

Kings Mountain Herald

VOLUME 91 - NUMBER 48 - TUESDAY, JULY 1, 1980 - KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Patrolman Harry Honeycutt Turns In Resignation Thurs.

By ELIZABETH STEWART
Co-Editor

City patrolman Harry Honeycutt, 30, stormed out of City Hall Thursday night at 9 p.m. after a second confrontation with the city board of commissioners resulted in no additional pay for policemen and after he tendered his resignation to Mayor John Henry Moss.

Otherwise, the hearing on the proposed \$9 million plus city budget for 1980-81 was a relatively mild one and resulted in formal approval by unanimous vote.

The \$9,429,671.00 budget represents a five percent increase over last year and is based on a tax rate of 50 cents and includes a five percent pay raise across-the-boards for all city employees.

Honeycutt maintained that the five percent pay hike was insufficient and questioned a pay plan scale which has been in effect for six years and allows for merit raises upon recommendation of the Chief of Police. Honeycutt also maintained that other cities of comparable size to Kings Mountain, for instance Forest City, pay starting patrolmen considerably more. Police Comm. Norman King disagreed with the figures presented by Honeycutt and both he and Comm. Jim Childers said there is only a \$10 difference in the pay in cities of similar size. Childers also maintained that the starting pay for city patrolmen has also been increased since the new pay scale went into effect. Honeycutt admitted that he had been "treated fairly" and acknowledged that he had received three raises since he joined the force but that his take-home pay was never more than \$6 after deductions were made.

Honeycutt also complained that policemen are unable to take their vacation period all at one time and wanted to know why another detective and a chief of police has not been hired. "I don't blame Sgt. Barrett (Acting Police Chief Jackie Barrett) for not taking the Chief's job," said Honeycutt. We have had five chiefs in 16 years and that means there is something wrong with the city administration. He declared that the controversial pay scale merit pay plan was outdated from the beginning and told the board that he had "gone against Chief Barrett's orders in failing to let him see these statements before I present them to you tonight. I believe in freedom of speech, however, although Chief Barrett says some things are handled better within the department."

Mayor Moss acknowledged that the proper way for an employe to resign is through department heads and replied to Honeycutt that two of the former chiefs of police retired

Effective Last Friday

Police Officer Harry Honeycutt, who resigned Thursday night at a meeting of the city board of commissioners, was informed Friday morning that his resignation had been accepted when he completed the third shift at 6 a.m. Friday morning.

Acting Police Chief J.D. Barrett said Honeycutt's resignation became effective when the Chief received it. Chief Barrett said city policy gave him the option of receiving the resignation at the beginning or end of his week. Honeycutt had planned to work until July 2, when he is to report to work on a welding job with a Charlotte construction firm. His resignation became effective quicker than he intended but the 30-year-old patrolman is leaving the local police department after 18 months "with no hard feelings", he said.

because of health and that Chief Thomas McDevitt, now of Forest City, served in that position for nine years. The Mayor pointed out that the city pays retirement benefits which match those paid by employes.

Comm. Humes Houston, responding to Honeycutt's question as to when a chief would be hired, said that applications have been taken and interviewing is underway for the chief's job. Houston, chairman of the pay scale study committee, said that each applicant would be screened and given a chance to sit down and talk with commissioners. "I don't know how long that will be, but I will notify you personally when the choice is made," said Houston.

Apparently unsatisfied with the answers to his questions, Honeycutt contended that "you mean that if 450 people apply you're going to wait until you interview each one? That means it will be six months, one year, two years before a chief is hired?"

Continuing, Honeycutt asked Houston if the board had narrowed down the applicants who had applied for the Chief's job and Houston replied that when the job is filled "you'll be the first to know."

A heated interchange developed at several points during the exchange between Honeycutt, King and Nicholson. And Comm. Bill Grissom suggested that "we allow to work for a company that will let you have three weeks vacation off at the same time."

Said Honeycutt "I work for the police department but the only place I can afford to live is in the county. We have people

who live in South Carolina and work for the city. I don't hear anyone saying anything about that. King replied, "We haven't said anything about you living outside the city."

Honeycutt said he is not the only police unhappy at his job. He knows of at least four who would leave the department if it were not for family and friends. He also maintains police morale is low and pointed to the sanitation department, which he said is also underpaid, who will get a 10 percent raise in the upcoming year's budget. "They (the sanitation workers) might get bit by a dog but they are not in physical danger everyday," said the policeman.

Honeycutt, as he did in his first appearance before the board, said equipment is not up to par. Gunbelts and holsters are worn out, he said, and guns were purchased about 10 years ago. Policemen go to target practice once a year and that's to qualify. "We need target practice every three months," he said. "When we do a good job who pats us on the back?"

Ptl. Honeycutt said his resignation will be effective July 2.

Charging that city commissioners are running the city at a cost of \$10,000 per person, Clayvon Kelly, of Woodside Dr., said that taxes levied in the new budget represent a 23 percent increase over the current year.

Citing new tax re-evaluation figures of real property of local citizens, including those sitting on the board of commissioners, Kelly said residents will be paying from 26 to 48 percent more in taxes. "My taxes from 1970 increased 88 percent but we still have the same tax rate. It's misleading when we say that the city has maintained the same tax rate (65 cents for the past 16 years and now 50 cents because of the new countywide re-evaluation) because we are not talking about the same amount of money." Kelly also cited figures that showed that the budget went from \$1 million 15 years ago to almost \$10 million today. "We still don't have a population of 10,000 people," said Kelly, "and this new tax-re-evaluation is going to affect us all but really hurt widows, those on social security and fixed income, citing cases of several senior citizens whose property had doubled in value even after subtracting an allowable \$7,500 tax base, the amount had doubled over last year.

