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Police here seeking state probe into criminal justice 'corruption'

Tippecanoe County Democratic Chairman Richard T. "Tom" Heide today said he'd "bet his reputation" that "all Democratic officials in Tippecanoe County are clean as a whistle," in response to police allegations of political corruption here and conspiracy to commit crime.

In a mass meeting Thursday night, 64 police officers from five local departments unanimously instructed the presidents of the four Fraternal Order of Police lodges to find out what can be done to bring in an outside unit to investigate corruption here.

State Police Supt. Robert DeBard said, at 10:45 a.m. today, he had not yet been contacted by the officers.

"I have not yet been contacted by any of those persons," DeBard said this morning. But, he said "all our department could do would be to investigate charges of criminal violation — either at the request of the governor, the prosecutor, or some appropriate judge or elected official.

"I have received no complaint in my office and the attorney general does not have statewide powers to make this kind of an investigation either," he said.

DeBard did say the governor "obviously is willing to hear any information from them or any other concerned citizens about happenings in the state and I'm sure the attorney general would have the same attitude."

The police meeting was called to take action on the Saturday firing of



TOM HEIDE
... Democratic county chairman

Tippecanoe County Chief Deputy Prosecutor John Dibble by Prosecutor James Kizer.

Strong statements in support of Dibble opened the meeting, and continued to be heard until Lafayette police Sgt. Richard Huffer rose and said: "There's corruption in this town that's almost ready to foam to the top. We've got to get somebody here from out of town (for an investigation) — don't get somebody you have to face every day."

"This town is crooked and then hell," Huffer said.

With that, other officers for the first time stood up and publicly said

what many had been saying privately for many months.

"I think this is the consensus of 90 per cent of the police officers in this town because of the things that have happened," said Guerry Dairymple, president of the Purdue FOP.

"We know there is corruption going on in this town," Lafayette Lt. Dave Gullion said. "But we as local officers can't get close. To do something about it we should go to the governor of the state and ask for an investigation into political corruption as well as an investigation for conspiracy to commit crime."

Thursday morning, Dibble charged that Heide, who is also Lafayette city attorney, had suggested his firing and that his dismissal had to do with political and professional reasons. Heide denied that charge, but Kizer refused to comment as he has since the dismissal.

However, this morning, Kizer said he is calling an 8 a.m. Monday press conference in his office at which time, he said, "I'll hit the whole ball of wax. I think I'll have a pretty firm statement Monday morning."

West Lafayette Patrolman Michael McLaughlin charged that "DUJ's (drunken driving charges) were reduced to parking ticket violations numerous times when Kizer was in charge (as a deputy prosecutor in West Lafayette City Court).

Kizer said today: "I never did that."



JOHN DIBBLE
... ex-deputy prosecutor

To a second charge by a Lafayette patrolman, who said Kizer is in the process now of reducing an armed-robbery charge to third-degree burglary, Kizer said today that "that case is lost." He said he would further explain Monday morning.

Heide, however, charged that Dibble was responsible for losing the case.

"They say there's corruption (here)," Heide said today. "If there is, why don't they say what the corruption is. If they don't trust anyone, why don't they tell you guys (the news media)? Nobody should

know better than them (police) if there is corruption or not.

"I'll be glad to answer specific charges . . . any charges there are, in a court of law," he said.

Heide also said he would not oppose a state police investigation here.

"That's like opposing motherhood," he said. "If somebody breaks the law, arrest them and take them to court. Don't just sit around talking about it."

Mayor James Riehle this morning said no one has contacted him directly with specific charges of corruption. The mayor has the power to request the governor for a state police investigation.

"If they (the state police) come in and investigate, then they come in and investigate," Riehle said. "I have no knowledge of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Dibble's discharge," he said. "And the charges that there is widespread corruption in Tippecanoe County I don't believe. I think we live in a pretty good community." Riehle said the situation to him "is kind of a perplexing thing."

Lafayette Police Chief Paul Butler, who did not attend the Thursday meeting, said he had no comment on the charges of corruption, but spoke confidently of his police force.

However, West Lafayette Police Chief Arlie Dailey was at the meeting and encouraged the officers to approach Kizer with their concerns.



JAMES KIZER
... Tippecanoe County prosecutor

"That's the first thing you should do," he said. "There's no reason in hell he shouldn't talk to you."

With Kizer still withholding comment until Monday, police are continuing bitter statements against Dibble's firing.

"Dibble went on the raid with them when they made the Chadwell arrest (Donald R., 1404 Center St.) and Kizer was in California with the Purdue football team," one officer said. "Dibble was left in charge. Why can't he make those decisions?"

"From Kizer's point of view, every time he leaves town, no one can make decisions."