

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

**Present:** Joseph Giordano, Supervisor  
Joyce Cooper, Councilwoman  
Dorcey Crammond, Councilwoman  
Dave Woods, Councilman  
Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk

**Absent:** Wayne Taylor, Councilman

**Others:** Jim Major, Bob Dedrick, Bob Streeter, Adam Barber, Dakota Olcott, Jeff Cook, Adam Hurlburt, Mark Wright, Shelly Hendrix, Jody Belden, Kara Blanchard, Courtney Brown, Matt Watts, Kortney Bessett, Molly Bechard, Bob Porter, Jim Cawley, Ashley Brand, John Bartlett, Charles Bolstridge, Cindy Childs, Jim Bergeron, Jon Cooke, Maria Tedford, Officer Genier, Officer Fleury and others.

Supervisor Giordano opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and proceeded with the business at hand.

**Resolution #37-2018** brought by Dorcey Crammond, seconded by Joseph Giordano to offer employment to Wendy Barber for the position of part-time Activities Attendant for the Ticonderoga Youth Commission at a hourly rate of \$12.24 per hour effective February 5, 2018, no benefits. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Joyce Cooper - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

**Resolution #38-2018** brought by Dave Woods, seconded by Dorcey Crammond to offer employment to Riley Manso for the position of part-time Activities Attendant for the Ticonderoga Youth Commission at a hourly rate of \$12.24 per hour effective February 5, 2018, no benefits. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Joyce Cooper - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

**Resolution #39-2018** brought by Dave Woods, seconded by Joyce Cooper to offer employment to Dominic Banish for the position of part-time Dog Control Officer at the annual salary of \$6,000.00 effective February 5, 2018, no benefits. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Joyce Cooper - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

**Resolution #40-2018** brought by Dave Woods, seconded by Dave Woods to accept the resignation of Kortney Bessett effective February 6, 2018. **All in Favor** Joseph Giordano - Aye, Dorcey Crammond - Aye, Joyce Cooper - Aye, Dave Woods - Aye. **Opposed** - none. **Carried.**

Invitation to Address the Board

Bob Porter stated that there are quite a few questions that seem unanswered that have been going on and being reported by WIPS and a lot of us are here in support of Mike LaVallie. He does know in at least what WIPS is reporting on is that Mike had planned on leaving at the end of February and the understanding is that the Supervisor had asked

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
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for his resignation from that position from what sounded like right away as Police Commissioner. He is wondering, when you asked for that resignation had you already gone to the board to ask them if it was ok to ask for his resignation, time wise he is not understanding how this came about.

Supervisor Giordano stated that Mike had submitted his resignation on January 18 and the board accepted this on the 25th of January for the 25th of February, the following day, he, Kortney and himself were at the Police graduation for our two new cadets who had just graduated. I came back and proceeded with his weekend and on Monday morning he had received notification that there was a memo that Michael had issued to the police department essentially appointing Mark Belden to the position of investigator in the police department which is in violation of a number of different rules of the town board and town law. First off, only the Town Board has the authority to create positions in which this would have been the creation of a new position and the appointment to the position. That is not Mike's or any other department heads, solely the Town board's. The Town Board had not even had a chance to discuss this prior to. Mike and he had had prior conversations, but there was no resolution as to where we were going in the future. The second thing was that Mike was already on his way out and was effectively making policy changes that he was not going to be around to implement. This is a question as to why he would initiate that policy. The third thing (and there were conversations about this) is that there is a Union involved with the police department, and the union needs to be contacted and negotiated with for any kinds of changes to the appointments or positions in that department. Had we not intervened, then the union would file an improper practice charge for failure to negotiate regarding that particular position. This was out of left field to have received this on Monday, not knowing this at all. At which case, there were several conversations between himself and Mike that day and he essentially said this was out of line, we need your resignation today or we will terminate you. He also provided Mark Belden as well as the board members and the new interim Police Chief Mike Mawn as well as the United Federation of Police Officer bargaining agent Dan, with a memo that he had created that spells out the violations associated with the move that Mike had made on Monday. This is not out of left field, it was not done maliciously, it was an act that the Town Board had to take because it was not proper conduct in terms of how we follow rules and procedures for hiring in the Town.

Bob Dedrick would like to speak out of experience, when he was Supervisor there was a Code Enforcement Officer who would spend four to five hours a day on porno sites. So he did go up to him and said either I have your resignation by the next Town Board meeting or he will go into Executive at that Town Board meeting and he is going to consult the board and recommend that you be fired. That is the time table that you have to follow. The question was, when you gave Mike an ultimatum of either resigning or being fired did you have board approval to do that?

Supervisor Giordano stated that he did not have formal approval, but he had spoke to the board and made them aware of the circumstances. He brought it to there attention, this memo and that it was not in due process of how we hire individuals.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
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Mr. Dedrick wants to say that it is totally unethical if you did not have the board approval that you were going to fire him. You don't have that right as a supervisor, you can't give him an ultimatum without their approval. He will be honest with you, he doesn't know where you will be 5 or 10 years from now, but the decisions that you make now are affecting the people for a long time. You may not be here 5 or 10 years from now, he will be, she will be here, she will, etc (pointing at the board members). It really bothers him that the decisions that you are making are going to affect people that are going to be living here for a long, long time. If you did that Joe then I am going to tell you it is unethical and it really bothers me.

Supervisor Giordano stated that he does not make decisions lightly, he has consulted with...

Mr. Dedrick stated that he his just talking about this ultimatum.....

Supervisor Giordano stated that there was a heated argument and a lot of things were said, it was really disappointing to have Mike do what he did...

Mr. Dedrick stated that there are two sides to that story and he wished that Mike was here to defend that because we are only hearing your side, but he thinks that Mike had the authority as a Police Chief to do exactly what he did.

Supervisor Giordano disagreed, he spoke with people that were in positions of authority, other supervisor's, the county manager, other people and this is the only body that has the authority to create positions and to appoint positions.

Mr. Dedrick stated that he totally agrees with that, they are the body.

Mr. Porter asked if the investigator position was budgeted.

Supervisor Giordano explained that there was no line item for an investigator.

Jeff Cook noted as being in this position previously he did discuss some things with Mike and he made a mistake of appointing somebody, he could very easily on his authority assign, direct or do basically whatever needs to be done, done to efficiently run his department and he told him after the fact that he wished he would have come to him, because he could have on his own assigned that individual to do investigations and it would have been his sole ability to do that and it has nothing to do with the board. First of all, he acknowledges that he made a mistake. You have a man that came here in June of last year that is highly regarded throughout this community and this whole surrounding area, the thing is that he came here to save this town's butt point blank and he gets stabbed in the back because somebody gets their feelings hurt. The thing is the way that should have been handled is that it should have been handled in a counseling session. First of all you knew, he had his first resignation letter here, you had accepted that at the last board meeting. He has a contract between the Town and him for employment, it says in that contract that either party can get out of the contract with 30 days notice. Here he

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
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and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

makes a simply mistake that could have been solved so simply, by just coming in and saying listen you don't have that authority to appoint, that rests with the Town Board - not any individual. He has dealt with a similar kind of thing, one individual decided to change everything and guess what, the state slapped him. The point being, one individual does not have - especially as a public servant - does not have the authority to go to some one of civil service and say either resign or I'm firing you because I didn't like what you did. You have to have some legitimate reason, you have someone that served the department and the town faithfully, better than most any one else is going to and one thing happens and you couldn't get it done quick enough to stab him in the back. There is a contract - first of all you broke the contract.....

