



# Chief McDevitt Resignation Is Talked Monday

By JAY ASHLEY  
Mirror Staff Writer

About 10 minutes after adjourning the scheduled meeting of the city board, the members re-convened Monday night and made Capt. J.D. Barrett acting police chief in the wake of Tom McDevitt's resignation.

The action was made following a message sent to the Forest City Police Department asking the question, "Who is your chief of police?" Forest City responded, "Tom McDevitt, formerly with the Kings Mountain Department."

The chain of events began in the Monday night meeting of the board of commissioners when a letter of resignation from Tom McDevitt was presented to the audience.

Ward Five Commissioner James Amos told the audience, "Before this meeting the board went into executive session to open a letter submitted to this board by Tom McDevitt". Amos read the text of the letter which is as follows:

"Since it is absolutely impossible for me as Chief of Police to supervise the members of the Kings Mountain Police Department without your full support, it is with utmost humility I submit my resignation as of this date (Feb. 25). It would be a great help to me and my family if you see fit to allow the city clerk to pay me for two weeks' vacation pay that I have coming."

After reading the letter of resignation, Amos said, "Ladies and gentlemen, as you know my position from the start of this situation, you know I have supported Tom McDevitt and regret his resignation."

Ward Two Commissioner, Lloyd Davis concurred with Amos' remarks and said, "All

I can say is we'll be losing a good man."

Mrs. Orangel Jolley, who petitioned the commissioners once before to retain McDevitt as chief, addressed the board members with a letter signed by several citizens. The letter stated the board members had caused McDevitt's resignation and urged support for the chief (Full text of letter will appear on editorial page).

Mayor John Moss read Mrs. Jolley's letter to the board and audience. Lloyd Davis noted again, "we have lost a good man and I'd like to rehire him."

Mrs. W. A. Russell, a signer of the letter, asked Davis if he would rehire McDevitt with full powers of authority over the department. Davis said "yes, I would. Any police chief should have the authority and responsibility to run his department."

Mrs. Jolley noted, "I have been a life-long resident of Kings Mountain and the past six years have been the best for our police department. It's the first time we have ever had trained policemen and I think if McDevitt resigns, we'll be taking a step backward ten years. He has been a model chief and our community and city is going to have a situation it doesn't want or need. He is a dedicated man and I know he will not try to do the job the city unless he has the full support of the commissioners. I think the newly-elected commissioners have let the chief down and proved they are against him."

After further discussion, Ward Six Commissioner M.C. Pruette asked the question that would later result in a re-convened session of the board when he asked, "Does the chief have another job?" The board members talked among

(see CHIEF p.8A)



CHIEF AND ASSISTANT CHIEF

...William Roper, J.D. Barrett

# J.D. Barrett, Assistant Chief Roper Is Named KM Police Chief

By JAY ASHLEY  
Mirror Staff Writer

William Roper, Jr. was appointed KMPD Chief of Police, Capt. J.D. Barrett was appointed Assistant Chief and according to a tape of the city council meeting Tuesday night, Tom McDevitt's resignation is still uncertain.

The technicality behind the former Chief's resignation came after a discussion of a five point

list of "wants" submitted by members of the police department.

As outlined by dispatcher Black Leonard, the list asked the board to act on the following: (1) To accept the resignation of Tom McDevitt. (2) To appoint William Roper chief and J.D. Barrett as assistant chief. (3) To increase starting patrolman's pay from \$110 per week to \$125 per week with increments of \$5 each three months for one year. (4) To institute a 15 percent pay raise across the board immediately with a \$1 per week addition for each year of service with the department (e.g. a man with the force three years would receive an additional \$3 per week as longevity pay). Longevity pay is now 25 cents for each year of service. (5) To institute full pay to officers who cannot work for reasons of sickness or hospitalization.

In addressing himself to the board, Leonard said the entire police department, with the exception of Ptl. Ernest Beam who could not attend, met Tuesday morning to discuss the recent situation in the department.

Leonard stated all the members present, except two who were excused for bona fide reasons, signed the five-point list.

