

Dispute Over Winsted Firing Continues to Stir Controversy

By DEBRA A. ALEKSINAS

WINSTED—A week after the Board of Selectmen voted to fire town manager Wayne Dove, despite objections from residents, the issue remains controversial.

Mr. Dove has since indicated that he will fight to retain his position, and a newly formed citizens' group is calling for a more open town government. Additionally, in the wake of last week's vote, Democratic Selectman Walter D. Miller has called for the whole board to resign.

And, despite reports that the four selectmen who voted to fire Mr. Dove are reconsidering their positions, Republican Mayor William McCabe said "there is no deal on the table." Selectmen were scheduled to meet Tuesday, and again next Monday, one day before a public hearing is scheduled on Mr. Dove's dismissal.

"No offers have been made...I don't see any change in the situation from Nov. 18 selectmen's meeting," said Mayor McCabe on Monday. Responding to reports that town attorney, Mark Svonkin, met with Mr. Dove late last week to present a compromise deal, the Mayor said "there certainly are always conversations" between town officials, although there have been no formal meetings of selectmen.

"I think the latest report is an example of a piece of the conversations that go on...one piece of many discussions among many people," the Mayor responded, adding that despite coalition of citizens fighting Mr. Dove's removal,

the outcome of last week's vote will not change.

Mr. McCabe said it will be Mr. Dove's decision whether or not the public hearing is actually held, but the session is required by charter. "In my opinion, [selectmen's position] will probably not [change]...although we will be aware of any petition that is submitted to us," the Mayor added.

The selectmen voted to hold the public hearing, if it is requested by Mr. Dove, at town hall. The location of the forum was then tentatively moved to the larger Gilbert School, but a scheduling conflict canceled that plan. As of mid-week an alternate site for the forum had not been found by town officials.

While, Mr. Miller last week called for the resignation of the entire seven-member Board of Selectmen because he said he felt irreparable "bad feelings" among the board will make it "very difficult to work together" over the next two years. He said it would be in the town's best interest if all the selectmen stepped down. However, "Nobody seems to be taking any action" on his proposal, he said Monday.

According to Mr. Miller, three of the four selectmen who voted against Mr. Dove—Democrats James A. Pettit and Nancy Habel, and Republicans, Mayor McCabe and Francis J. O'Neill, Jr.—indicated late last week that "they would hire him back." However, Mr. Miller said, Mr. O'Neill was the only one of the four selectmen who did not agree to a compromise.

"These people are holding out as a block...and unless a coalition of four agrees, there's no deal," he said. "This is an example of people not working in the best interests of the town," Mr. Miller noted.