Supervisor Giordano stated that he broke the contract .....he did not follow the employee handbook in terms of policies set forth, a department head cannot just make a determination as to who they want to hire or create positions, that is not in the employee handbook.

Mr. Cook read aloud the contract signed by Mike LaVallie and the Town..(on file) This contract is a legally binding thing (if he were Mike he would sue you), but the point being is the ethics involved..... if you have someone that is going to be leaving, faithfully served for six or seven months and will be leaving in a week and a half or two weeks and take and have the public that don't know these fact look at it from the outside and say, Jesus, what did he do that he had had to resign all of a sudden, what is this big bru haha over. Nobody knows except for the people that care, there is a section - as stated before, one individual does not have the authority to do anything on the Town Board. You as Supervisor has certain responsibilities, but as far as what happened, you have no authority individually. His understanding is that you decided that you had an executive session before the police committee meeting, when was the public notified of the town board meeting?

Supervisor Giordano stated that you do not need a 72 hour window to post a meeting if you have all the board here and all the board was here.

Mr. Cook stated that they wouldn't have been here if you hadn't have called a meeting.

Supervisor Giordano stated that we did call a meeting that afternoon.

Mr. Cook asked what meeting did you call, you have to be in a meeting to be in an executive session, you can't call an executive session, that is not how it works, you have to be in a public meeting before you can go into an executive session.

Supervisor Giordano stated that he did call a meeting.

Mrs. Thompson explained the meetings law, an emergency special can be called as long as every town board member had personally been called and every town board member is in attendance of that meeting, you don't have to....(interrupted)

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
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and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Cook stated that you may be able to have a meeting, but in order to go into an executive session you have to start that meeting first, that is what I am saying - did they do that?

Mrs. Thompson stated yes, that it is in the minutes.

Mr. Porter asked if that happened before he asked for Mike's resignation, he asked the board, did he meet with you and tell you that he is going to ask for Mike's resignation?

Councilman Woods stated that we had a public meeting, we went into an executive session and we laid out the problems. You know this is a two-fold deal too, because Mike Mawn expressed interest in taking over when Mike LaVallie left. Dale Quesnel was going on vacation for two weeks in Florida, that left us without Supervision so we thought that it would be better that Mike resign but stay on and help Mike Mawn get straightened around. When Mike is gone and Dale is gone we have no supervision. Anything after that was just accelerated and got out of hand.

Mr. Cook stated that the only problem with that is that it is not legal. Just because someone was interested in a position, how can you take and fire someone..... Just because someone is interested in a position.....(inaudible) if this was the decision when he called up, before he met with you or anyone else on the board and calls Mike up and says I want your resignation or I am firing you. That is the point right there, coercions of the 2nd degree, a person is guilty of coercions in the second degree when he or she compels or induces a person to engage in conduct which the later has the legal right to abstain from engaging it. In other words, Mike didn't have to quit, okay, but the means of instilling in him or her a fear that if the demand is not complied with the actor will use or abuse his or her position as a public servant by performing some act within or related to his or her official duties, making a phone call and telling him either leave or get fired, in such manner as to affect some person adversely. You think this might have affected Mike adversely, publically, financially, ethically, professionally. How do you think, that is the terminology of coercions in the second degree. That is a Class A misdemeanor. The problem is that for way too long this Town has been so micromanaged, and he understands, he wants someone of high quality in there and Michael was high quality. He tried talking him out of staying here til he was blue in the face, only for the reason, he would have been an ideal candidate, only for the reason because he knew what he was going to go through. He just spoke to a guy who is ready to retire, that has huge impact that he could offer this town and his only reason for not taking the test is the politics of this town. Who's detriment is that to, the tax payers, who's detriment is it to, the police department because the Town Board is just going to keep on going on as the Town Board goes on.

Councilman Woods stated that no one can dispute how well Mike was thought of, he was the idiot that got him to..... (inaudible) from that point on we did everything we could to keep him here, we offered him money, retirement, we tried to do a longevity to help with his retirement, we definitely wanted him.....(inaudible) beyond ....

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Cooks stated that he understands that, but the point being is the way things are run here in this Town, you could promise him the world and give it to him - a year in a half from now, someone else takes it away.....

Supervisor Giordano asked what the solution would be for that...

Mr. Cook stated that the solution is over all, maybe the Town Board or the people that are micromanaging so much.....

Supervisor Giordano stated he disagrees, he has been here this entire time and Dave is the one that got Mike in here, but he is the one that tried really hard to keep you here, ..... (interruptions - inaudible) there were reasons why he was reluctant to take this job and he is not going to share them out here, but he had extensive conversations with him that went from one thing to another and he worked diligently on all the different aspects to see how can we make it work so Mike LaVallie can stay here in Ticonderoga as the police chief.... this what happened here is not a mistake, Mike knew he needed to contact the labor relations person and have the negotiations between that person and their local bargaining agent in order to go through with this. This was just discussed in December and it has not taken place, Mike basically said Joe you take care of it, but this was after the fact.

Jim Majors interrupted to say how about you stop smearing Mike's name, you are going over and over.....

Supervisor Giordano stated but you are smearing my name, I have a reputation too and you ..... (interruption)

Mr. Major stated that you have made the stupidest decision he has ever heard off. That is his opinion and he will talk about that in a minute to give you the perfect example of whey this is a stupidest decision ....

Mr. Cook continued that his point is the fact that Mike would have been ideal to stay here, again - he talked him out of it, his father talked him out of it, his father stated that he wanted it in writing that he wouldn't stay here for the simple fact that he couldn't trust to be able to be here long enough to be able to retire.

Councilman Woods went to see him personally and he said it wasn't dollars - it was quality of life.

Mr. Cook stated that a day or two before he got the phone call saying resign or I'm firing you, he had talked to me and said that he is still on the fence, he was still going to take the test, but he was still on the fence because he really wanted to stay here and contribute to his community. A few days before this and he still would have, had he had that opportunity and maybe he wouldn't have made that decision, but when somebody calls up and says as this says a Class A misdemeanor, calls up and says either resign or be fired especially when he has this resignation letter sitting there. It is insane.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Porter asked based on what Mike did, if he refused to write that resignation letter you - everyone of you - would have voted to fire him.. He wants to ask you individually, would you have voted to fire him...

Councilwoman Cooper stated that we weren't given that opportunity, so it wasn't even a consideration...

Mr. Porter stated that you accepted his resignation, but if he didn't turn that resignation letter in, you would have said, Mike you are fired.

Councilman Woods stated that he had already turned in that resignation letter...

Mr. Porter stated that he didn't have to, he was given an ultimatum, put your resignation letter in or your fired...right. (inaudible.....)

Adam Hurlburt asked who is running this meeting, because there are 10 people talking at once, no one is raising their hand, can we get some order. Whoever, is on the floor stand up, whoever is not sit down..

Mr. Porter continued that it doesn't make sense, you asked for his resignation, but what if that kid refused and said you know what - he was worried about his retirement and those kinds of things.... (inaudible)

Councilman Woods is saying he had resigned already, other than this investigator thing, that is the crutch of this whole thing, we would have kept him without a doubt.

Mr. Hurlburt would like to touch base on this infraction that Mike allegedly did, he knows you mentioned having to do a MOA with the union about the investigator position, he doesn't believe so as it is still in our collective bargaining agreement that there is an investigator position, it has never been dissolved, it has just been vacant for awhile..

