Insisting on open government in Winchester

12/22/93

Recently, Community Lawyer Charlene LaVoie sent a letter to the town of Winchester regarding the failure of Town Clerk William Riiska to certify a 1991 petition signed by 360 citizens.

When Mayor John Gauger Jr. received the correspondence he made copies, had them marked "confidential" and sent them to members of the Board of Selectmen in a packet also marked "confidential." Mayor Gauger's actions were a direct effort to deny citizens and the press access to Community Lawyer LaVoie's letter.

When Selectmen Brian Sullivan, a strong believer in open government, received his copy, the next day he made me aware of it. No one should have to guess what I did with the information once I received it.

Register Citizen Reporter June Peterson went to the community lawyer's office and received copies of the letter from lawyer LaVoie. June then wrote a story about the situation.

Everyone should be aware of the fact that for the last four years, Brian Sullivan, Mayor Gauger and myself have stood shoulder to shoulder insisting on open government in the town of Winchester.

Apparently, Mayor Gauger now either has a severe case of the "Short Memory Syndrome" or for the last four years his stance on open government was used only to garner votes in his quest to be mayor of the town of Winchester.

Walter D. Miller
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Walter Miller is a former selectman in the town of Winchester.