

# Supervisors strike deal with hospital

Watsonville Community Hospital will have to pay \$100,000 to connect its planned addition to the Freedom Sanitation District sewer line.

However, Santa Cruz County supervisors — acting as directors of the sanitation district — did agree to allow the hospital to pay \$50,000 now and the other half when the addition is completed.

That's the best deal Pajaro Valley Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr. could obtain for the hospital. Moore had asked the board earlier this week to adopt a special sewer hookup rate for such institutions as hospitals. Moore said the hospital might not be able to start construction of its addition on schedule if it was hit with the \$100,000 fee.

Hospital spokesman Orval Brackey had told the board that when it originally made its applications relating to the new addition, the sewer connection assessment was listed as \$32,000. Since then, however, the board raised the connection fees in the district to a steep \$4,000 per individual home and commensurately more for large users. The new formula raised the hospital's liability to \$100,000.

Public Works Director Don Porath said those new fees would be needed unless the board wanted to delay the planned expansion of the sewer lines and the lifting of the building moratorium in the Freedom district.

Supervisors Gary Patton and Joe Cucchiara stuck firmly to a position that those who use the system the most must pay the costs involved in their heavy use. Board Chairman Robley Levy, while not disagreeing with that position, led the way in asking the public works department if it could not figure out some way to lessen the impact on the hospital without damaging the pay-for-use concept.

Porath told the board Thursday that lowering the total rate for the hospital would throw a monkey wrench into the sewer district construction schedule. But he did

say that there was precedent for allowing a user to pay a portion of the fee on application and the rest upon completion of the project. If that were done in the hospital's case, he said it would mean a delay of perhaps six months in the proposed Sydney Avenue sewer project, but would not otherwise interfere with the district's plans.

With Mrs. Levy joining Moore and Supervisor Dan Forbus in the affirmative, the board agreed to allow the hospital to split its payments. Cucchiara and Patton voted against the compromise.

Mrs. Levy's successful effort to work out a less onerous burden for the hospital prompted Moore, who is usually crossing political swords with her, to remark: "I want to thank the chairman. I think she did a service for the city of Watsonville."