

Winsted

Ex-town manager mum on next move for reinstatement

By RAY ROUTHIER
Courant Staff Writer

On Jan. 6, the selectmen are to appoint a search committee to look for a new permanent town manager. Republican Mayor William H. McCabe said he wants the search process to be "nonpolitical" so the new town manager will be able to work easily with all town officials and residents.

The three selectmen who voted to keep Dove have said they may not participate in the search, saying that the four who voted to fire Dove have enough votes to pick whomever they want.

When Dove was appointed town manager in December of 1990, many claimed the move was politically motivated. An extensive search had been dropped, before any interviews were conducted, so that Dove could be hired.

Some of the selectmen who voted to fire Dove have also claimed that he has been too political in his job, playing favorites with some selectmen and residents.

But Sullivan and other Dove supporters say that Dove's accomplishments — town improvements and projects with no tax increase — speak for themselves.

WINSTED — There are still some things Wayne W. Dove and his supporters can do to try to get the fired town manager reinstated, and nobody was ruling those out Friday.

But no one was announcing any specific plans either, one day after selectmen voted 4-3 to make Dove's removal permanent.

"For the moment I'd rather not say anything," Dove said Friday. "Give me a week or two."

The vote by the selectmen may not have ended the public outcry over Dove's firing that began nearly two months ago, but it certainly put the momentum in the selectmen's hands.

Under the charter, residents cannot appeal the decision, so the only options left for Dove and his supporters seem to be taking some kind of legal action.

Dove's attorney, Dennis A. Santore, said Friday he probably would not meet with his client until next week to discuss a possible lawsuit against the town. Santore said earlier this month he was prepared to sue the town on Dove's behalf, charging that the firing violated Dove's contract.

For residents who have opposed Dove's firing — 1,600 signed a petition to reinstate him — the options now are limited.

Residents could appeal a Superior Court judge's ruling that a townwide vote on Dove can't be held. Charlene LaVoie, community lawyer, had filed the original suit asking for a referendum in early December, but would not say Friday whether she'll appeal it.

Democratic Selectman Brian W. Sullivan, who was among Dove's supporters, said Friday he was unsure if anything else could be done.

"I think it's a done deal," Sullivan said.

Sullivan was one of several people who said that maybe the charter should be changed so that residents

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Wayne W. Dove
Former town manager

can have a say in major decisions such as Dove's firing. But so far no one has called for a charter revision commission to be formed.

The selectmen are scheduled to meet Monday at 7 p.m. in town hall to discuss and possibly appoint an acting town manager. Town Clerk William T. Riiska has been acting town manager since Nov. 18, earning no extra pay, but wants to be relieved of the duty.