Supervisor Giordano stated that in this last contract that was ratified it was removed...

Mr. Hurlburt stated ok, but in the past - appointments of vacancies, (read from the union contract) the Chief of Police in consultation with the Town Board, consultation - will be the sole judge with respect to the degree to which applicants meet job qualifications. The selection of internal and/or external applicants to fill positions will be at the sole discretion of the Chief of Police, in consultation with the Town Board. So he just has to talk to you about it, it doesn't much matter if you guys agree with it.

Supervisor Giordano stated that you can ask anyone if it had been talked about, the only two people that had talked about it was Mike and I. We were in disagreement about what we were going to do with that, especially since he wasn't committing to stay on long term.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Hurlburt asked why the investigator position wasn't in that collective bargain agreement.

Supervisor Giordano stated that it was removed, in the last ratification it was taken out - we were going in a different direction.

Mr. Hurlburt stated that there then is still a vacancy for a Sergeants position, he has the money for it.... (inaudible)

Supervisor Giordano stated that there is no specific line item put in for an investigator position.

Mr. Hurlburt would now touch base with Mr. Cook's argument, is that really fire able?

Supervisor Giordano stated no (many interruptions from the public - inaudible)

Mr. Hurlburt continued to say that it sounds like there is just a miscommunication between the board and you Chief of Police that could easily have been squashed with a conversation...

Supervisor Giordano stated that a mistake and miscommunication are very nice ways of saying something....he did not have any knowledge of this memo that went out to Mark Belden that all the offices that came in to work that day signed. He had no knowledge of that until it was brought to him.....

Mr. Hurlburt interrupted to ask that you had no knowledge of the intention to appoint an investigator....

Supervisor Giordano stated that he had no knowledge that this was taking place on this particular date, we had been discussing it at length....

Mr. Hurlburt stated that he believes he was involved in some of these conversations (the Supervisor did not believe he was as they took place after Mr. Hurlburt left the department) ...

Supervisor Giordano stated that he is not opposed to an investigator position, he believes the Town needs one, however the Town needs to follow due process and this did not follow due process, this is not a mistake that Mike did not have knowledge of this, he did have knowledge of this.....

Talking in the public - inaudible....

Matt Watts asked if Mark was given a start date...

Supervisor Giordano stated that he did not give Mark a start date... this is not a mistake, it is someone that put something out there and it was brought before the board....



**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Jim Cawley stated that it sounds like a mistake, miscommunication - he thought he had the ability to do something and you clearly thought he should have consulted with you, so as the person in charge, he would expect, YOU to sit down with a man that you liked to talk about it before you call him up and say Hey, if I don't have your resignation by such time.....(inaudible) stated that this is what we have been told, that is what we are all here for ..... the second part of his question is, who are the police commissioners in Ticonderoga.

Councilman Woods stated that the Supervisor is the police commission.

Mr. Cawley asked why do we have only one police commissioner, and how is that smart....how did that happen, when his grandfather served we had three...come on, what is going on.... one voice.... where is that coming from guys...

Supervisor Giordano stated that everything comes through this board, everything - the commissioner handles the day to day stuff, but everything comes through this board....

Mr. Cawley stated that it doesn't matter, one voice is not enough when it comes to dealing with these things, where's the logic....

Supervisor Giordano stated that it comes back to what Mr. Cook had said, having too many people micromanage it hasn't helped it either....(inaudible)

Mr. Cawley continued that all he can say is he is disappointed with how you handled your affairs with the Chief of Police, we voted for you, we like Mike, he grew up here, he was doing a hell of a job for this community, if he had already given you his resignation and was intending to leave at the end of the month and you saw a perceived problem, you should have pulled him into your office and had a private conversation to straighten it out, but instead his reputation is more smeared than you can possibly imagine and that my friend is wrong. Now if all of these people in this room and the people that elected you got together tomorrow and demanded your resignation publicly, what would you do....

Supervisor Giordano stated if that is what you want to..... the people do make the decision and ..... (interrupted)

Mr. Cawley stated that tomorrow he will circulate a petition, he is out of here, he wants your resignation, buddy, he wants it and he thinks he can get enough names to get you out of here, it is uncalled for - you should have spoken to Mr. LaVallie ....

Supervisor Giordano stated that he did talk with him on many occasions. ....

(Inaudible)

Mr. Cawley - stated that you hired him to do a job, do you think he was doing a good job....(Yes), so you don't think he is allowed to make one mistake that is correctable, with somebody that is knowledgeable, you think that is not correctable, do you think it is was

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

correct to say you have to resign now... do you really believe that you couldn't have worked this out with him, seriously...

Supervisor Giordano answered that if you and I had a conversation and we agreed, or didn't agree on something and there was no clear motive to go forward and all of a sudden you do something that should have had consultation with him and you know about that, how are you supposed to take that, how would you take it, that is not a mistake.....

Mr. Cawley stated forget about the politics and the bullshit, where is the humanity and the human side of this equation, that is what he is asking, where is that part of you?? When are you going to lead from your heart, he doesn't see you doing that... He sees you towing the company line and talking to lawyers and all this non-sense, he doesn't like it, he told you last year, that as a new business man in Ticonderoga he was disgusted with the conditions of the down town, the sidewalks are a mess we have a lot of problems, but he is not going to sit down and talk about it, he told you in a meeting with the other police chief that he was going to do x, y, z and if you didn't like it you could arrest him, and he did those things and at one point you came out and joined him and he applauded him for doing that, he respected you for getting out from behind your desk and helping, but in this case, we have a police chief that everybody in this community loves and we all agree that he was doing a great job and if you knew that he was going to leave at the end of the month on his own accord it was bull shit to force him and embarrass him, cause him.... the reason he went along with it was because he was afraid he would lose his other job and wouldn't have a future anywhere his career would be over. That is what is wrong, there has to be middle ground and you have to find a way to fix it. You are our elected official, you could sit with Michael, even privately and offer him an apology for the way it was handled and maybe he would offer you an apology, this is non-sense. If we could all get together and coax Michael to be the police chief again, he would hope that you guys would support him and give him that job. He has said enough, but he tells you, he doesn't like the lack of personal connections with the police chief especially one that is this beloved in this community and has done as much in a short amount of time. Mr. Cawley marched out of the room and returned to announce that in 18 months Elvis is coming after him. (applauds)

Mr. Major stated that he has been trying to support this police department for as long as he has lived in Ti permanently - 2002/2003. At one point, he offered the Town space for the police department to move to which was downtown for free for 20 years, the Town couldn't make up it's mind, there was no support. Then along comes Grinnell, heavy handed, tries to move the Police Department into what he thinks is an excellent place and you didn't want it because the cops would be in your neighborhood. Police cars would be in your neighborhood, oh, my god what a terrible thing. Then we finally get a police chief who cared, was doing something about the drunks downtown and the fighting going on, which he couldn't get anyone else to do even after multiple conversations, he would get help for a day or two and that was it, but this guy really worked at it so let me tell you something else about himself, he spent - 30 years in (?) department stores and knows well how personnel issues are handled, if he had fired somebody who had good reviews, who

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

was respected, over one issue, he would have been canned, he would have been out on the street, because his manager would have said to him, well, why aren't counseling this guy, why aren't we training him. He was one of your best employees, how dare you can him Jim Major and that is what he is saying to you, how dare you give him an ultimatum, did you know an ultimatum had been given to him - -- How dare you, so at peak you are pissed off that this guy challenged you, and you just couldn't handle it, you skin is just too thin. My god he created the biggest sin in the world and he is already leaving, and he did a terrible thing which you say he knew he couldn't do, that goes to the state of mind, you don't know what he knows. He can't tell you how disappointed he is, he has been trying to support him and you have been after the police department for year now. It is time to do something, it is time to get them out of that damn building - it is falling down - give them a respectable place to work where they feel like human beings and are treated like human beings, which is something that you haven't done - and he is out of here too.