The dispatcher, in discussing item one, said, "Mr. McDevitt talked with me last Thursday. I received a letter from him in the mail and as a result of that letter I came and talked with him. Then on Friday he stated to me, and asked me not to repeat it, but I feel that I am free to now because he stated to me he had accepted a job with the Forest City Police Department as their chief and that he would be sworn in on Monday."

Leonard said in view of this information, McDevitt should be granted his resignation and the department wished him good luck in his new employ.

On item two, Leonard stated the department wanted the city board to "appoint Capt. William Roper as Chief and Capt. J.D. Barrett as Assistant Chief."

According to Leonard, "we as a group feel Capt. Roper is well qualified to lead us and unite us and that all the members can cooperate with him. We feel that he, along with other members of the department, are qualified to be the police chief here."

He then outlined the other three points of the list. Members of the board questioned the policemen present about the list, concentrating mostly on the proposed pay scale.

Ward Five Commissioner James Amos finally said, "Mr. McAbee and I have voted differently a number of times in the few meetings we

(See ROPER p.8A)



Photo by Jay Ashley

SQUARING OFF - Sgt. T.F. King (left in checked coat) got into a heated verbal exchange last Monday night with Mrs. Orangel Jolley (right at edge of photo) over the attributes of

former Police Chief Tom McDevitt. King noted, "if the man says, I know I'll be fired for what I've said."

## Mrs. Dedmon Seeks Court Clerk Office

Clerk of Superior Court Ruth Dedmon has filed to seek another term.

Her filing statement, released in Shelby Friday, states:

"When I announced my candidacy for the office of Clerk of Superior Court four years ago, I made the following statement: 'It is my purpose and intent to render courteous, competent and efficient service to all people, and you as a citizen of our county deserve such service at the hand of any public official. I make no promises other than to serve our people fairly and impartially, without fear or favor, in accordance with the law.' This I have done, to the best of my ability. I have put forth an honest effort to merit the continued support of our citizens."

"The following is an excerpt from a letter I received from Hon. Bert M. Montague, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Raleigh, dated July 6, 1972: 'It gives me a great deal of pleasure to recognize the tremendous improvements in the operation of the Clerk's office under your administration. We shall look forward to a continued operation in your county in accordance with the high standards that you have already set.'"

"When I was elected to this office it was my aim to make this one of the outstanding Clerk's offices in the state, and with the help of my fine staff, we have reason to believe we have been able to attain this goal. We sincerely hope the people of this county will allow us to continue our



RUTH DEDMON

efforts," she said.

In February 1970, Mrs. Dedmon was appointed by Governor Robert Scott as one of two Clerks in the state to serve on the Courts Planning Committee of the State of North Carolina Criminal Justice Manpower Program.

In January of this year, Mrs. Dedmon received the U.S. Department of State Meritorious Service Award for outstanding community service for voluntary participation in the Passport Application Acceptance Program.

Mrs. Dedmon is the former Ruth Spangler, daughter, of A.S. and Mittie Warlick Spangler of Cleveland County. She is married to Roy D. Dedmon. The family resides on Rt. 1, McBrayer Rd., Rodney. They have one son, Shelby, 13, student at North Cleveland Junior High School.

## 'If McDevitt Stays, I'll Probably Be Fired.' T.F. King

After the "first" meeting of the city council Monday night adjourned, several citizens and police officers remained to "discuss the situation." The discussion turned into a rapid-fire verbal exchange that resulted in a policeman noting, "I'll probably be fired for saying these things if McDevitt stays, but I've kept my mouth shut too long."

The remark came from KMPD Sgt. Tommy F. King, shift commander of squad "B". His words were prompted by a statement from Mrs. Orangel Jolley who said there wasn't anyone, in Kings Mountain qualified to serve as police chief.

As the arguement began, Rocky Ford, a citizen of Kings Mountain, said, "when a person says no one in Kings Mountain is qualified to be chief, that's putting the people of the city pretty low. If a man has been here for 18 years as a policeman and someone says no one is qualified, that's putting everyone down."

Tommy King: "If a man in Kings Mountain is not qualified to do the job, the best thing to do is to fire the entire police department and hire a new department. There were police officers in Kings Mountain when I was born and they'll be police officers in Kings Mountain when I am dead and gone. How can anyone say no one is qualified?"

