

But Carey's 1981-82 budget message two weeks ago called for a reduction, through attrition, of 1,145 employees during the next fiscal year. It proposed \$19.3 million in state aid to the Staten Island center.

"I'd just like to get my hands on the guy who negotiated that for the state," said one Willowbrook executive. "He obviously didn't know anything about the daily reality of running a place like this."

Peter Goldmark, the state's former budget director now serving as head of the New York City Port Authority, is that man. And Goldmark has no apologies.

"The agreement was designed to make life better for the residents, not the people who work there," Goldmark said. "It was a negotiation and an attempt to change a hopeless situation. The fundamental test is: Did it set into motion a process?"

Since January 1978, 1,081 Willowbrook residents have been placed in community residences. In addition to the 1,600 mentally retarded who remain in buildings on the Willowbrook campus, approximately 1,000 others transferred from Willowbrook remain in other state institutions.

But support among state legislators is clearly waning for plans to place Willowbrook residents in group homes. This reflects widespread community opposition to the establishment of group homes, higher costs of maintaining the mentally retarded in group homes and the new wave of fiscal conservatism.

Instead, legislators appear to be shifting their support to the idea of building villages of group homes, or small institutions.

Like Assemblyman William Finneran, D-Greenburgh, they argue that those mentally retarded who remain in Willowbrook represent a difficult population to place in the community. Such residents, they say,

would be better served at a slight distance from the community in houses clustered together to economize on staff, transportation and purchases.

Finneran asks, "Might a substantial portion of the mentally retarded be better served in closer proximity, rather than in isolated houses? The heavy cost may otherwise eventually diminish the services the homes can provide.

"These are tough times, times of belt-tightening," he said. "I think the inclination of the Legislature has been one of sensitivity and generosity, but its members are now being troubled by second thoughts about the cost of de-institutionalization."

Many of the advocates of the consent decree are irked and worried by the ideas some hold that those who remain in Willowbrook are too difficult, either for medical or behavioral reasons, to place in community residences; and that there is a cost saving in maintaining large institutions or group homes clustered in villages. The group-home villages would be just another form of institutional life, they say.

Institutions "are essentially unworkable," said Paul Dolan, executive director of One-to-One Foundation. "For long-term care, they consistently fail to meet the needs of the people they're meant for and instead meet the needs of those who run them. The taxpayer ends up supporting a very inefficient system that holds people hostage."

Goldmark, for one, remembers five years ago when residents' behavioral and medical problems were used as an argument against placing any Willowbrook inmates in the community.

"Professionals who worked were devastatingly ingenious in finding reasons why someone couldn't leave Willowbrook," he said. "I'd walk down the hall and ask, 'Why not this little girl?' and they'd give me a reason."

Page 4