"Your salary, Mr. Mayor was \$450 a month back in 1965 and 15 years later it's \$1968 a month and \$23,625.00 annually," said Kelly, who added, "That's over a 300 percent increase. Why can't our city employees get more than a 5 percent increase?" he asked.

The Mayor corrected the salary figure and said his present salary is \$20,837.28 annually. Comm. Jim Childers noted that "we'd like to give everyone a 10 to 15 percent raise in the new budget but we just don't have the money."

Mayor Moss said he was delighted to see public concern about the budget. "We're having a good meeting tonight, folks," said the Mayor, during the 90 minute discussion of the budget. The Mayor said that "we have a very tight budget-money wise, and we have attempted to take into consideration the immediate needs." In a prepared budget message prior to the adoption, the mayor outlined various improvements in the city during the past year and said that because of inflation several proposed considerations would have to be moved to the 1981 budget, mentioning specifically the improvements at the old City Hall, which is to be renovated into a law enforcement center.

In other actions Thursday night:

•Southeastern Consulting Engineers of Charlotte was hired to do an electric rate study after Engineer W.H. Little Jr. told the board that Duke Power Co. has applied for a 9.1 increase in electric rates effective Aug. 20 to wholesale customers. Little explained that the state utility commission could delay the increase until September or October but suggested that a study should be made to determine how much the costs will go up to city customers. Saying that he is sure Duke will get an increase, Little said he does not know how much the increase will mean but that the base rate is going up 24.3 percent.

•Set July 14th as date for a public hearing on street assessments for Princeton Drive.

•Awarded contract to the low bidder, Mill Power Supply Co. of Charlotte, at \$10,469.64 for six 50-KVA pad mount transformers and awarded the low bid to Phillips Utilities of Gaffney, S.C. at \$140,426.00 for extensions to the KM sewer line to serve the new Canterbury Road industry, Commercial Shearing Co.



RECITES PLEDGE - As the nation prepares to celebrate Independence Day on Friday three-year-old John Forrest Teer, son of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin L. Teer, recites the pledge of allegiance to the flag. Young Teer learned the flag pledge and was on the program for a recent meeting of Colonel Frederick Hambricht Chapter DAR at the home of Mrs. H.A. Goforth. John's mother is a former DAR Regent.

Grover Town Board Adopts 1980-81 Budget

GROVER - A budget of \$125,403.51 for 1980-81 was unanimously adopted by Grover Town Board in a special meeting Thursday night.

The board also gave all employes a five percent across-the-boards pay raise and set the tax rate at 23 cents per \$100 valuation.

Absent from the meeting was Commissioner Edward Philbeck who was on vacation.

The new budget is \$8,928.88 more than last year and the tax rate is 12 cents lower than the current year's rate due to the re-evaluation property.

All actions at Thursday's meeting were unanimous. Comm. Quay Moss made the motion to raise salaries. At last Monday night's budget meeting the Council voted 3-2 not to give employes raises but changed their minds later in executive session and rescinded the action 3-2 for more discussion Thursday

night.

The big winner at this week's budget hearings was the Police Department which received \$22,481.06 which includes the cost of a new Chevrolet Malibu for Police Chief Steve Walker and where \$2,000 is budgeted for a fingerprinting machine, fire extinguisher, first aid kit and walkie-talkie. The Fire Department received \$1,000 for capital improvements and street improvements are budgeted at \$14,099.00 with sidewalk construction expected to cost \$1,000 and new street lights expected to account for \$3,027.60. The Sanitation Department is earmarked to receive \$11,288.86, the cemetery department will receive \$1,000 and recreation and city beautification is expected to cost \$3,392.00.

In other actions: The board retained Kings Mountain lawyer Scott Neisler as town attorney.

County Bloodmobile Visits

Listed below is the schedule for bloodmobile visits in Cleveland County during July:

July 10 - Pittsburgh Plate Glass (in plant) at the PPG Shelby Plant. Hours 12:30 until 6 p.m. Goal 200 pints.

July 30 - Lafayette Street Methodist Church in Shelby.

Sponsored by the Fellowship Softball League and the Fraternal Order of Police. Open to the public. Hours 12:00 until 6 p.m. Goal 150 pints.

July 31 - Dover Elementary School in Shelby Sponsored by Dover Mills. Hours 11 p.m. until 3 a.m. Goal 100 pints.

Two KM Youths Charged

Kings Mountain Police arrested two Kings Mountain youths Thursday morning and charged them with breaking, entering and larceny at Wade Ford on Shelby Rd.

Police charge Lee Bickley, 19, of 1301 Wales Rd., and David B. DeVae, 18, of 1308 Wales Rd.

Reported stolen was a battery from a car.



VISIT WITH CONGRESSMAN - Congressman James To Broyhill, center, is shown with Mrs. Sue Payne, second from left, administrator of Kings Mountain Convalescent Center and current President of the North Carolina Health Care Facilities Association, in the nation's capital. Others are, J. Craig Souza of Raleigh, Executive Vice President of the

Association, and Mr. and Mrs. Bill Rogers of MGR, Inc. of Spartanburg, S.C. The group attended a conference of the American Health Care Association in Washington, D.C. last week (June 23-25). They also met with Senators Jesse Helms and Robert Morgan and Congressman James Martin and Richardson Preyer.