

Selectman wants board to resign

By JOSEPH A. O'BRIEN
Courant Staff Writer

WINSTED — Democratic Selectman Walter D. Miller on Tuesday called for the board of selectmen to resign because of Monday's 4-3 vote to fire Town Manager Wayne W. Dove.

"The best interest of the town is no longer being served here," Miller said. "There is major animosity and hard feelings that I don't see going away. I think we all should resign and get new people in here," he said.

Republican Mayor William H. McCabe, Democrats James A. Pettit and Nancy Peters Habbal, and Republican Francis J. O'Neill Jr. voted to fire Dove.

Their votes brought boos from many in the crowd of about 140 residents at Gilbert School.

Democratic Selectmen Brian W. Sullivan, Walter D. Miller and John F. Gauger Jr. voted against Dove's dismissal.

Miller charged that removing Dove was part of a deal to name McCabe mayor despite a 5-2 Democratic majority.

"They've got the votes to do anything they want," Miller said Tuesday. "There was a deal to cement this thing."

Miller also charged Monday that there was a "political payoff" when selectmen named Mark Svonkin town attorney on another 4-3 vote.

Habbal nominated Svonkin, seconded by Pettit. Svonkin's wife, Sheila Garbus Svonkin, was Habbal's campaign manager during the recent town election.

Miller also said Tuesday that he has heard that the four controlling selectmen may try to name Thomas J. Botticelli, former Democratic town chairman, town manager. Botticelli was one of the four largest contributors to Pettit's campaign. He contributed \$100.

More than 20 residents defended Dove at the three-hour meeting Monday night at which selectmen named Town Clerk William T. Riiska acting

town manager.

Charlene LaVoie, the community lawyer hired under the Shateek Nader Trust to represent the interests of residents, was among those who spoke on Dove's behalf.

"I've had calls from at least two dozen people," LaVoie said Tuesday afternoon at her Main Street office.

"People also came in to see me, probably at least a dozen. They were a cross section of the community. They're furious about the process."

She said the residents who talked to her want her take some action,

such as an attempt to recall the four selectmen.

LaVoie said that under Connecticut law, there is nothing to prohibit recall of elected officials, but there is also no provision for it.