

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – March 16, 2022 -- 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

The Town of Montville has lifted the mask mandate effective Monday, February 28, 2022, throughout Town facilities in coordination with our schools. Although the mask mandate has been lifted, Uncas Health strongly recommends that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, continue to wear masks indoors.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comments by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

1. Call to order.

Chairperson Southard called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Noah Carver, Matt Beaupre, Jon Chase, Morgan Matthewson, Deborah Schober, Rocky Stone, and Kate Southard. Absent were Commissioners Kevin Clang and Denise Gladue. A quorum was present.

4. Adjustments to the Agenda. -- *None*

5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit).

Chairperson Southard asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve.

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2022. Discussion: Commissioner Stone noted a spelling correction under Item 7, "*ARPA*" not "*ARCA.*" Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Recreation Director's Report for March 2022.

Director Bushway expanded on his final bullet, the American Red Cross. He reported receiving a contract from them today for the babysitting class. It would require eight (8) attendees with a plan to begin the class in late April/early May at a cost of \$100. The attendees will be encouraged to sign up for Hire-A-Teen to be listed as a babysitter through the Youth Services Bureau. Commissioner Stone inquired about the cost for design of the disc golf course.

8. Report from Finance.

Director Bushway reported there are no surprises in the Finance Report. The basketball schedule is near completion so there is the possibility for transfer of funds from the program to other line items.

9. April Newsletter

Director Bushway reported there have been only three (3) applicants for summer camp jobs. Nine (9) are needed and the search will continue on social media. Returning staff have applied and he is waiting on one (1). Per a question by Commissioner Stone concerning the Farmers Market, Director Bushway commented on his discussion with Chairman Southard about its promotion. Initially, events only will be listed in the newsletter, but eventually the plan is to have a separate page for the Farmers Market to include special dates, pictures, and an announcement of its opening day, June 10. Chairperson Southard reported scheduling is being done for special dates and the Committee will meet next week.

10. Parks and Facilities

a. Priority Actions for Parks

Chairperson Southard reported this item refers to the walkarounds, the tours of the facilities undertaken by the commissioners. Director Bushway reported Public Works has a list of items requiring attention. Fencing growth on Route 163 and trail debris from the winter has been removed, in addition to filling in holes. The list also includes a lot of purchasing items. As to the order of the list, Commissioner Stone suggested tackling the least costly items first but said the list needs to be put in some type of order and some items have been budgeted for ARCA funds. Commissioner Chase volunteered to work with someone to organize the list; he and Commissioner Stone will prioritize it and report back at next month's Commission meeting.

11. Unfinished Business.

a. Parks Signage

Commissioner Stone reported he would be attending the next Public Works meeting regarding the first batch of signs and samples given to Director Bourdeau. Referencing Commissioner Stone's comments in last month's minutes, Commissioner Carver reported he would call Casey.

b. Carnival 2022

Commissioner Matthewson reported on vendors, contract signings, and the goal to have more participants/visitors attend the event. Director Bushway reported 12,000 wrist bands are on order—a goal to reach for according to Commissioner Matthewson.

c. ARPA Funds

Director Bushway reported on a stalemate regarding the Department tennis courts citing a purchase order for them as voted on by the Town Council. On March 14, Town Council Chair McNally put a hold on the Parks & Recreation courts and the high school courts for relocation to the Community Center. Director Bushway reported to the Commission on the escalating cost for concrete, metal, and asphalt for the project and his dissatisfaction with the aim to relocate the tennis courts. A meeting will be held tomorrow, March 17 at the Office of the Superintendent of Schools and will be attended by Town Council Chair McNally, BOE Chair Wills Pike, and

Director Bushway—Mayor McDaniel and Finance Director Hart are unable to attend. The Commission discussed points on the redirection of the Department tennis court plan as follows:

- Development of Parks & Recreation falls under the auspices of the Commission and no pitch was made to alter the Department tennis court project. (*Chase*)
- The redirected initiative came from BOE Chair Pike as part of the BOE 2022-2023 CIP Plan for \$750,000 as he would not support tennis courts at MHS or Camp Oakdale. Parks & Recreation has \$365,000 for four (4) tennis courts. (*Stone*)
- BOE was approached by the Department about a combined cost for repair of the MHS and Department tennis courts but had no interest. The cost is more to build on a virgin site nor was their mention of what the Commission has put in motion. (*Beaupre*)
- ARCA funds of \$365,000 is targeted and already appropriated for Camp Oakdale. (*Stone*)

