

County To Work With Local Hospitals On Detox Center

BY TERRY POPE

Southeastern Mental Health Center's plan to construct a tri-county detoxification center in Wilmington was placed on hold again Monday night after commissioners agreed to work with local hospital officials to prepare a feasibility study for the project.

Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Chairman Chris Chappell said that although the "detoxification center would be a plus," granting a letter of intent to SEMC to build the facility may "include a hidden clause in there."

SEMC Director Mel Martin approached commissioners for a second time Monday asking for the letter of intent. An earlier request was also placed on hold by the commissioners on Aug. 5.

Following the unanimous vote Monday to deny the request, SEMC officials left the commissioners' chambers with the door slamming behind them.

The alcoholic treatment center needs the support of commissioners in three counties—Pender, Brunswick and New Hanover—before applying to the state for a certificate of need to build the proposed center next to the New Hanover County Health Department on South 17th Street in Wilmington.

In addition to its annual prorated contribution of about \$100,000 for general mental health services, SEMC would eventually ask the county to begin contributing close to \$45,000 a year toward the operating cost of the center. Chappell said one of the problems he has with the plan is the "figure of \$45,000 and it being two years away."

He added that if a letter of agreement is signed, then it would make the county responsible for helping to

finance the operation of the facility, and \$45,000 two years from now may not pay the bill.

Chappell's motion asks that administrators from the Brunswick Hospital in Supply and Doshier Memorial in Southport work with County Attorney David Clegg and County Manager Billy Carter to prepare a feasibility study on the proposed treatment center.

Martin told the board Monday that upon its request, he had contacted the two administrators at the county hospitals about the plan. He said that

Brunswick Hospital administrator Charles Sons told him "that he did not feel it would be competitive to their operation." Martin said he did not have time to receive written statements from the two administrators.

"Both of these gentlemen told me, that first of all, they could not provide this type service in their hospitals right now," Martin said.

In response to those comments, Chappell said he was going to place Martin "on the hot seat a little bit." Chappell said he also asked County

Manager Billy Carter to contact the two administrators—Sons and Arthur Pittman at Doshier Memorial—to gather their reactions to the plan.

"Did I come out okay?" Martin asked.

Carter said that Sons stated he would be "willing and would like to sit down and look at these programs," and would possibly be interested in establishing a satellite clinic for alcoholic patients at the Brunswick Hospital.

A feasibility study would also in-

clude the possibility of establishing a satellite clinic in Brunswick County. At the Aug. 5 meeting, Commissioner Grace Beasley, a member of the SEMC board of directors, said she would like to explore the idea of a satellite detox center in Brunswick County because of the distance involved in seeking treatment in New Hanover County and the county's growing population.

SEMC's proposed tri-county detox center would include 20 beds, offering a seven- to 10-day treatment program that includes individual, group

and family counseling, detoxification, intervention, medical referrals and aftercare. Patients from all socioeconomic levels would be accepted, with fees charged according to their ability to pay.

SEMC can now place alcoholic patients in no more than eight available beds, two involuntary beds in Onslow County and six undesignated beds at New Hanover Memorial in Wilmington. NHMH ended its detoxification services in July 1984, but agreed to provide SEMC with six beds until the center is built.

Park Didn't Sample Water

State records show that the owners or operators of the Leland Mobile Home Park water system failed to notify customers that they did not sample water for coliform bacteria during March 1985.

The N.C. Drinking Water Act requires owners and operators to notify customers in writing.

Coliform bacteria are environmental bacteria which originate in the soil and intestinal tracks of warm-blooded animals, including humans. The presence of this bacteria in drinking water indicates that some contamination has occurred, said John McFadyen, an environmental engineer with the N.C. Department of Human Resources' Water Supply Branch.

A failure to test drinking water each month as required doesn't mean the water is contaminated, but it cannot be assumed, he added, that the water is safe without proper and continued testing.

Mayor Thomas Seeks Re-Election

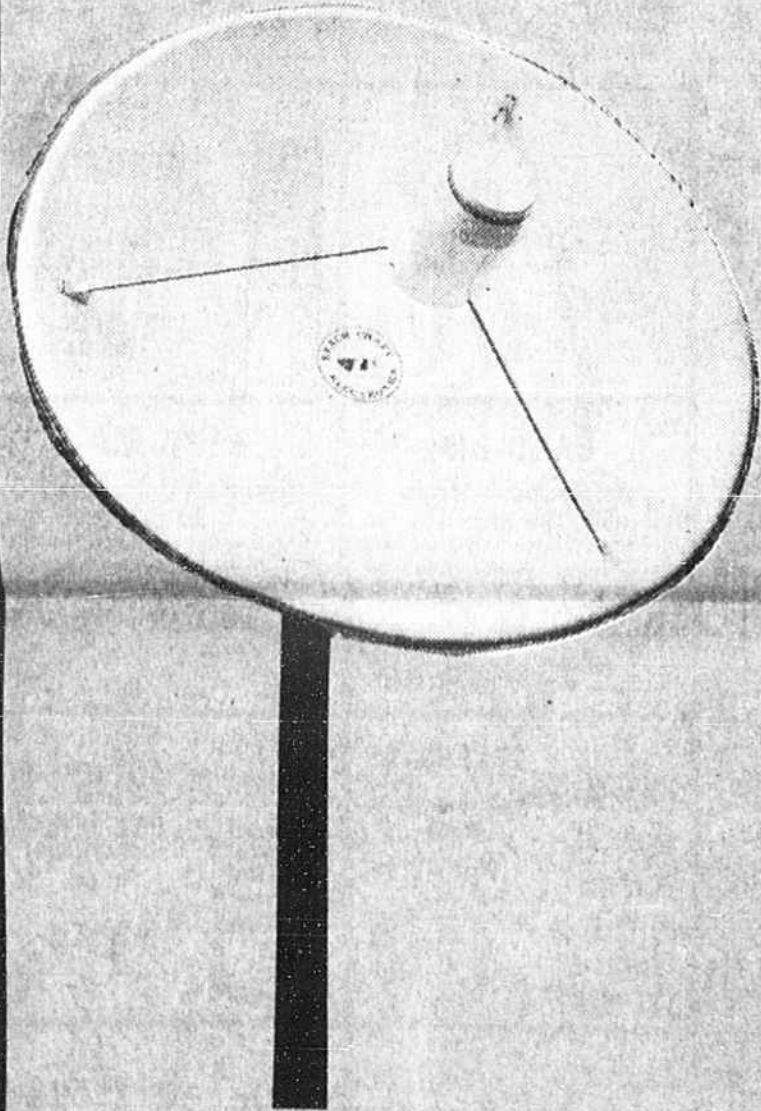
Long Beach Mayor Ben Thomas has announced he will seek re-election.

Thomas, 48, filed for the two-year post Friday, when the filing period opened. He has been mayor since 1982 and also served from 1979 to 1981. Thomas is a maintenance supervisor for Daniel Construction Co. at Pfizer Chemical Co. in Southport.

Three commissioners' posts are also up for election on Nov. 5. The filing deadline is noon on Friday, Sept. 6.

Filing for Long Beach offices opened earlier than in other towns, in order to allow for a non-partisan primary on Oct. 8 should three or more persons file for mayor, or seven or more candidates file for commissioner. In the case of commissioners the top six vote-getters in the primary will have their names placed on the Nov. 5 ballot.

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