

The Enterprise

A GateHouse Media Company newspaper

CHAZY DOWALIBY
Editor

STEPHEN C. DAMISH
Managing Editor

MARILYN HANCOCK
City Editor

GARY FINKELSTEIN
Opinion Page Editor

RICHARD DANIELS
Publisher

EDITORIAL

OUR VIEW

BEHIND STOUGHTON'S CLOSED DOORS

Francis Crimmins may turn out to be the best town manager in Stoughton's history. But if he doesn't, there will be repercussions that will come to roost in the Board of Selectmen's office, which pushed through Crimmins appointment with almost no public input.

Crimmins wasn't an overwhelming choice. The vote was 3-2 and dissenting selectmen complained about the hiring process as well as the salary, which was set at an astonishing \$158,000 – \$38,000 more than Crimmins' predecessor received and nearly \$30,000 more than the average salary for a judge in Massachusetts.

Crimmins is giving up his seat as presiding justice at Stoughton District Court to become town manager. Selectman Joseph Mokrisky said Crimmins "will have the unprecedented ability to bring people together."

He will need it. Stoughton has been a wreck over the last six or seven years as corruption and endless dissension in the Police Department has give Stoughton a black eye and embarrassed residents.

Selectmen had a chance to do something right – hire a new town manager in an open, honest process that would restore confidence in the town's top leaders. But that didn't happen. Crimmins isn't necessarily unqualified for the position – he is a former Stoughton selectman and town moderator – but selectmen decided not to advertise for the town manager's position and to not have public interviews. Residents complained, to no avail.

"We did something different, not illegal," Mokrisky said.

True enough. But we don't think Stoughton residents wanted "something different." They wanted a transparent hiring process and a town manager who begins his tenure above reproach. Selectmen didn't do Crimmins any favors by hiring him behind closed doors and giving him an over-the-top salary.