Mr. Cook stated that you made a comment that the whole reason for this basically is that because of the decision that Mike made, Mike didn't have the authority to make that decision, it was your, the board's authority, the point is when you called him up.... when he made that decision, he wasn't trying to influence anybody, he wasn't trying to do anything like it says here, that they committed a crime - he simply made a mistake, you were right in saying that he doesn't have the authority. The other end of that, is that you did the exact same thing that affected his lively hood, you affected all sorts of things, his work, you could very well have affected his job down there in Warren County - you did the exact same thing in a different manner as what you called him and said resign or I'm firing you. You did the exact same thing, but you can't fathom that, it doesn't seem as though... and everybody that has talked.... you come back with some reason, something this and something that, you did the exact same thing as you said you were going to take and fire him for, then you did it on your own and didn't consult with anybody until after you had already told him that. If you were going to do some thing like that you should have consulted with the board, got a quorum and said listen, this is what case is, ok - we are not happy with your decision, you may face termination. Just like Bob said, instead of you going ahead and doing exactly what you complained about Mike, his decision - just like he said - he could have assigned him to do this work and it could have been basically non of your business except for the political fallout. He can assign anybody to do anything, he can assign 4 people to go out and have a traffic stop, he can assign an individual to do specific investigations, there are a number of high profile investigations right now. The problem is when you have a group of people, especially two new people that are nice guys and are qualified to start - you have people that need guidance, people that have experience behind them to show them how to do that. These two new guys, are they going to be able to go to this new chief, he doesn't know the guy - he spoke to him once and that one time he didn't even acknowledge him. One of the officers introduced him to him and he looked up, shrugged his shoulders didn't say a word. He doesn't care, that isn't the point, the point is these two new guys, will they be able to take and go to the chief and say listen, I have a rape case how do I go about doing this, has he ever handled a rape case, he doesn't know, I have a first degree assault with a weapon, I have a gun complaint and he needs someone to call in backup, does this guy have any experience with that - his understanding is that he worked almost his full career on the road. You as

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

the appointing authority have to understand what is required of these police officers. He has heard it said that you are getting to understand and see how things go and you have disappointments and you have had successes, can you even fathom the amount of information that those two new guys need. Who you put in place, is he going to provide that information. If that is not the case, then that becomes vicarious liability, that is when you do something that you have control over and you take some responsibility. So if something happens now and you have one of these new guys go and do something because they don't know and they go to the new police chief and he doesn't know what is going on and something happens, do you know what it goes back to ... you, personally. There is a lot to think about with the police department and he is not trying to disparage any other department in this town but the police department is the only one that deals with taking peoples rights away from them. That is part of their job. It is the only entity in the country that has that as part of that job. Where do you get more complaints, you get complaints all the time - this officer did this, or this officer did that - you have to have someone smart enough in understanding the law enough to know how to deal with that. Hopefully, you did that.

Mr. Dedrick wanted to mention two things, from this point on there are two issues that you need to take up because everyone is going to leave this meeting - we are going to be hot, you are going to be upset and that doesn't solve anything, but number 1 - he knows there is a Chiefs test in March and he would hope that if Mike LaVallie passes that test he is considered, that is only fair - he has the respect of this Town, he has the respect of this police department and he deserves the right to be one of the people who are interviewed if he is interested in that position, the second thing and he can't believe that it has happened but it is water over the dam, but you don't have a sole police commissioner. You have to have at least three people so that if anything that was unethical at the police department and it came before us police commissioners that you have at least a 2-1 vote. You can't have two people so at least three and at least two of them be outside of this town board, interested citizens. That is fairness. Those are two things that he would really like considered. Thank you.

Mr. Streeter explained that he came here months ago and invested a quarter of a million dollars of his own money in bringing this radio station back. There is the newspaper, all the newspapers, all the media has advocated their responsibility with regard to Ticonderoga and the community - Essex County in particular, there is no news here. When there is no news, stuff happens . Stuff happens and he is not pointing fingers at anybody, that is not the case - he has no idea if you are republican or democrat, he does not care, but he is telling you that he has been watching for 10 months this Town perform and the things that are going on here and he doesn't like what he sees. He genuinely doesn't like what he sees. He thinks Jim spoke to the heart of it, we are human and we have to be human here, in the law enforcement business and you guys that are LEO's can back him up on this, when you fire a guy, his career net -net is affectively over, he goes no where and he goes no where fast to any other department . Nobody is going to be willing to take a chance on a guy that has been fired, particularly from a Chief's job, because you have all kinds of ... you don't know what happened and you may not be able to get police records or personnel files, all you know is that the guy has a black mark next

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

to his name and Mr. LaVallie doesn't deserve that. He doesn't know the man, he has never met him in his whole entire life, all he knows is when he came to Town he asked him for some things and he was very confident in getting them done, he was very efficient in getting them done, he called and talked with you (supervisor) and wanted to meet you and sit down and have a chat with you, not about the bad stuff, he wanted to talk about how we can make this community a better place to live. He is telling you guys, his job is going to be to hold the feet of power to the flame of the people's will. Now you take that however you want to take it, but he is here to do a job, he won't be run off and he won't be put down and he won't be dissuaded. He doesn't care if you are a democrat or a republican, he doesn't care if you are an ant crawling across US Highway 9 North, if you are a problem we are going to be talking about it. The Sheriff is back in Town, that is what we are here for. Now that is not a threat, that is just a reality. He came here to do a good thing and part of doing a good thing is telling the hard stories. Work with us, we will work with you. We will give you anything you need, he was absolutely devastated to be quite honest with you by the fact that he had to find out about a police chief being fired in his town and there isn't even a press release, not so much as a single piece of paper ever issued to the press that he could find and if so where the hell are the newspapers tonight and where is the story on the front page or on page 93 of the newspaper. He sent a copy up to the press republican, they didn't even acknowledge it, they don't give a crap about Ticonderoga, I do. He is here to tell the stories, good bad or indifferent and he will tell you the truth, we bleed blue over at WIPS. By gosh, when you start taking on the police department, he is going to be involved in that story. Thank you.

Kortney Bessett stated that the board accepted her resignation today and originally it was for tomorrow, but she officially gave her resignation today at 2:00 p.m. so she could be here for Mike LaVallie. She wrote a letter that was very heartfelt and sincere to you guys and she asks that it be added to the minutes. (at the end of these minutes) Regardless of whether the process was wrong or right, the first week Mike LaVallie got to that position that department was changed immediately for the better and you will see that in my letter. In the last few days, since all this went down, that department has taken 20 steps back and is absolutely shredded of all the work that we put in. She hopes that you will read her letter and you will think about the decision that was made the other day, because it was a huge mistake.

Mr. Watts asked in the past 6 - 8 months how many officers have been let go and how many have been hired back.

Supervisor Giordano tried to remember - Officer Larmore left in February, Sgt. Hurlburt left in July, we hired three cadets, one was let go in October, and one is on administrative leave....

Mr. Watts asked if some were let go and have since come back...

