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## Keehn, McTygue fall to Johnson, Scirocco

By TED REINERT , The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS - Scott Johnson bounced out one-term Mayor Valerie Keehn, and Skip Scirocco ousted 16-term Public Works Commissioner Tom McTygue in a good night for the Grand Old Party in the Spa City.

Following two years of a bitterly divided Democratic City Council, the Republicans appear to have taken control once more.

The only uncertain race was for finance commissioner: GOP candidate Ken Ivins leads Democrat Jane Weihe by about 150 votes, and an Ivins victory would give the GOP a 3-2 advantage on the council. There are about 500 ballots yet to be counted, and the majority should be Republican, according to GOP city chairman John Herrick.

Johnson led Keehn 4,240 to 3,750 Tuesday night. The third candidate, Gordon Boyd - who fought a primary battle with Keehn with the backing of the city's Democratic Committee, was defeated in September, and continued to campaign against the mayor on the Independence and Conservative party lines - received 516 votes. Scirocco's triumph was clear early. He won every district and had the highest vote total, with 5,188 to McTygue's 3,222, according to results reported by the League of Women Voters.

"It was a nasty campaign," McTygue told supporters gathered at the Principessa Elena on Oak Street. "They threw a lot of mud at me, and it looks like the mud stuck."

Public Safety Commissioner Ron Kim handily won a second term over Republican challenger Richard Wirth, a private investigator, to give the Democrats their sole win in a contested council race. Fellow Democrat Accounts Commissioner John Franck was unopposed and also will serve a second term in the office.

The Democrats swept to power on the council in 2005. But over the past two years, city government was dominated by a battle between rookie Mayor Keehn and McTygue, the city's most successful politician of the past decades. On Tuesday, both lost to Republicans.

"I think people were tired of the negativity from the Democratic primary," Johnson said. "We need to do away with the negativity and the infighting. Without building consensus, you can't move anything forward."

Johnson, a wealthy retired attorney, made much in the campaign of living as a child in the federally subsidized Jefferson Terrace apartments. "I hope the kids in the Terrace now realize there is opportunity out there," Johnson said. He won District 14, which includes Jefferson Terrace, 227 to 216.

Johnson celebrated with fellow Republicans at their traditional Holiday Inn gathering place, while the mood was more subdued at Keehn's camp across the street at the Inn at Saratoga.

Still hanging hopes on the last districts shortly before conceding the election, Keehn said, "Even if it doesn't work out that I'm re-elected, I feel like the voters have made a clear decision with Public Works. I think I did something that no other mayor has had the courage to do. And if I have to pay a price for that, it was worth it."

Kim, a Keehn ally, was disappointed with the results for mayor and said negativity on the council probably hurt her.

The crowd at Republican headquarters was more concerned with Scirocco's race against McTygue than any other.

Scirocco just kept saying how good he felt about the race and talked of plans to start working on a transition team.

"People are talking about the need for change," said Scirocco, a former city supervisor and retired animal control officer. "We need to get to work now."

In 2005, Keehn, a teacher originally from Wyoming, won successive upset victories over former Deputy Mayor Hank Kuczynski for the Democratic nomination and one-term Republican Mayor Michael Lenz in a close general election. As mayor, she presided over a City Council that was controlled by the Democrats but sharply divided. Inner-party acrimony increased with a referendum last fall to change the city's commission form of government to one with a more powerful mayor. Keehn backed the proposal, while Boyd led the charge to defeat it.

"There was a general disappointment with Valerie," Boyd said. "I think Johnson's election will be a good thing for the city. I was trying to accomplish a change in the mayor, to get a mayor who told the truth, and ran orderly meetings. I was making a sacrifice for something that I knew we needed."

Boyd made a point of coming to the Holiday Inn to congratulate Johnson.

"I want you to know I appreciate they way everything worked out," Johnson said.

"We all make our sacrifices," Boyd said. "Now it's time for you to make yours."

The two men made plans to meet.

Approximately 9,000 votes were cast overall. In 2005, 9,370 cast votes for mayor, with Keehn defeating Lenz 4,537 to 4,376.

DPW Commissioner

Scirocco's victory signals the end of an era for the Department of Public Works. McTygue, who had said this would be his last term had he won, has served 32 years as commissioner, beginning in 1972 with a four-year break from 1978 to 1981. His father, Charles A. McTygue held the job for nine terms from 1948 to 1965.

The victory is also a strong political comeback for Scirocco, who lost his supervisor job after eight years when the Democrats swept in to power in 2005.

The DPW race provided the last-minute drama of the election season. McTygue and an employee were caught by police taking down Scirocco signs on South Broadway on Tuesday morning. Scirocco said he would not press charges. Meanwhile, Scirocco may have been hurt by the

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malfunction of an automated campaign call effort. Some citizens received as many as a dozen calls from Scirocco on Monday night, and responded with angry calls and e-mails.

While McTygue charged the Scirocco campaign with fighting dirty, he was reflective, too.

"I'm happy," he said. "It's been a long and wonderful career, 32 years. We've done a wonderful job running the department. This year, the community wanted change, and they got it."

Earlier in the day, he said, "I win either way."

When asked about McTygue's brother, William McTygue, the civil-service protected public works director, Scirocco said only that William McTygue has a job to do.

"I understand he's Tommy's brother," Scirocco said. "Billy's got a job to do, and he can do his job. We all have jobs to do."

Scirocco's brother, Frank, campaigned for him and commented on the fractured Democratic Party.

"I was up on Broadway with a Scirocco sign, and Keehn people high-fived me. You kind of felt bad," he said.

"I'm disappointed for McTygue, it's unfortunate that his political career is ending on a down note," Boyd said.

**Commissioner of Finance**

Former Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce head Ken Ivins leads retired teacher Jane Weihe in the race for the open finance seat being vacated by independent Matt McCabe after four years.

"Almost a clean sweep," said Ivins. "I'm not surprised at all. We had an excellent team."

"I was hoping to win a little bit bigger than this," he said. "I'm very confident that with the absentees, we're going to prevail."

Weihe ran for mayor in 1987. She was the last candidate to enter the race, at the Democratic Committee endorsement meeting, and stressed her support for securing Saratoga Lake as the city's water source during the campaign.

**Public Safety Commissioner**

Incumbent Public Safety Commissioner Ron Kim won re-election easily over Republican challenger Richard Wirth, a private investigator.

"Commissioner Kim walked in and took over a department that was in turmoil and he turned it around," Police Chief Edward Moore said earlier Tuesday. Kim's predecessor Tom Curley lost the Republican Party's support in the 2005 election because of the scandal surrounding his deputy Erin Dreyer, whom Moore sued for trying to harass him out of office.

Kim has won the support of many in the police department by pushing hard for a new police station which could cost the city \$17 million.

Coming to an agreement on the station for next year's budget is the highest priority for the remainder of the current council session.

"It turned out in my favor because everyone that ran with me came in. I'm very happy for all of them. Their strength will enhance the city in many ways," Wirth said. "I'm glad I had this opportunity to run. Just to see them make it makes me happy."

Andrew Bernstein, Jim Kinney and Paul Post contributed reporting to this article.

An advertisement for TLC Laser Eye Centers. The background is a photograph of Tiger Woods in a red shirt and blue cap, kneeling on a golf course and looking towards the camera. A bright, circular light effect is positioned to the right of his head. On the left side of the image, the text "THERE WAS A BALL THERE. TIGER JUST COULDN'T SEE IT." is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. On the right side, the TLC Laser Eye Centers logo is displayed, consisting of the letters "TLC" in a large, blue, stylized font above the words "Laser Eye Centers" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

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