Chairperson Southard addressed the fiscal responsibility of the Town; the lack of notice to the Commission, her attempt to speak with BOE Chair Pike, and her state of mind, angry and bamboozled. Any attempt to stop the redirected plan is a negative and phone calls about it were said to not be her place. Her concerns include transparency with the Commission, what is best for the Town, seeing the numbers for the redirected proposal, and whether it will be cost effective. Town Councilor Bunnell responded the authority of Department property rests with the Commission; Commissioner Chase pondered why the proponents of the plan were not present at this meeting which he described as disrespectful and outside the boundaries of the Commission. Commissioner Stone spoke of approval of ARCA funding by the Town Council for the Department plan that is now on hold for further discussion pending the meeting tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. where Chairperson Southard and Commissioner Stone, Commission Vice-chair, asked to be present. Town Councilor Bunnell suggested sending a letter to Mayor McDaniel listing the Commission's arguments, the cost increase for the redirected tennis courts plan; the bypassing of authority; and the movement of an appropriated expense. Director Bushway explained the Department CIP plan calls for a reduction from eight (8) to six (6) tennis courts and his having brought a contractor to the BOE regarding the same and being told the BOE courts would not be repaired now. Commissioner Matthewson inquired who would pay the additional 20% for the newly proposed plan stating there was no joint effort nor numbers, cost, entertained. She also asked if tomorrow's meeting would be available by Zoom; it will not. Director Bushway commented no decisions would be made at the meeting as the Town Council cannot tell the BOE how to use its funds.

Per further discussion by the Commission, additional comments were made about the use of Camp Oakdale versus common core initiatives; the use of the tennis courts by the BOE during the year; the decision at the March 8 BOE meeting to pursue a common location (the existing one is a common location); the Camp Oakdale courts are lighted; and building new would cost more. Other concerns were whether the newly proposed location would be maintained under the Parks & Recreation budget, the schools have made do without tennis courts and it is alleged the Department courts are not used; and feedback at the March 8 BOE meeting from parents and BOE members about the tennis courts and its removal from the CIP for this year.

Motion by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Stone to generate a letter from the Commission Chair and Vice-Chair to Mayor McDaniel expressing the Commission's consensus

and opposition to a proposed joint tennis court facility. Discussion: None. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried. (*Commissioner Carver left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.*)

d. Montville Farmers Market

Chairperson Southard reported plans for the Farmers Market are going great. There is a lot of interest particularly from vendors that include 2-3 food vendors and there are currently musicians for each scheduled date. The market will be open on Tuesdays from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. from June 14 thru September 27.

12. New Business. -- *None*

13. Communications.

Chairperson Southard asked Director Bushway had he spoken with Josh Paine regarding his request to pay out-right for exclusive use from now to July of Kobyluck Field concerning an AAC team, The Crush. He has experience maintaining a ballfield and would line it and would only ask Public Works to mow it. Director Bushway reported on the sporadic users and the two (2) teams based in Town who are charged \$25 for a game and/or practice. The fee for the field is not the issue; instead, it was Mr. Paine's additional request for rain dates on weekends. Also, maintenance of the field may cause grievance as it is a union job. In addition, Mr. Paine is looking for a cost reduction to make the field their home field and wants to schedule days as needed. Commissioner Schober proposed having Mr. Paine book the dates he needs in advance to avoid exclusive rights and concern about setting a precedent. Director Bushway commented all Town kids use the fields from 4:30 p.m. until dark; the schools do not have exclusive use; and teams with older kids have tournaments. Commissioner Beaupre commented the teams are nonprofit and it would cost this team \$1,600 at \$100 per week from April to July, 16 weeks and the plan would work if the team was treated like every other program. Commissioner Chase proposed a different price for rain dates and asked if the concern was logistics versus exclusive use. Per the Commission, it was suggested Mr. Paine review a calendar, choose dates including rain dates and then book them. In addition, remove the word "exclusive" concerning use of the field then, Director Bushway can compute the cost.

14. Remarks from the Public of Non-Agenda items (3-minute limit).

Chairperson Southard asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Bunnell remarked on the reappointment of Kelly and Michael Orbe to the Farmers Market Committee. He also referenced the parking for walking trails and proposed parking at Fort Shantok at short distance away per his discussion with Town Planner Burdick who he commended. Town Councilor Bunnell reiterated his recommendation as to the content of the letter from the Commission done with haste to Mayor McDaniel regarding the proposed joint tennis facility.

16. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway. -- *None*

17. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Beaupre remarked he would try to attend the meeting tomorrow as previously discussed. Chairperson Southard thanked Director Bushway for his hard work and that of Finance Director Hart, as well.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned. *(Commissioner Carver left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.)*

Respectfully submitted by,
Gloria J. Gathers
Town of Montville -- Recording Secretary/Minutes Clerk

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON
THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**