Supervisor Giordano agreed that Officer Genier was let go and it has since been resolved after going through the due process of the bargaining unit..(after prompting by Mr. Watts he continued)... Officer Ruby was issued a letter and the issue was resolved. There has

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

been a number that Mike and he have been involved with. Sometimes his (Mike's) decision was the one that stuck and sometimes it was his own based on the information, Ruby was one, Cadet Overbeek was another. He knows why you are all here today, he hears what you are saying, he understands what you are saying, he is not immune to the feelings that have taken place. The first thing that came to his mind when he took this job that was told to him was that this is a thankless job and obviously you are here today on behalf of a beloved person in Ti and it was not his intention ever to do what happened. In the last month and a half Mike and he have had some differences of opinion in the direction of the department and in order to be able to take the reins of a department you have to commit to running the department and he has shared with the board his exhausted efforts to try to make it amendable for Mike to be here. None of that came out tonight. Bob called the other night and asked two questions and none of them had to do anything with this, one of them was about the new chief we hired and you asked if it was true Mike was ....(inaudible) there has been very little factual information that has come out on behalf of the Town regarding this incident which is very unfortunate. He is sitting here listening and the thing that really calls to him, was that you put him in office and he is not from here and his background has nothing to do with this, he is still learning a junior if you will on this whole scope of government and we are dealing with an issue that has not been resolved since we had been initially instituted a failure to comply back in the early 90's and he is talking about your water project. That has become the sole source of his time for the most part and dealing with other matters, personnel matter, sewer matters, finance matters - there are a lot of things that have been taking place here and he knows that people like to point the finger and say how dare you, Joe, how dare you, Joe - Jim and Jim stood up. This is a daunting task and it does get very emotional, it gets very exhausting. He spent his entire weekend just trying to get caught, if he even can say get caught up because you never really can get caught up in this position. Every department has some major thing going on and it takes robust facts to move forward. Jeff you served on this board and you know you can't just sit on this board and make decisions willy, nilly, because it is going to impact people. You talk about a police department that has a faulty, dilapidated building and that didn't happen yesterday or the day before, you have a highway shed, that too needs a solution, you have so many issues and we are tackling them and he is putting in all the time that he has - one of the things that Mike said when he came on is that I'll do whatever it takes Joe and you know what, he didn't even know Mike, but his reputation was enough for him to say yes, this is the guy that we want to run this department, so what happened here was unfortunate and he knows that we all see this from two different sides and he will reach out to Mike to have a conversation - he is not inhuman or whatever else has been said, but Mike and he have had differences in how we want to approach handling this department simply because people inside see it one way, people outside see it another way. People all around this town have their own perspective as to the terms of how this department functions and it is a learning lesson, it doesn't happen like this, you have to gather the facts, gather the understanding and figure out what makes sense long term. Non of the things that he has done have been made like this (snaps his fingers) and if people want decisions made like that, then you probably should have hired the guy that was originally here before him because he doesn't work like that. He is very thorough and very meticulous, he makes sure this board is aware of all the facts and information and he relies a lot on people that

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

we have here that have been with the Town for many, many, many years. Our Attorney, our labor relations, our Human Resources, we just brought on a CPA, there are so many different issues that need expert advise to get through, it doesn't happen just because you put someone on this board and all of a sudden they are going to know just what to do. He doesn't expect you all to understand because the old adage says that until you walk a mile in a person's shoe you don't really know what theirs are. Jeff, you talk about the police department and you are absolutely right, they are a unique group of individuals and they have a unique responsibilities and he is trying to learn the best he can of what that need is over there, but they are not the only group in Town that he is responsible for overseeing. He does not know how to articulate it any more that what he just said. There are so many things and he is doing the best that he can and he is bringing people on this board as much as they want to be part of and they do want to be part of it, but to really understand the issue - we have a zoning problem, we brought solar up and then brought in down, then brought it up again and down again, why because we don't even have a foundational zoning code here. That was brought in and slammed down in front of this board that wasn't even an agenda item, we are working on derelict buildings, derelict infrastructure, derelict policy. We have people that are coming to our water and sewer meeting and asking for changing in rates and we need a new policy to be able to address that so that it stands for how we operate our water and sewer. So, your frustration here is well taken, he is not going to sit here and be disparaging against anyone he hears what you are saying, but there is so much more behind the scenes that you just don't see. All he can say is Bob, you are right and everyone that has said something here tonight is right, because communication is really the key here, communication and getting rid of all the toxic, cancerous, caustic conversation that happens out in the world, face book, Ti topics and anything else that turns the page and spins it is such a way that makes it look like this board is just rogue and doing whatever they want to do or that person is out to do anything that he or she wants to do. That is not the case, we are trying to come to consensus and solve problems for the long term. He might not be here next term, who knows, but no one knows what their future is, but as long as I'm here I will do the job the way I have always done my job, he works until it is done. He is not the most punctual person and that is his own fault, but when the job gets started, he sees it through to the end. That is who he is. All he can say is that this is unfortunate and he is sorry that this happened this way and there was a lot of emotion involved on what happened that particular day and there were conversations that had been had between Mike and he and he will reach out to Mike and have a conversation and we will go from there.

Mr. Cook understands exactly what is being said, when he was on the board there were a million different things going on and you can't accomplish everything. There are things going on that you are dealing with right now that was happening when he was on the board and 10 years ago when he was on the police department, the exact same things are still being discusses. That is how difficult it is, he understands, but your first comment that you said when you first came here and got on this board, you are learning and that is excellent and it is good that you want to learn and not just dictate but the point being in this specific instance that we are taking about - okay, it was like you went completely away from that. Your accepting that Mike,,, had you simply counseled him as an administrator would counsel a person...

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Supervisor Giordano asked how do you know that this didn't happen before hand, how do you know that, that is my question to you. You keep ... there are two and actually more than two sides to this, so how do you know that this did not happen before. How do you know that there weren't discussions about this. There was no counseling to this thing but there was a lot of discussion,,

Mr. Watts asked if Mike was told outright not to make this appointment.

Supervisor Giordano stated yes, he didn't agree with how we were moving forward with that.

Someone asked if it was flat out stated.

Supervisor Giordano stated that he did not issue anything, but he did also not expect Mike to go forth with a memo, that is not how this..... (interrupted)

Mr. Hurlburt asked then how did you make this appointment after he was forced to resign, there is still an appointment there - there is still an MOA in place, you did exactly what LaVallie was going to do but now without him....

Supervisor Giordano stated that there is no MOA in place, we left it as is because the schedule was set...

Mr. Hurlburt stated that we are still doing the exact same thing that LaVallie intended to do, but just didn't go about it correctly procedurally... we are still doing the same thing, exactly what he envisioned to do just without him leading the department.

Someone stated that basically the terminology thing is the issue, he was investigator instead of just an officer there doing investigations..

Supervisor Giordano answered that this is part of it.

Someone then said so we get someone fired because he misnamed someone's position, that is no right.

