

## Hearing Draws 1,000 As Hospital Receives Support

By ED HARPER  
News Editor

Sixty "little old sweet women who wear tennis shoes" and about 1,000 other persons gathered at the Courthouse, Friday night, to demonstrate that the August 17 vote in favor of Doshier hospital was no fluke.

The "little old women" Margaret Connaughton referred to are the Doshier Volunteers, who have created a flea market and gift shop to raise thousands of dollars for the benefit of the hospital. And that, according to Bill Smalley of Yaupon Beach,

characterizes the spirit of the community.

"I hope the rest of the United States has the quality and caliber of people I have seen in this (Southport-Oak Island) community," Smalley said. "You stand up for what you believe in."

If there were 1,000 people in and around the courthouse Friday night, 990 of them were "standing up" for Doshier hospital. It was an over-whelming and near-unanimous show of support. The Pilot could count only ten persons who were anti-Doshier, and only three of them spoke to the packed

courtroom audience.

It was an orderly meeting in that no one got very obscene. There was frequent cheering when Doshier was spoken kindly of, there was booing when one opponent said Doshier would send you home to die, and there were frequent snide remarks about the whole hospital affair — about the same number from each side.

But generally for 99 per cent of the crowd it was an exercise in support. Lawrence Burwell, representing the State Health Planning and Development Agency which called the

hearing, said during the two-hour session he was "becoming convinced this is more of a religious revival than a public hearing."

Eugene Tomlinson, mayor of Southport and chairman of the Doshier board of trustees, introduced Burwell, who said the purpose of the hearing was "more than to determine interest" in keeping Doshier. His agency must report to the federal government on the "need" of the facility; if the report is positive then the project "can claim reimbursement in certain elements of financing," he said.

He said it would not affect either the hospital improvements being made, or the re-imbursement for patients.

Burwell said later in the meeting that the federal concern is based on court rulings that hospitals are "free enterprise" and can compete. He said that if the federal government is going to re-imburse money, then it wants to be satisfied of the need for the facility.

The review is supposed to be done by the Cardinal Health Agency, a federal overseer of projects in this part of North Carolina. The involvement of his agency, Burwell said, is an "inept process," but necessary.

Hospital Consultant Maurice W. Perreault said there are different ways of interpreting the law under which the hearing was called. The purpose, he said, is to overcome "mal-distribution" of medical facilities. According to Perreault, Doshier was "a working model of the legislation before it was written." He explained that if Doshier were closed, this section of the county would qualify as an "under-served area."

Perreault reviewed the planned Doshier project, which he said is "not a new hospital" but one which follows the directives issued annually by the state. Renovations have been made in accordance with the directives, he said, "to conform with health care delivery standards." The Doshier project, according to Perreault, is "categorically a renovation replacement project."

Perreault said the Doshier project is "a vital need." The improvement is in response to the "steady, sturdy growth of the community," he declared.

The expressions of support were expected from Southport-Oak Island residents, but what everyone was interested in was the opinion of those in opposition. The first in-order statement against Doshier was, "This hospital will take funds from the other hospital."

Burwell said the Doshier facility will have "no effect" on funding for the western area hospital.

Tomlinson said that during visits to Raleigh representatives of the Southport-Oak

(Continued on page 22)



REDSKIN HALFBACK Robbie Howard (44) moves on Oak Island defenders during first-week action Saturday night in the Brunswick County Little League football program. The Southport squad beat the Dolphins 19-0 after Bolivia defeated Boiling Springs Lakes 21-0 in the opening game. Doubleheaders are played each Saturday night at Taylor Field.

## Public Hearing Comments . . .

HAROLD CRAIN, Long Beach Mayor

Crain emphasized that he was not speaking for the town because "there are certain dissident elements" who object to having Doshier continued. (The Pilot has been told at least three of the six other board members besides Crain opposed the referendum.) Crain said he was speaking as a taxpayer and a 12-year veteran of the Watts Hospital board of trustees. He served six years as president of the Durham facility and chairman of the board.

He said hospitals that are not self-supporting suffer either from poor management or the lack of doctors. Doshier problems started, he said, only when the two-hospital controversy arose. Two doctors moved away and Doshier was left with a staff insufficient for the hospital to profit. But now, he said, Doshier is operating "in the black," with a Friday patient census of 41.

Of the 41 patients, he said, 19 were from the Southport-Oak Island area. "Nine are from your area, sir," he told one of the three men who spoke against the facility Friday night.

Crain, also a retired construction executive, said the area is facing a period of "very dynamic growth," with another major industry soon to announce plans to locate here. He said there is "no question" about the necessity for two hospitals.

WALTER JOHNSON, Long Beach Rescue Squad

Johnson said there were two important points to consider as far as the rescue squad was concerned — the time to transport patients, and the cost of operating rescue vehicles. Both benefit from the proximity to Doshier. He said that during the past year there have been four people who he could name "who would be dead" without the hospital being so close-by.

DR. NORMAN HORNSTEIN, Doshier physician

Hornstein, who said he had seen hundreds of lives saved during his 22 years on the Doshier staff, listed summertime beach population, Sunny Point Army terminal, CP&L and Pfizer as evidence of the need to keep the hospital. "These four overwhelmingly overshadow the rest of the industry in Brunswick County," he said.

He also pointed out that Ocean Trail Convalescent Center, almost adjacent to Doshier, "needs to be in close proximity to the hospital," and said injured and sick seamen are often brought here off ships. It would be "unconscionable" to close Doshier — "as certain politicians in the western part of the county are trying to do."

