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Archived Story

County not yet sure exactly how to handle decision-making on Measure 37 claims

By Joel Gallob Of The News-Times

Wayne Belmont, the Lincoln County Counsel, said this week he would not want to discuss any specific Measure 37 case before the county. But, he recalled, "We said at the time we adopted our basic procedure the county had no money in the budget to pay claims, and that was not an option at this time. We could revisit that, but with the dollar amounts we're seeing, it would take only one or two of them to make a big dent in the county budget."

On Tuesday, he noted, the state Attorney General issued an opinion that sought to clarify certain questions with the measure, and the legislature may yet take up Measure 37 and try to clarify other ambiguities. In Lincoln County, Belmont said, "We will look at these things carefully and with a recognition that it's a changing landscape out there."

Measure 37 sets a deadline of 180 days after filing for the reviewing jurisdiction to reach a decision on any claim under the measure and, said Belmont, "we'll make a recommendation to the board of commissioners" giving them time to make a decision. Any such matter will, he said, be listed on the board's agenda beforehand. The measure does not provide for a public input process, and Belmont did not know if the commissioners would deliberate on any given case at their regular Wednesday meetings and not decide the issue until a week later, to provide time for input or review.

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