

January 25, 2021

The undersigned people of Rockport have filed a lawsuit in the Essex County Superior Court seeking the Court's intervention in Rockport, as the numerous demands made to the Board of Selectmen, to support the volunteer Rockport Fire Department and reinstate James Doyle as Fire Chief, have gone unanswered.

The Rockport Fire Department is the heartbeat of our community. Its selfless volunteers perform their jobs as true professionals for close to nothing simply because they want to keep our neighbors safe. It plays a central role in our Town's history and traditions, including our beloved 4th of July Parade and bonfire. But most importantly, this kind of selfless service is what makes our town so great and our feeling of community so unique.

Jimmy Doyle has been a big part of this history. He has served as a Volunteer Fireman for nearly 50 years, an appointed member of the Board of Engineers for 20 years, its Fire Chief for over 10 years, and Rockport's part-time Fire Inspector for over 20 years. We have separately all known Jimmy for decades, as he has been a pillar of this community for nearly fifty-years, not only in this role but as a successful local business owner for over 35 years who has given back to our community in countless ways – from coaching our kids in youth sports to serving as a member of the Friends of Rockport Athletics to even donating his excavation equipment to make Evans Field the beautiful baseball diamond it is today. If you drive through five-corners once a day, chances are you will see Jimmy driving by with a wave and a smile.

Unfortunately, the future of the Rockport Fire Department has been put in uncertain waters for the past two months. In early November, members of the Rockport Fire Department sent a letter to Rockport's Board of Selectmen, which demanded the removal of Assistant Police Chief/Emergency Services Director Mark Schmink from his unlawful takeover of the RFD's command structure and the return of the RFD to the lawful command of Jimmy Doyle. The firefighters' demands went unanswered; instead, the Selectmen delegated the problem to Town Administrator Mitch Vieira. The following day, Town Administrator Vieira placed Chief Doyle on administrative leave.

Rockport's Town Meeting is our gatekeeper, not a Town Administrator whose powers come from a contract negotiated behind closed doors, which include authorities the Town Meeting never approved. Since then, in only 18-months, the Town Administrator was assigned a badge and an unmarked police car, the Asst. Police Chief replaced the Board of Engineers and took over command of the Fire Department, the Police Chief's wife was hired as an attorney to investigate various firefighters (including Chief Doyle), the Police Chief's wife was appointed to the Town Government and Bylaw Committee to rewrite the Town's Bylaws, and that these same officials used taxpayer funds to purchase an email encryption software to communicate with. The Selectmen are accountable for the actions that have brought us to this point, and they can fix it.

We come from various walks of life: two of us are former members of the Rockport Board of Selectmen, former and current appointed members of various Town boards, a retired accountant, a retired public school administrator, and owners of various successful and longstanding local businesses. We love Rockport and cannot sit idle as our Town government violates, not only common decency, but the law.

Glen MacLeod William Brundage Armand "Dan" Aparo Craig Morrill William Tobin

Janelle Favaloro Patrick Keating Brock Hale Currier Kathy Milbury Barbara Stavropoulos