

Cost put at \$52.5 million for Middlesex Courthouse

Rep. Charles Flaherty (D-Cambridge), chairman of the Committee on Counties, predicted yesterday that the final cost of the Middlesex County Courthouse will exceed \$52.5 million.

Outlining the history of the project, which he described as a fiasco, Flaherty promised to fight for state takeover of financing, building maintenance and administration of all courthouses in Massachusetts.

He said his cost estimate included interest on the construction bonds which will not be paid off until 1991. The building was supposed to be completed more than a year ago and was to have cost \$15.5 million.

Flaherty said a central

state office, staffed by experts, is needed to avert the kind of chaos involved in the construction of the Middlesex Courthouse.

The Counties Committee will require the courthouse architect, Edward J. Tedesco of Tedesco Associates in Winchester, to present a certified statement for the actual amount needed to complete construction of the building. This must be acceptable to the committee, Flaherty said, before it will ask the Legislature to approve further bonding legislation. Tedesco has estimated that \$8.5 million more will be necessary.

The architect, according to a contract signed in 1962 with the Middlesex County Commissioners, will be

paid 5.5 percent of the cost of construction. He has received \$1.2 million.

Flaherty presented a press conference with detailed background information and chronology of events relating to the courthouse project. He said he would not make any charges or try to place the blame but that the record is clear that the present system of construction is "cumbersome and illogical."

He said county officials do not have the expertise to handle large, highly technical building projects and that continuation of the system would ignore "the real lessons of the Middlesex County Courthouse fiasco."