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Allaire named town attorney

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BARKHAMSTED – Town officials have selected a new town attorney to replace outgoing attorney Donna Brooks.

The Board of Selectmen have named former Winsted Town Attorney Stephen O. Allaire of the law firm of Ruggiero, Ziogas, and Allaire of Bristol.

Brooks, one of three partners in the firm of Dixon, Brooks, and Wexler on Center Street in Winsted, announced in mid-September that she intended to step down after eight years on the job.

She cited the increasing workload of her private practice, and the work created by town matters as the reasons for her departure.

Brooks said she would stay on until the town found her replacement and all her pending cases were completed.

Allaire was dismissed from his post in Winsted following the controversial Mills vs. Town lawsuit.

That suit, brought in 1991 by resident Patricia Mills and Community Lawyer Charlene LaVoie, challenged the Winsted Board of Selectmen's decision to give former Winsted Police Capt. Francis J. O'Neill a supplementary retirement payment.

The Winsted selectmen were critical of Allaire's perceived failure to expeditiously obtain a summary judgment on the case. Allaire's motion for summary judgment, finally obtained this year, was built around the fact that a 360 signature petition, calling for a town meeting on the benefit package, was never certified.

Allaire subsequently sent a letter to the board explaining the summary judgment, and proposed that the town consider filing a lawsuit claim against Mills for drawing out the case for so long.