a month, that would bring completion in May. Still to be done would be interior work.

Dever said legislation will be sought to provide funds to complete the job, already three years old.

A suit against the original contractor, Gevyn, is pending in US District Court, seeking damages for alleged failure to carry out the contract.