Mr. Cook stated that this comes down to Symantec's, he can assign anybody whatever he chooses to do under his authority, he cannot appoint. That is the bottom line, the only thing that needs to be discussed and what we are here for. The bottom line is he was called and said either resign or I'm firing you for the simple fact that he didn't assign someone to something, he appointed someone which he didn't have the authority. Instead, all of this is emotion, just like said but the bottom line is and especially knowing that someone is assigned to it now, that is insane, but the bottom line is it is unconscionable that what happened - that phone call is unconscionable. The problem is that you are not understanding or not seeming to take responsibility. That is what our concern is, there is legal ways - you are saying that he didn't do something legally, you're right, so deal with it as an administrator and then let him run his department. You are



**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

saying you are inundated, which he knows you are. You all on this board are inundated, people have no concept how busy this town is and trying to solve the issues that are going on in this town. The Town has gone downhill so badly that you are trying to dig yourself out of a never ending pit, with a thousand different things, but the point being is what you could have done was counseled him and let him go until the end of this thing until the 25th when he said he was resigning. In Dave's behalf, he was hoping that he would stay on and help whoever came in regardless who it is, that would have been an ideal thing. If you were in his shoes and you made a mistake and your boss called you up and said you need to resign or I'm firing you, do you think you would stay around and help someone else? Mike has the integrity that he probably would anyways.

Dakota O'lcott has a couple of things - the first is that Chief Mawn is from Brandt Lake, so why wasn't a supervisor or someone with supervisor experience from a different department since Chief Mawn was brand new be promoted such as Sgt. Quesnel or Ritch Waldron or so forth - the second, this is all grand that we are talking about this but what are you going to do as supervisor to resolve the Mike LaVallie issue when we leave here. This is all in this discussion.

Supervisor Giordano explained that Mike Mawn approached us as to having interest in that position and to the second question, he will reach out to Mike LaVallie and have a conversation with him.

Someone stated? He came to you and said 'hey I want to be Chief'?

Supervisor Giordano stated that when Chief Johns went on administrative leave a conversation was had with him.

Mr. Cook stated that you said he came to you after Mark Johns was let go. That was in June??

Supervisor Giordano stated yes, conversations actually came up with Mark Johns for a succession plan, who would he look to for to cover that position and the thought was talked about looking outside the department, so when someone approached us having 26 years of experience with the State Police plus other special assignments and serving in various capacities....(inaudible)

The question was asked if he had sufficient experience? Answer was Yes.

(inaudible)

Mr. Cook stated that civil service requires two years of supervisory experience - there may be wiggle room when the politics are involved.

Supervisor Giordano stated that there were no politics involved. His application was sent up there and given all of what he has done in his 26 years of experience he met the minimum qualifications...

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Cook stated that you said he came to you when this was going on with Mark

Supervisor Giordano stated that he has been coming to him since November and the discussion of Mike not staying on. We were looking..

Mr. Cook understands and that is a logical thing, but his question is - you just said he came to you when this started going on with Mark, which was the end of June...

Supervisor Giordano apologizes it was not then, he came to him when we found out that Mike would not be staying and that he might be someone that could fill that particular void; however, back in June, he was a retired state trooper and the thought was here was someone that was retired and we had numerous conversations with other agencies outside of our town, who do you get for chief, and prior retired police officers in whatever capacity they work in whether it be Ritch Waldron with the BCI or... those are options for us to consider for the police chief position.

Mr. Cook stated that Ritch Waldron is a nice guy and he was an excellent trooper and an excellent BCI investigator but he is not qualified to be the chief. What he is getting to, you talked to Mike Mawn sometime in June - he wasn't even hired until June 22nd.

Supervisor Giordano stated that he just had a general conversation with him out in the hall the first time he met him because he was thinking about looking for someone. It was not like it was a detailed conversation, it was a very general conversation.

Mr. Cook stated - again, as a Town we have been down this road before, okay - nothing against this guy, he doesn't know him, but he wouldn't speak to him when he did see him, we went down this road before where we had an individual who was hired as Chief from a two man department. He has nothing against guys, he worked with both on the PD and afterwards, but he was not qualified to be a police chief. The town would have huge detriment because of that, and it lasted for years. The department within the law enforcement community was down graded hugely during that time. Not to blow his own horn, but the department came back immensely while he was there. When he left, he doesn't have any information on it, whatever happened has happened. He knows there was an issue just like everybody else does in this town, but when Mike went there, he brought back a lot of moral. Over the years, we have lost more people from this Town police department that you can even imagine. Every single one of them that he knows of that have left this department, have not been a benefit to the Town as we put money into them, have succeeded and some of them have succeeded greatly. One individual that was a political appointment that he insisted that we not hire, that individual came on the police department for a short period of time because of politics and that individual ended up getting arrested for felonies when he went to Vermont's police department. Everyone else that he knows of has excelled coming from this police department. The only people that don't get this are the people here, why would people keep on leaving Ticonderoga? That hasn't been addressed in 25 years.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Supervisor Giordano stated that you have been on this board.

Mr. Cook stated that he tried to address and he didn't get that opportunity because it wasn't allowed. The point being is that we need to try, as a board - you, we need to try to address having people leave here. You have two new guys, hopefully they do well. He thinks they are very good qualified guys, they are very ethical, hopefully they will not want to be here in five years, because they see how things are. The point being, just like someone else mentioned, Mike made a mistake and you made a mistake doing what you did. The same exact mistake that you held him accountable to, you made that same mistake and you still have not acknowledged that. That is all the people in this room is looking for, you made a mistake. You didn't go in front of the board, you are only one person - it takes three people on the board to make a decision to hire or fire him. You had zero authority to call him and say resign or you fired. He knows it is difficult, he knows it is, he has been on the board, he has been on the police department and dealt with many things that were very frustrating, he fired his nephew, that is one of the few things. The whole point is, people just want you to own what he did. Mike can own what he did was wrong, is that to the degree that he should have been fired? Especially on the circumstances that he had already given and had an accepted letter of resignation. That is all it is, accept the responsibility of what you did, that is all that everybody is here for. Go on from it, it is not the end of the world. Just accept the responsibility of what you did, you want to hold Mike accountable to it, you need to accept this responsibility.

Supervisor Giordano stated that there are two people in this conversation and he will reach out and have a conversation with Mike and will share that with the public.

Mr. O'lcott has another question, was Chief Mawn given a police cruiser to go back and forth from home to here. (Yes) Why, when that hasn't been done for any other Chief.

Supervisor Giordano stated that the Sgt. currently brings a vehicle, it was something that was asked and allowed.

Mr. Porter asked if this was a board decision.

The board stated that it was the Supervisor's decision.

Mr. O'lcott stated that there were no plates on the car.

Mr. Cook stated that it doesn't need plates.

Mr. Watts wanted to state a personal opinion, he does not know Mr. Mawn from anyone, but the dealings that he has had with him, he does not think that he is a very community oriented person, he doesn't think that he cares about Ticonderoga the way that Mike and the other officers do. He thinks that you had a couple of other people that were probably capable of filling that position within one being Dale Quesnel. Was it offered to him? The dealings that he has had with Mr. Mawn, for instance on the dispatch radio he was asked if he was the only patrol on today and his comment over the radio was what was

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

your first clue - that was not very professional. He was witness to a time when someone came up to him and give a complaint on someone who was depressed seeking medical attention who spoke to the state police and they told him to go to the local police for them to call us and we will deal with it. He refused to, he said the person is doing the right thing, let them be instead of calling the state police. Then that person got upset and left and his comment to that person was well you can leave all jacked up, that is the way to get you jammed up. That is not, to him that is not the person that he would want representing the police department as the chief of police. He thinks that you should have looked a little further into it and done a little better homework.

Courtney Brown (?) wanted to mention that a lot of us here are public servants, fire, ambulance and what not, we rely on the police department heavily to come and assist us with codes, accidents, working together with together. Not once have she seen the new chief come and assist fire or EMS and everybody else that is here and community minded, they don't need to be called to come, they'll come, they will help. He doesn't. That is huge.