Ford: "The only reason we have not had an even better police department is pay. The board here hasn't given

proper raises." King: "You can't run a department and lie to your men and the man (McDevitt) has lied to me personally. I know for what I've said, that if the man stays he'll fire me. The thing in this department is if you're in the clique, you're in and if you're not, you're out. "Alright, you talk about police officers being qualified or not, we have two men in the department, in the history of Kings Mountain, who have two-year college degrees in police science, Officer Dodge and myself. I do not owe my degree to Chief McDevitt. I owe that to my own hard work and time spent going to Gaston College. I was not allowed to drive a city vehicle to school either, I had to drive my personal car."

Dorothy Howell (secretary and policewoman with the KMPD): "You were reimbursed for your expense, travel time..."

King: "Partially reimbursed, yes, from the United States government."

The discussion then drifted towards the chief's relationship with the men in the department.

King: "When you write a citation and the young man goes to the chief and he looks at the citation and says, 'well, that officer doesn't have any sense, he's stupid, we'll make a fool out of him in court,' -- that's happened to me. Now don't start talking without knowing what you're talking about."

A lady in the group: "Well,

my son got a ticket and Chief McDevitt didn't try to help him."

King: "Did he ask him?" Lady: "I did."

King: "Did you get any help on it?"

(See "I'll p.9A)

## As Resignation Reason Ex-Chief Cites Lack Of Support

"The statement in my letter of resignation tells exactly my reason for leaving the department", said former police Chief Tom McDevitt in a phone interview Tuesday from Forest City.



TOM McDEVITT  
...Now In Forest City

In his letter, McDevitt told the commissioners it was "absolutely impossible for me as Chief of Police to supervise the members of the Kings Mountain Police Department without your full support."

McDevitt said he had contemplated resigning "for about three weeks" and decided to make it final over the weekend.

The former chief joined the KMPD on Feb. 28, 1968, coming from Asheville. His resignation came three days away from his sixth anniversary as chief here.

While McDevitt's resignation was being discussed by the city council Monday night, McDevitt was being sworn in as Chief of the Forest City Police Department. McDevitt succeeds Joe Brown, who has recently served on a limited basis due to illness. The Forest City department is composed of 16 men with a "very active police reserve force."

(See EX-CHIEF p.8A)

## Rhyne Takes On Broyhill

Jack Rhyne, 38-year-old state senator from Belmont, will oppose James Broyhill for the Congressional seat from the 10th District in the November General Election. Neither Rhyne nor Broyhill have opposition in the May Primary Elections.

Rhyne, who was the youngest mayor in the United States when elected to that post in Belmont in 1963, served two terms in the North Carolina House before running successfully for the State Senate.

In Broyhill, Rhyne will be trying to unseat a six-term congressman and one of the state's most attractive Republicans. Broyhill, who some people consider unbeatable, has scored on-sided victories over Democratic challengers in recent elections.

However, some of the more powerful Republicans in the state have apparently become upset at Broyhill within the last few days. Some GOP party members say it is because Broyhill's brother-in-law, William E. Stevens, a state representative and official with Broyhill Industries in Lenior, has filed for the U.S. Senate. Hamilton C. Horton of Winston-Salem had previously stated he would seek the Senate seat, but withdrew when Stevens filed.

Rhyne is married to the former Sue Wallace of Charlotte, they have three children, Robin, a freshman at UNC-Charlotte, Johnny, a sophomore at South Point High School, and Susie, a student at Belmont Central



JACK RHYNE

School. The Rhyne's reside on South Point Road, Belmont.

Monday when he filed to run for congressman, Rhyne issued the following statement:

"Last week I announced that I did not see my way clear to run. Since then, my phone has rung almost constantly, causing me to reconsider. These calls came from Democrats, and Republicans with many promises of small contributions."

"Realizing that the task will require somewhat of a miracle, I approach this endeavor with all determination, humility and compassion that I possess. The decision to gamble with such high odds on everything I worked so hard for all my life has not come easily. It is a decision reached only after much time and prayer in somber meditation."