

Sabattus citizen's group challenges selectmen

By [Kathryn Skelton, Staff Writer](#)

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SABATTUS — A group calling itself Concerned Citizens of Sabattus has alleged "unethical and possibly illegal happenings" on the Board of Selectmen and asked for more details in the resignation of the town manager last month.

Gregory Gill left office Sept. 1. He'd worked the last year without a contract.

The group's letter, signed by more than 30 people, alleges Gill was pulled aside and forced out by one selectmen and that two of the other four selectmen knew about it.

The board voted 3-1 Tuesday night to pass the letter on to the town attorney.

"That's where it ended, unfortunately," said state Rep. Stacy Dostie, D-Sabattus, who had collected signatures for the group.

"We want to leave the town manager out of this; it's not about him, this is about policy and procedure," she said. "Our goal is (that) we want them to say in front of us what happened and why they did this, and if they did make a mistake, be big enough to apologize to people. I will walk away satisfied with that."

The letter asks whether Gill had had job performance reviews and why town charter wasn't followed if he was essentially terminated: "This clause also states the following: If the termination is with just cause, the Town will have no obligation to pay termination salary and benefits; otherwise, the Manager will continue to receive his normal salary benefits for a period of 60 days following the specified date of termination. The resignation agreement that was worked out with the former town manager was much more generous than his contract. Why did the Selectmen choose not follow the Charter or the town manager's contract?"

Chairman Mark Duquette, Scott Lansley and William Henshaw voted to send the letter to the town attorney. Paul Loesberg voted against.

"We're spending too much money on lawyers," Loesberg said Wednesday. His preference, he said, would have been to answer the questions Tuesday night.

The three selectmen who voted in favor couldn't be reached Wednesday for comment.

"I'm certain selectmen will have a response at the next meeting, Nov. 10," interim Town Manager Jim Bennett said. He said he was cautioning the board to act slowly and carefully.

Norm LaPlante, a former state legislator who went door to door gathering signatures, said he was concerned that the right process hadn't been followed.

"It was in bad taste, it was unethical," he said.

State Sen. John Nutting, D-Leeds, said he and Dostie have been involved in the issue because Sabattus is within their districts and it involves interpretation of a state law: whether questions can be answered because they deal with process or whether they can't because they steer too close to infringing on a person's reputation.

"There was a lot of frustration in the audience last night," Nutting said.

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