Embattled mayor still likes job

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WINSTED — During two terms on the Board of Selectmen, William H. McCabe was often referred to as the voice of reason with a knack for settling differences.

But on Tuesday, a selectmen's meeting went haywire, with selectmen shouting and pointing fingers, and McCabe uncharacteristically joined in the fray. The meeting, as well as a confrontation between McCabe and Community Lawyer Charlene LaVoie, were taped by Mad River TV, the local public access station. Many who saw the broadcast were aghast at McCabe's actions.

"The skill of holding a rational discussion or debate with selectmen (John F.) Gangar, (Walter D.) Miller and Charlene LaVoie I have not yet mastered," McCabe admitted yesterday. "I'm a human being. When individuals use the selectmen's meetings to make personal and public attacks on others and when the facts are so grossly misstated you sometimes have the urge to set the record straight."

However, with those exceptions, McCabe has found his two-month term as mayor heartening.

"The cooperation I've received from the vast majority of the citizens, town hall employees, board and commissions, the majority of the selectmen has been very heartwarming," McCabe said.

James A. Petit, the former mayor and now a selectman, said he empathizes with McCabe. "I think Bill will be, in time, an effective mayor," Petit said. "Bill has to act as he is comfortable. I think for him not to do it that way ... would be denying the people that elected him the full Bill McCabe."

For the most part, McCabe, a Republican, has always been well-liked by voters. In 1987, he was top vote-getter. He repeated that victory again in November, taking 1,744 votes.

"I always liked McCabe," Miller said. "On the previous

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