

4 January 2024

To the Town of Danville,

It is with deep regret that I must step down as town moderator. It is clear that the Board of Selectmen, and especially Mr. Shawn O'Neil, has no interest in working with me, and I will not be responsible for fostering a division in town functions. Elections are too important.

At the meeting of 20 December 2023, Mr. O'Neil introduced a warrant article to ask the town if it will have a hand-count of the presidential election. As he did that, he misrepresented the situation in Danville, relied on fear-mongering to support his case, and claimed experience that, for recent elections, he does not have. When he was challenged, he threatened to rally people to hand-write their votes, forcing a hand count. He also said, when asked if he spoke with me, "I don't need to," and got increasingly frustrated by the idea that he would speak with the person who oversees the elections, and who might have some professional, specialized information and a valid opinion that might contradict his own.

At that same meeting, Mr. Griffiths peddled groundless fears, largely based in ignorance of how the voting technology works, and he acknowledged that we might still be counting at 6 AM Wednesday morning. I cannot agree to those terms.

In addition to this board's dismissiveness, Mr. O'Neil has repeatedly and emphatically made it clear that he does not take his election duties as supervisor seriously. At the first election I oversaw (state primary, 13 September 2022), he voted, introduced himself to me, and left. He did not return to count ballots at the end of the night or send a representative to participate, as he is required to do as a selectman. For the second election I oversaw (general election, 8 November 2022), Mr. O'Neil sent in an absentee ballot, as is right and proper, but again did not send a representative to fulfil his duties as selectman. For the record, here are the statutes that require selectmen to be present:

- The New Hampshire Constitution, Part 2, Article 32 says the selectmen shall be present for the tallying and announcement of the votes cast;
- RSA 659:60 says the moderator oversees counting of votes by elections officers, "including the selectmen";
- RSA 659:95 says the boxes used to store all ballots shall be sealed and certified "in the presence of the selectmen or their designee";
- RSA 659:98 notes the selectmen, or their designees, are responsible for signing the sealed boxes containing all ballots, cast & unused.

I sent this list to the Board of Selectmen prior to the third election (town election, 3 March 2023), with a note that I only required their presence for the count, and would like them to arrive around 7 PM, so they could be sworn in before the polls closed at 8 PM.

Prior to the third election, both Mr. O'Neil and Mr. Griffiths publically argued against my right to free speech and that of those registered voters that live at the same location I do. Mr. O'Neil tried to get me to promise to break the law in that same forum. During the election itself, Mr. O'Neil was present for much of the afternoon, but acted solely as a private citizen. After he voted, he observed from the side of the polling place instead of actively helping out. At the end of the night, he objected to taking the oath of office, then finally took it looking directly at me, with his back to the American flag. During the hand-count of ballots, he tried to bully and shame me, and was offended when I asked him to return to his counting duties.

As noted above, at the meeting on 20 December, Mr. O'Neil offered a warrant article. When asked if he spoke with me, he said "I don't need to." That is legal fact. However, it is also fact that he simply did not reach out in any way. He did not show any courtesy to the town moderator. That was the final straw.

In my time as moderator, I have had overwhelmingly negative interactions with Mr. O'Neil and very mixed interactions with Mr. Griffiths. I have had good interactions with Ms. Johannesen. While I have had no official interactions with Ms. Inman or Mr. Hester, I have had mixed experiences with their predecessors. The 4-1 vote in favor of a hand-count for the presidential election suggests that the majority of this board does not, in fact, care about my training or my experience. Had either mattered, further discussion of and voting on the article could have been tabled for a later meeting, to which I would have been invited to speak, and the board could have gathered facts, not fears, to inform their decisions.

Because the board did not wish to include me in their discussion of a hand-count, and the board members have individually shown disdain, contempt, and arrogance, I feel it is best to step down before the next event, the 2024 Primary Election on 23 January. Because I care about the town and sound elections, I will work with the supervisors of the checklist and town clerk as requested to help with a smooth transfer of duties.

I apologize again to the townspeople of Danville; it was an honor and pleasure to serve as the town moderator, but the 2024 election cycle is too important. I wish for the board and the moderator to have a relationship built on respect, and I know now that I do not have that. Therefore, I am not able to do the job the town has elected me to do, and I hereby resign my position.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Chandler  
4 January 2024

*NB: Signed original delivered to Christine Tracy, Town Clerk.*

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