Mr. O'lcott asked how long is he chief for?

Supervisor Giordano stated that he is interim until the Chief exam - March.

Mr. Cook asked if there is a contract.

Supervisor Giordano stated no. No contract right now. He is retired and can't make more than \$30,000.00....

Mr. Cook stated that he would need a waiver.

Mr. Porter asked what the waiver would say, that there is nobody qualified?

Mr. Cook stated that there would have to be an instance of dire need and nobody else is immediately qualified.

Adam Hurlburt was named as being qualified and was asked by Mr. Cook why he left. Mr. Hurlburt did not want to get into that.

Mr. Cook stated in essence it was because you knew that you were going to make out better down the road.

Mr. Hurlburt stated that it was nothing to do with the work or the community.

Mr. Cook stated that we had an instance where we hired a young man from the community, he went to the police academy worked as a police officer, he had an opportunity and had taken the state police test a year or two before he was hired, coincidentally the day he graduated from the police the following day he was chosen to go to the state police academy. The town board was absolutely livid, one town board

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

member specifically was literally jumping up and down hollering how he was a waste to the community, this same town board member would have done the exact same thing to benefit him and his family, but because it was somebody else it was completely different. Those kinds of things have gone on for years, that is the mentality ... when you deal with this you need to get somebody in there and make the point, if they can't do something tell them. Don't throw them away again, the department has gone up and down, up and down. You want to have something in this community, you want to keep things in this community, you things to come in to the community, they are not going to come in to it if they see people walking up and down the street doing drugs. Like communities in the county. Put an individual in there that is qualified, put an individual in there that has some concerns for the community and leave them alone. Stop micromanaging.

Mr. Streeter asked if Mr. LaVallie will be paid from the 31st of January to the 26th of February.

Supervisor Giordano stated no, he resigned.

(Inaudible)

Mr. Cook stated that it is a Class A misdemeanor to demand that, read the law - 135, 60 subdivision 8 - you might want to look it up.

Mr. Streeter thinks the man should be paid, at the very least.

Mr. Watts stated that he wouldn't have resigned if you hadn't asked him to and demanded he did.

Supervisor Giordano stated that it is unfortunate and he will talk to Mike.

Kara Blanchard stated that you still haven't admitted that you are wrong, you can talk with him all day long, but that doesn't change anything. She witnessed the conversations, both conversations that you had with him and he was not heated and she thinks anyone in this room that knows Mike will say that it takes a lot to get him heated, a lot. You were the only that was heated, you terminated him and then you called him back and said I want your resignation or you're terminated. Are you going to admit that you are wrong?

Supervisor Giordano stated that he is going to talk with Mike.

Mrs. Blanchard asked what does it matter if you talk to Mike, he is not going to defend you. He is embarrassed. He can't even go to Wal-Mart because he doesn't want to see anybody and talk to anybody. He grew up in this town and you didn't. Admit that you are wrong, that is all the people want.

Mr. O'lcott agrees, that is all we want. You made a mistake and admit it.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Hurlburt stated that additionally, Mr. LaVallie did plan on leaving on the 25th of February so he hopes that you guys have contacted civil service to make sure that the newly appoint chief is in fact all qualified to take the job because that would be another huge black eye, if he takes the test, passes it and gets revoked by the state because he doesn't have the sufficient supervisory experience. He has nothing against the guy, he has talked to him a few time and got along with him. Cross your t's dot your i's, make sure he has got two years as a sergeant or something equivalent and not just being the most senior guys at a sub station on a throughway.

Mr. Porter doesn't believe it makes sense, if he is applying for a waiver usually it is because nobody else is qualified. If somebody else is qualified...

Mr. Cook stated that we had a retired BCI investigator, Benny Snow, that had phenomenal - he had never seen anybody that had better skills, he could hand write a six page search warrant and it looked like somebody did it in calligraphy. He was beyond a doubt the best thing that happened to the Town of Ticonderoga Police Department in progressing it from a small town police department to be competitive as far as handling whatever needed to be handled within that department. He had phenomenal skills, but he had some personal things. The point being, he lost his job because he didn't have supervisory skills, he was in the position for 3 or 4 years and raised the level of competence tenfold, but he lost his job because he didn't have supervisory experience and it went to court. Again, he just can't fathom why we would put all our eggs in one basket, if the town wants to have a viable department, something that is going to be long term, long lasting and be a quality service to this community.... why doesn't somebody go out and look for people, why wouldn't we put something in the paper looking for an experienced chief, looking for somebody that is community oriented. He thinks it should be someone from here.

Councilman Woods explained that we were hoping that Mike would stay.

Mrs. Thompson stated that we did advertise for a chief and we got no applicants.

Mr. Hurlburt stated that he can't speak for Mr. LaVallie, but he knows that he loves this town and believes that he probably really would consider staying if he was allowed to do his job. He thinks that you put the best person in place and just let him go. Don't try to control his every move, you may have to reign him in every once in a while, but put him there. You can see the greatness that he has done in the last six months, he saw it, he put his name in for part-time, he would have never done that if the place was still in shambles the way it was when he left. It made mass improvements, but moral is probably rocked again and it will take a little time to build that back up. If you want any of them to be successful, pick the best candidate and let them do their job and that will free you up to do all those other things that you are talking about - the water, you have to trust your employees.

Mr. Watts stated if they make a mistake counsel them, don't fire them.

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Hurlburt stated yes, you keep an eye on them, but you can't be involved in every decision they make. You have to trust them to make the right decisions, you have to vet these people out until you know you have a decent person in there and let them do their job.

Mr. Cook added or find somebody that you can put that trust in and let them do their job. Just like you said, every department here has issues, absolutely and a lot of issues is with infrastructures especially, the biggest issue with the police department right now comes from the Town Board. As far as operations, they don't know from one day to the next they don't know what to do at this point. His understanding is that there was a memo put out that if they can't get a hold of the current Chief, they are to contact the Police Commissioner.

Supervisor Giordano stated no, first the sergeant and then the police commissioner.

Mr. Cook stated that this is ludicrous to think that someone that has zero knowledge of the law, zero knowledge of how the police agency works, why wouldn't they contact the senior person. Again as far as vicarious liability, you have no concept of the personal legal liability that you are taking on and even to put something out like that. What are you going to tell somebody if there is a felony assault and the Chief or the Sergeant aren't around? He hopes you tell him nothing because anything you tell them won't be right. That is what he is trying to explain to you, it is not the point.... people have to understand what that is. It has been that way for as long as he has ever had anything to do with a police station and probably long before that. The better the moral is, everybody works together. When he was there, he can remember a violent domestic assault right up the road here, people knew what was going on - we had one man on unfortunately, we didn't have the man power that we have now, we had one guy on and went to a domestic violence and the guy had beat the crap out of his girlfriend, he took his expandable baton out and hit this guy and the guy laughed at him, in about three minutes there were five police officers there because we cared, because we didn't wait for someone to give us a call and have that officer end up in the hospital and see how badly he was beaten. That is the kind of comradery we need. That is the kind of cohesiveness that you need in this department and that is what Mike had brought here. Hopefully, you can get whatever it is to get that back.

Mr. O'lcott asked if you guys are going to do anything to Joe since he didn't follow protocol to terminate Mike.

Councilwoman Crammond stated that we don't have any authority to do anything to Joe.

Mr. Watts asked what is the reasoning for the Chief to have a car to take back and forth to home.