Later, Hornstein had the floor again and said "one of the essentials" of a successful hospital is doctors, adding that the Southport - Oak Island area is very much able to attract physicians. "This hospital is viable," he said of Doshier, while the new hospital will have "a great deal of trouble out in the country" attracting doctors.

MARVIN WATSON, Yaupon Beach mayor

Watson said that although he has many friends in other areas of the county he "put all the cards on the table" and the answer "came out pro-Doshier." He said it was "inconceivable" to not have a hospital in the area. "I don't think any other kind of bond issue could have passed in the last election" other than the hospital referendum.

RAY WALTON, Southport Lions Club

Walton pointed out that although industry has moved into the area Doshier was here before,

(Continued on page 2)

## Brunswick Jobless Rate Ranked Second In State

By BILL ALLEN  
Staff Writer

Brunswick County has the second highest unemployment rate in North Carolina at the present time.

David Holden, manager of the Employment Security Commission branch office in Southport, said the July preliminary survey shows that the unemployment rate in Brunswick County is 12.5 per cent.

"We have just recently received the July preliminary report," Holden pointed out. "The report, which provides employment information in the state, usually is about two to three months behind."

The 12.5 - per cent figure gives Brunswick County the second highest unemployment rate in North Carolina. Only Martin County, which stood at 12.8 per cent, had a higher percentage of unemployment in July.

Holden said he could offer no explanation why the Brunswick County unem-

ployment rate was so high at a time when it should have been lower based on seasonal factors.

"The July rate should be lower since it includes vacation and farm-related seasonal employment in the county," he pointed out.

Based on the July report, Holden said the county could have the dubious distinction of topping the state in unemployment percentages in the fall and winter months unless something happens.

Brunswick County's unemployment rate tops the national and state averages. National unemployment increased from 7.8 per cent in July to 7.9 per cent in August. It was the third consecutive monthly increase and the highest level of unemployment in the nation this year.

Unemployment in North Carolina increased from 6.2 to 6.7 per cent in July, the third consecutive monthly rise.

Holden noted that the state research bureau considers

the monthly employment - unemployment reports preliminary and subject to later revision when more information becomes available.

Economists, however, question the accuracy of the statistics since only people receiving jobless benefits are counted as unemployed. They believe a "good rule of thumb" is to double the number which would cover all the people seeking employment.

Brunswick County's July, 1976, rate is one percentage point lower than the 13.5 per cent recorded in the summer of 1975.

The Bureau of Employment Security Research reported that Brunswick County had 14,630 people in the work force this July. A total of 12,800 held jobs while 1,830 were unemployed.

Incidentally, June and a banner month for employment in the county. A total of 13,380 residents held

(Continued on page 22)

## City, Trustees Ask To Join In Lawsuit Defense

By ED HARPER  
News Editor

The City of Southport, the hospital Board of Trustees and individuals have asked the court to allow them to become co-defendants in the lawsuit challenging the August 17 referendum in support of Doshier hospital.

And in addition the groups have asked a sum of \$2.5 million in general damages and \$2.5 million in punitive damages from the plaintiffs, who they claim have taken "deliberate, wrongful" actions in "utter disregard for the rights of the intervenor defendants."

The motions were filed last week, and the request to intervene will be heard in Elizabethtown on or after October 6 by Superior Court Judge Henry McKinnon. Attorney for the city, the trustees and the individuals is Carter Lambeth of the Murchison, Fox and Newton law firm in Southport.

All members of the city Board of Aldermen

and the hospital Board of Trustees are asking to join the defense of the lawsuit, along with individuals Mark and Margaret Connaughton, Jackie Herring, Otto K. Maehl, June Brown and Harold Davis.

The three parties are asking to join defense of the lawsuit "in order to assert the defenses and claims for relief set forth in their proposed answer, counter-claim and request for declaratory judgement." The city has "a very real interest," the motion reads, which relates to Doshier hospital and "the outcome of this transaction."

"The disposition of this action without the City of Southport as a party may, as a practical matter, impair or impede the City's ability to protect its interest in seeing that Doshier Hospital is operated as an acute medical care facility in Smithville Township by the new Board of Trustees for Smithville Township," the document said.

And the Board of Trustees has been charged with the responsibility of operating, maintaining

and supporting the hospital, and has accepted title to the property. "Therefore, the disposition of this action without the addition of the Board of Trustees of Smithville Township Hospital may impair or impede the ability of said Board of Trustees" to protect its interest, the motion to intervene said.

The individuals, who "constitute some of the 84 percent of the taxpayers" who voted in favor of the Doshier referendum, "along with other residents of the Township depend upon the existence of an acute medical care hospital in the Township for their health care and welfare," the motion stated. "They have a direct interest in the outcome of this transaction because they, as taxpayers, want and need acute hospital services in Smithville Township."

The motion said that none of the three groups could be adequately represented unless allowed to participate in defense of the lawsuit.

The lawsuit, which declares that the August 17 referendum should be nullified because the law

under which it was called is unconstitutional, was filed on September 13 on behalf of Myrtle Arnold, Harley Evans, J.D. Larson, W.E. Lesh, Sr., Joseph Monroe and R.E. Sellers. The motion for the intervenors filed last week asked the judge to dismiss the case "for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted."

The motion said that the plaintiffs "do not constitute a sufficient class" as required by Rules of Civil Procedure. "Plaintiffs in reality only purport to represent a very small minority of the taxpayers and freeholders of Smithville Township as evidenced by the August 17, 1976, election...."

"By virtue of this fact," the motion continued, "plaintiffs cannot and do not speak for the vast majority of taxpayers and freeholders in Smithville Township. Consequently, plaintiffs do not constitute a class which insures adequate representation for the great majority of said

(Continued on page 13)