

**HB1102**  
**Bill Testimony**  
**Rep. Eric J. Murphy**  
**District 43, Grand Forks**

In mid-October 2023, I was asked by now retired Chief Nelson to request that the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) embed two agents with GFPD. The major law enforcement emphasis for these agents will be focused on cybercrime, with an additional emphasis on sex crimes that exploit children.

While the Grand Forks Police Department is fully staffed, its detectives lack the expertise to specifically work in cybercrime and lack the computer forensics expertise and other law enforcement capabilities unique to BCI.

Further, my understanding is that other major cities in North Dakota have agents with similar expertise embedded in their police departments, making this a common practice.

As such, I began working with Chief Agent Harstad to bring Chief Nelson's request to fruition. Initially our efforts were directed to include the costs for these two agents in the BCI budget and until mid-June, this was the plan as highlighted by Director Grabowska's mention of this in the BCI/AG office legislative briefing in West Fargo.

However, the executive branch decided it was best to request a separate appropriation for these agents resulting in the necessity of HB1102. I spoke with Chief Agent Harstad in this regard and BCI continues to support this mission with the Grand Forks Police Department and this specific bill for the appropriation.

This effort is a major point of emphasis for Mayor Bochenski and the city is renovating two offices to house these agents. Further, the City of Grand Forks has budgeted \$148,000 to offset costs associated with training for these agents and required computers and other equipment necessary for their success. They are prepared to provide additional resources as required.

These costs borne by the City of Grand Forks include, but are not limited to:

**Total Grand Forks Costs to add two Agents for biennium: \$148,000 plus office space**

\$12,000	Office furniture
\$64,000	Computers and forensic equipment
\$60,000	Training and travel costs
\$12,000	Internet and firewall

The costs borne by the State of North Dakota include, but are not limited to:

**Total State Appropriated Costs for two Agents for biennium: \$775,000**

\$480,000	FTE for two agents
\$161,000	One-time equipment costs
\$44,000	Cost of forensic software
\$90,000	Cost for cell phone unlocking devices

The State's costs will be increased due to recent changes in costs at BCI and an amendment will be introduced in Appropriations Committee. It is anticipated that this increase will be

between \$40,000-50,000 for the biennium, some of which will be salary, which is a reoccurring expense as well as software costs.

I urge a due pass on this bill as clearly these agents are not only a needed resource for the Grand Forks Police Department, but also for the Grand Forks Sheriff's Department. These agents will serve the northeastern North Dakota law enforcement community in this unique law enforcement capacity while being housed in the Grand Forks Police Department.