Supervisor Giordano stated to respond, right now there is only one officer currently on. We are talking about having two officers .....(inaudible)

**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
commencing at 4:30 p.m. to offer employment for Activity Attendants  
and any other Lawful Business that may arise**

Mr. Watts stated that he is expected to respond from Brandt Lake.

Mrs. Blanchard stated that no previous chief has ever gotten a vehicle to respond from home. She can't tell you how many times Mike got called in the middle of the night..

Mr. Watts stated that this is a waste of our tax money, he is not going to respond from Brandt Lake and if he is that officer is screwed.

Mr. Hurlburt stated regardless of who gets appointed the position or who passes the test, from whatever you take out of this discussion we've had. Pick the best candidate and give him some lead way to run the department without have to worry about the nit picking. Let them do their job.

Supervisor Giordano wants to be fair, he doesn't mind taking the criticism but there was not that much micromanaging to Mike, again unless you walk in the shoes you don't know. This one particular issue was one that we talked about, but there were other ones that he... when there was an issue over at the bar and he needed to pull the license that wasn't him, Mike just took care of it - that hasn't happened in the past, when he came on there was the whole PBA fiasco and that was an internal issue that then came out external, but it is those things... all the errors of the town board, he doesn't see it that way. Everyone needs to take responsibility, the officers, the two different platoons and well they worked together.... he doesn't want to delay this any longer. He is sorry that this has come to this, it is unfortunate that this has come to this, this was an emotional thing dealing with other things that particular day and then seeing this posted after repeated conversations and not having any agreement between the Chief and himself as to moving that forward and also not bringing the Town board into it so as to that aspect the haste if you will of bringing this to a head on that day, it is unfortunate and he apologizes for that, but to take the full 100% burden of this, it takes two people. Mike is a competent person, he knows the rules and the laws and to see that it just floored him. So again he apologizes for how things came out and he will reach out to Mike to have a conversation ....

Mr. Hurlburt stated that the damage is done, and he appreciates reaching out and amending what you can, but if he was in his shoes and he passed that test, he would think triple times hard to come back and work here again after he was just thrown on the street. Possibly you just lost the best candidate you ever had, you will never get him back because of that decision. It is unfortunate that this happened and if he was in his shoes he wouldn't ever consider it. Mike is a different man and has more integrity than he will ever have, if is unfortunate.

Jim Bergeron asked if there is a plan to put two more commissioners on?

Supervisor Giordano stated sure we can discuss it.

Mr. O'lcott agrees this would bring better structure.



**Minutes for a Special Ticonderoga Town Board Meeting held on February 5, 2018  
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Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tonya M. Thompson, Town Clerk

February 4, 2018

Dear Joseph Girodano and Town Board,

As you have received my resignation today for my position as Records Clerk for the Ticonderoga Police Department I would like to share my final thoughts with the board since I was not asked to do an exit interview. I have worked for the Ticonderoga Police Department for four years and I have put a lot of time, effort and passion into my position so I kindly request that each of you take the time to read my letter with an open mind.

When I began this position the expectations were very different. I worked alongside these men and women to understand their life as police officers which is something that most cannot comprehend. Through the past four years I have poured my heart and soul into this position spending a lot of time building good PR for the department along with many other positive changes. Due to circumstances, my husband and I have decided to relocate our family and I am now giving up a job that I truly love and in my eyes will be irreplaceable.

I have witnessed a lot of changes occur to the this department over the last 8 months starting with the removal of Mark Johns and now ending with the removal of Mike LaVallie not to discredit all that occurred in between. As you can imagine our department went through many ups and downs while being faced with all these obstacles that the Town Board was throwing our way. We dug deep and overcame struggles one day at a time.

I commend you for bringing Mike LaVallie in as Interim Chief of Police. Within the first week the department was no longer struggling with all the changes that were occurring but we were moving forward as a team. Morale was higher than I had ever seen it, officers were motivated and excited about where our department was going in the future. He was unlike any leader I have ever worked for. He listened to our concerns, our ideas and our opinions. He showed respect and in turn was given respect. He supported each of us and never let personal feelings cloud his judgment. My position as the Records Clerk always required a strong working relationship with whomever the Chief of Police was. I was for a lack of better words their "right-hand man" often being privy to information about the department before it was released.

I have been disheartened by the events and decisions that I have witnessed over the last few weeks. As an employee and a tax payer of this town I expect that the decisions made by the Town Board be at the Best interest of our department and town not based on personal judgments or grudges.

Unfortunately I am aware that you as town board members are often not given the most accurate information regarding decisions that you must make by our Town Supervisor. I encourage you going forward to research information, ask questions and be an active part in the process.

For example there were numerous conversations about the Investigators position and when it was to begin between Chief LaVallie and the Town Supervisor. I know this to be a fact because when these conversations were held Chief LaVallie and I would discuss and prepare to execute a plan for this position. If you reference the 2018 Budget for the Ticonderoga Police Department you will see the monetary allotment for this position in which you as town board members had to agree and vote on for that to be passed. Tuesday January 23 I participated in interviews for the new Records Clerk position. During one of the interviews I informed the candidate that many changes were occurring with the Ticonderoga Police Department "especially with the new position starting on Monday" (which would have been January 29, 2018) I continued to inform the candidate that she would need to work alongside with that officer to assist with things such as paperwork or any other request that he might deal with investigations. I reference this event because Supervisor Girodano was in this interview as we spoke about the new position.

I am not here to determine whether Chief LaVallie followed proper procedures when appointing Patrolman Belden to that position, that is the responsibility of the Town Board but I am here to make it known that the perception that you are portraying to the community that Chief LaVallie acted solely in regards to the addition of an Investigators position is false and in my opinion terminating his employment based on that event was unethical and downright unnecessary. This was a man who stepped up in a time of need and sacrificed much of his life to assist his community and our department; only to turn around and be treated with such disrespect. We are all humans and make mistakes and if it is fact that Chief LaVallie did not follow proper procedures in this event it could have easily been remedied without a forced resignation.

I am discouraged by the lack of support that I have watched the Town Supervisor offer this department as he continues to micromanage every decision that is made by these men and women who he has hired to do a job. These men and women face an unimaginable amounts of criticism and disrespect on a daily basis with some of the individuals that they come into contact with. They walk through this door and work a shift where their lives are at danger at all times, they go through experiences that most of us never want to think about. The last thing these officers need is to have a lack of support coming from their town officials so I urge you make the effort to learn more about our Police Department and the men and women who serve for you.

Lastly, I would like to address the hiring of my position as Records Clerk. As I will not go into specific details to protect the parties involved, I am disgusted that sincere recommendations were made during a meeting with the hiring committee and all the information was not relayed to the Town Board in full honesty. I know this job like the back of my hand, better than anyone in the department or on the Town Board and I have always put the best interest of the Police Department as my first priority. I have been informed of all the reasons why the decisions were made the way they were but I believe once again due to direct knowledge that the decision made by the Town Supervisor to persuade you as Town Board members to vote in a different direction was driven by personal judgements and grudges and not in the best interest of the town.

This letter was not written to disrespect the Town Board in any manner. This letter was written from the heart and in full sincerity. I love this job and I love these men and women! I can only hope that you read through my thoughts and when making decisions for the town in the future... make sure that all aspects are thought through. When your decision is made make sure you can stand behind that decision 100% and say in full honesty this was the very best decision for this town.

Thank you for your time!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Kortney Bessett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K".

Kortney Bessett