



COURTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION — Workers prepare window panel before it's hoisted into place on upper story of new Middlesex County

courthouse in East Cambridge.
(Paul Connell photo)

\$4m for winterizing Middlesex Courthouse

A contractual dispute, lack of money, politics, investigations and the cry for grand jury action have all surrounded the proposed \$27 million, 21-story Middlesex County Courthouse, which is not being completed in East Cambridge.

To preserve the \$20 million portion of the building already built, \$4 million is being spent to winterize it.

The original contractor for the project estimates that it may cost \$45 million before the court complex and high-rise detention center is completed, and this may take three to five years because of lawsuits.

Construction was halted last summer when a dispute developed between the contractor and the county commissioners.

Gevyn Construction Corp. of Mamaroneck, N.Y., said "misrepresentation, faulty drawings and inadequate funds in conjunction with inept and irresponsible contract management by disinterested county commissioners and their inexperienced architect" were the basis of a \$5.4 million suit against the county. Before the suit the company had received \$14 million.

Gevyn said it would cost \$45 million or more to complete the project. In 1963, when the project began, it was estimated that the cost would be about \$16 million.

Late last year the commissioners asked for \$8 million more, but the Legislature did not take any action. There is no record of any bills for more money being filed this year.

After some dispute, the Franchi Construction Co. of Newton was awarded \$4,387,000 in November to winterize the top 10-stories.

The job included closing portions of the structure, scraping rust and repairing any damages which the weather caused during the period the building was not under construction.

This week Middlesex County Sheriff John Buckley called on Atty. Gen. Robert Quinn to investigate the project.

Later, a spokesman for Quinn said Buckley had not yet made a formal request. He added that some months ago, Quinn and Middlesex County Dist. Atty. John Droney had placed their offices at the disposal of the Supreme Judicial Court, which was investigating the matter.

"If Sheriff Buckley has any evidence of wrongdoing," the Quinn spokesman said, "then he should turn it over to Droney."

The commissioners refused to comment on the controversy, on the advice of counsel, because the matter is in litigation.

Reports have still not been received from either a special legislative commission or the Supreme Court concerning the dispute.

The only vocal reaction has come from the taxpayers. Selectmen and mayors are organizing to block increased assessments for the project.