

The only selectman to speak at the hearing, Brian W. Sullivan, sharply criticized the four as a group of hypocrites who preached openness and understanding to get into office and have done nothing but close the political process to the people.

Reading quotes from the four selectmen's election literature, Sullivan questioned whether they were living up to the promises they made to the people.

Quoting from O'Neill's campaign literature, Sullivan pointed out how O'Neill promised to listen to the people. Sullivan turned to the crowd and said "listen Buddy listen." The crowd erupted with applause.

In over three hours of testimony, only two people supported the actions taken by the board. And one, Elbert Manchester, specifically spoke to his faith in McCabe's character. As of 10:30 p.m., the hearing had not yet ended.

Another, Gene Gouthier harshly criticized Dove as a man not worthy of the position. He received a rude reception from the crowd with one woman shouting from the back "sit down before I slap you down."

Some who said they knew Dove only slightly said they feared the move to fire the town manager would have its most serious negative repercussions outside of the political arena.

Speaking of Dove, Robert Caley said "he can't walk on water but he has helped prevent the town from drowning in higher taxes or getting shipwrecked on beaches."

Last night, a petition from the Citizens Coalition for Open Government, a group formed specifically to fight the Dove firing, requesting a referendum on the firing, was being feverishly signed by the members of the crowd.

Charlene LaVoie, community lawyer and CCOG organizer, requested that the petition for referendum and the petition requesting the selectmen to rescind their votes not be ignored.

After last night's hearing, Habbal and McCabe both said they would spend today reviewing the input they received last night and considering their vote tonight.

"I will be doing some soul searching," Habbal said.