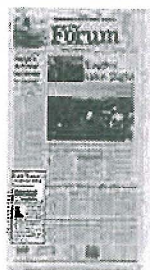


The Forum
 Fargo, ND
 Circ. 59646
 From Page:
 1
 8/25/2010
 395355



²⁰⁰⁻⁷⁷ Cass inmate's medical costs a concern

**■ Treatment costs to county
 for violent offender could top
 jail's entire medical budget.**

By Patrick Springer
 pspringer@forumcomm.com

Cass County taxpayers will have to pay for costly medical treatments for a jail inmate with a history of violent crimes.

Inside

► Cass approves asbestos removal from old courthouse.
 Page C1

County commissioners were briefed on the case in closed session Tuesday – and warned by Sheriff Paul Laney that the bills likely will be significant.

By law, the county must pay inmates' medical bills.

The inmate's identity was not revealed because of laws protecting medical privacy.

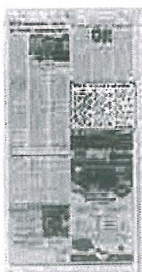
But Laney said the inmate has been convicted of violent offenses and is in custody awaiting trial on other charges, with still other charges under review.

The inmate's crimes are too serious to simply drop the charges to avoid paying the medical bills, Laney said.

"I can tell you it was a deadly weapon," the sheriff told commissioners in a discussion in open session that followed the

INMATE: Page A10

The Forum
Fargo, ND
Circ. 59646
From Page:
10
8/25/2010
395355



INMATE: Treatment in jail unlikely

From Page A1

closed discussion of the inmate's medical problems. "Do I have that concern for public safety? Absolutely."

It's possible the need for specialized care would mean transporting the prisoner for treatment elsewhere. Although the county routinely pays inmates' medical bills, this case is unique, Laney said.

The cost easily could exceed the jail's entire medical budget for inmates, now approximately \$300,000, he added.

Commissioners urged Laney to seek other possible funding sources, including medical assis-

tance, if the inmate is eligible.

State's Attorney Birch Burdick is also doing legal research to determine the level of care the county is obligated to provide.

Commissioner Scott Wagner said, for instance, that the county had no obligation to pay the inmate to fly to Europe for experimental treatments.

Commissioner Ken Pawluk asked if it would be possible to treat the inmate in jail, since "this is an extraordinarily dangerous individual."

That's unlikely, Laney said. He later told reporters hospital treatment appears likely. That's been done

before, he added, noting a man who abducted a Fargo woman and later was shot in Moorhead was hospitalized under guard.

Answers, including a second medical opinion, should be in hand soon, he said.

"We have a lot of hard decisions to make in the next couple of days," Laney said.

Cass County has consulted with state corrections officials and other law enforcement officials, and Laney expects the issue will come up in next year's legislative session.

Inform on searchwork Cass County
Readers can reach Forum reporter
Patrick Springer at (701) 241-5500