



## TOWN OF KILL DEVIL HILLS

*Land Where Flight Began*

### NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Mary E. Quidley, Town Clerk  
252-449-5302, mary@kdhnc.com

KILL DEVIL HILLS, North Carolina – Wednesday, January 25, 2012 – On September 23, 2011 Kill Devil Hills Police Chief Gary L. Britt was placed on paid, non-disciplinary suspension because it was reported to the town manager that a petition for Chief Britt's removal was "imminent" from Judicial District 1 District Attorney Frank Parrish. The petition was never filed.

After the Chief was placed on suspension, the Town, with the assistance of the risk management division of the North Carolina League of Municipalities, immediately coordinated a professional review of the performance and leadership of Chief Britt and its impact on the operation of the police department. The lengthy review was conducted by three retired law enforcement professionals: Gerald Galloway, retired police chief of Southern Pines, NC; David D. Cashwell, retired director of the Criminal Justice Standards Division of the NC Department of Justice; and, Thomas M. Moss, retired police chief of Garner, NC.

This professional panel reviewed all identifiable complaints or issues which were understood to have been contained in the proposed petition. Extensive interviews were conducted with Chief Britt as well as each and every employee of the police department, including both sworn officers and administrative staff. Although it appears that some employees had issues with Chief Britt's management style, there was no evidence identified that indicated anyone was intentionally violating any criminal laws or engaging in any unethical conduct. Recommendations were made for improving certain aspects of Chief Britt's management style, including improving communication within the police department and clarifying existing policies.

Based on these findings, and based on Chief Britt's employment history with the Town, including his capability and willingness to implement and work within the panel's recommendations and town manager's direction, Chief Britt was returned to his duties on December 22, 2011.

Speculation on Chief Britt's employment status continued, and in January 2012, *The Outer Banks Voice* reported that Resident Superior Court Judge Jerry Tillett had responded to questions by *The Voice*. Judge Tillett acknowledged investigations

regarding Chief Britt and Kill Devil Hills officials, and indicated that some matters had been referred to the Honorable Milton F. Fitch, Jr., Superior Court Judge, for his consideration. Judge Fitch subsequently issued an order to the Town on January 19, 2012.

Judge Fitch's order contained statements which indicate that inaccurate information was provided to him, including the statement that the Town had recently implemented new policies which would limit an employee's ability to speak out on matters of public concern. At no time has the Town implemented any policy under which anyone is denied the right to speak out on matters of public concern. The Town has filed an appeal with the North Carolina Court of Appeals which addresses this Order, which is a matter of public record.

Finally, recent public statements attributed to KDH Police Officer Andy Ennis indicate an apparent belief that his personnel records have been falsified. This allegation has been investigated and is simply not true.

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Mary E. Quidley  
Town Clerk  
Town of Kill Devil Hills  
252-449-5302  
[mary@kdhnc.com](mailto:mary@kdhnc.com)