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Time to unlock the front door to Gilmanton's town offices

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To The Daily Sun,

On February 23, Gilmanton's Town Offices went into a state of lockdown. Meaning, in the middle of business that day, the doors to Gilmanton's Town Hall were locked. At the time, the unofficial word was that an employee at Town Hall had been threatened. When questioned, this belief was neither confirmed nor denied by any member of the board or town government. This silence, then, simply enforced the idea that someone had indeed been threatened. In fact, from that point on, traditional access using the front door was barred, and residents were forced to access through a locked and monitored back entrance, which held a posted notice claiming that this was necessary for the "safety of our employees" — which further reinforced the idea that a threat had indeed been made, and that town employees were in some form of imminent danger. However ...

After being questioned multiple times at the March 1 and 5 Gilmanton selectmen's meetings, the Board (BOS), although evasively sidestepping the issue, were forced, nonetheless, to concede that local law enforcement was never notified, which is a strict protocol: that all threats be reported to local authorities. It soon became clear that there had been no threats. None whatsoever. In fact, the BOS, pressed to explain their actions, issued a press release — of sorts — which finally put the issue to rest: no threats had been made. The doors, however, remain locked.



So how much longer will Gilmanton's board play out their little melodramatic soap-opera? Hard to say. When newly-elected Selectman Michael Wilson publicly addressed the issue, which he clearly doesn't agree with (March 26 selectmen's minutes page 2 - line 73), Chairman McWhinnie interrupted, saying, "Please be quiet" (Line 74), to which Selectman Wilson replied, "I have a right to talk" (Line 75). Mr. McWhinnie did not agree, and said "No, you do not have the right to talk" (Line 76). Now, that's a class act for you! 374 voters elect Mr. Wilson so that finally a voice of reason can be heard on the board, and Mr. McWhinnie, more in the style of a dictator than any chairman I've ever seen, tells him to shut up. And that pretty much sums it up ...

The fact is that the only thing being threatened at Gilmanton's Town Hall is an agenda. An agenda to control, manipulate and censor. An agenda not driven by a true governing spirit but by egos so misguided that they have lost the ability to see beyond the ends of their noses. Bad enough Gilmanton had to suffer through the embarrassment of the ACLU debacle and countless other unsavory events — now this.

At the March 26 meeting, Selectman Wilson proposed that Selectmen Bishop and McWhinnie give the town back its Town Hall front entrance (lines 327-329). The answer was no! I would say, however, that there are at least 374 taxpayer/voters who agree with Selectman Wilson. I'm one of them. It's time to end this charade — insert the key, turn it ... and unlock that door!

Al Blake

Gilmanton