

Essex Raft Committee To Pay 3 Constables

ESSEX — The Connecticut River Raft Race Committee has offered to pay for three of the 15 extra constables who were on duty during the Aug. 4 race and the town apparently is going to accept the offer.

The resolution of the dispute between the committee and the town, which had sent the entire extra duty bill to the committee, is an uneasy one.

"We're not in full agreement," First Selectman Richard Riggio said Wednesday, "but we'll have to do the best we can. It's our responsibility to secure the town so I guess we'll have to pay."

Kenneth Fischburg of Old Saybrook, the race's organizer, said he had discussed the race arrangements with Riggio before the event and had agreed that the committee

would pay for three constables. Fischburg said he estimates the payment will be \$150 but Riggio said the total hasn't been settled. He said he plans to ask the resident trooper for his opinion on the matter.

Riggio has said several times this month that he is waiting for payment from the committee.

It was necessary to have additional constables because of the traffic snarls and disorderly conduct connected with the race last year, Riggio said.

This year's event, which featured about 100 homemade rafts that raced from Deep River to Nott Island, across the harbor from Chester, attracted about 8,000 rafters and spectators.

Fischburg said that no one involved made much money

from the event. The committee which gives its profits to charity, obtained \$700 to \$1,000 this year as opposed to \$3,500 the previous year.

Fischburg blames the reduced profit largely on a heavy rain at the end of the race. The committee had hoped to collect \$3 from all the guests at the after-race party on Nott Island but the downpour made the collection impossible, he said.

The Tri-Town Jaycees didn't make their expected profit on beer sales so they couldn't contribute much to the committee charity donation, Fischburg said, adding that the food vendors have said they lost money.

However, enough was made to pay the bills and make a donation and, "most importantly, everyone had fun," Fischburg said.