

**Town of Montville Parks & Recreation Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
March 30, 2022, 6:30 p.m.  
Town Council Chambers - Town Hall**

**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 comment 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 6:31 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**3. Roll Call**

Present were Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver (6:34 p.m.), Jon Chase, Morgan Matthewson, Deborah Schober, Rocky Stone, and Kate Southard. Absent were Commissioners Kevin Clang and Denise Gladue. A quorum was present.

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

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

**5. New Business**

**a. Community Center**

Chairperson Southard referenced discussion by the Commission at its March 16, 2022, meeting concerning future plans for the Community Center. Commissioner Chase brought forth a motion for action which the Recording Secretary noted to Chairperson Southard could not be added to the agenda as amendments cannot be made to a Special Meeting Agenda. Commissioner Chase disagreed and his motion was seconded by Commissioner Gladue.

Commissioner Chase expressed disagreement with the proposal to have tennis courts at Fair Oaks as it had not been brought before the Commission and referenced a letter to Mayor McDaniel concerning the same as proposed by Town Council Liaison Bunnell at the March 16 Commission meeting. Town Councilor Bunnell reported on the Board of Education (BOE) Superintendent meeting he attended on March 17 with BOE Chair Wills Pike, Town Council Chair Tom McNally, Director Bushway present in addition to Superintendent Palin to discuss the use of Fair Oaks for tennis courts. His concerns were the purchase order that had already been approved for repair of the tennis courts at Camp Oakdale; whether the Commission wished to change the direction for tennis courts from Camp Oakdale to the Community Center; violation of the Town Charter that gives the Commission management and control of its facilities; and Fair Oaks having been relinquished by the BOE 20 years ago and is now under the auspices of Parks & Recreation. The

question whether the purchase order was interfered with is a legal one Town Councilor Bunnell believes but other questions for the Commission include 1) whether to take the BOE suggestion and share the tennis courts, 2) if there is shared use of the facility who will have preference and with a proposal to have the BOE Superintendent check with other school districts regarding facilities shared with the municipality; and 3) ARPA funds were approved for repair of the Camp Oakdale tennis courts and the BOE can seek ARPA funds as well.

Commissioner Chase spoke to the investment by Commission and Director Bushway to revitalize Camp Oakdale tennis courts and working with the Public Works Director to clean-up the facility. Existing grounds are used for the Carnival and removing the tennis courts is not responsible per the Town Charter or to the taxpayers. The BOE has its own opportunity to seek funds and repair their tennis courts. Commissioner Beaupre acknowledged there was talk years ago about tennis courts at the Community Center and the item was on Agendas and CIPs, but the Community Center became stagnant. Not having tennis courts at Camp Oakdale will hinder its progress and the Town needs to repair them and bring them up to standards. The cost for new courts will be more and exceed \$1 million. The Commission has finally agreed on work for its tennis courts and its being ripped away. Commissioner Chase noted the BOE did not come before the Commission but the Commission, specifically Director Bushway, has had contact with BOE Athletic Directors about the condition of the BOE courts that are in worse condition than the ones at Camp Oakdale. Town Councilor Bunnell noted the BOE has its own ARPA funds and its tennis courts were on their CIP for many years.

Commissioner Stone reported the BOE 2021-2022 CIP referenced their tennis courts but was not in the Plan for the previous two (2) years. The diligence by Director Bushway to obtain ARPA, funding and requesting/placing the purchase order for the Camp Oakdale tennis courts to have it stopped by one (1) person was questioned. Town Councilor Bunnell referenced Charter Section C305.C, *Prohibitions; Interference with Administration* and Section C308, *Code of Ethics and Investigations* concerning proper protocol. The best interest for the Department is to have Town tennis courts; and the BOE to have courts at the schools, per Commissioner Stone. The Department courts have free access 24 hours a day and have been updated with pickleball courts. Chairperson Southard spoke prior to Covid with Senior Center Director Kathy Peck regarding interest for pickleball by seniors. The courts have not been used due to their condition. Possible tennis lessons for seniors are being considered but they would have to schedule online to use the courts at the Community Center. Investment to the taxpayer exists at Camp Oakdale as the courts are fenced and have lights according to Commissioner Chase. Commissioner Matthewson inquired about the impact of tennis courts at the Community Center for the Carnival and Summer Camp. In addition, the cost of architecture design fees, \$30,000, for the Community Center is funded according to Commissioner Stone.

The Commission proposed keeping the tennis courts at Camp Oakdale but Town Councilor Bunnell did not know if a motion could be made per the response of the Recording Secretary. Commissioner Chase remarked a motion had been made and he disagreed with the Recording Secretary and Mayor McDaniel who the Recording Secretary referenced. Discussion followed by the Commission as to

how the purchase order was stopped given the approved ARPA funding. Town Councilor Bunnell remarked the question should be posed to Mayor McDaniel and said the funding was approved by resolution of the Town Council. Litigious action would take years and the interference needs to be resolved. Town Council Bunnell attended the Superintendent Meeting on March 17 and said he could go to the follow-up meeting to express the feelings of the Commission. Commissioner Carver questioned why take action for a default position; that was the position at the BOE Superintendent meeting Town Councilor Bunnell attended. The Town Charter sections referenced and a move to correct the status of the Department purchase order will be discussed with Mayor McDaniel. The next BOE Superintendent meeting about the topic is scheduled for April 4. The next ARPA meeting April 12 at 5:00 p.m.

No action was taken on motion for this matter.

**6. Remarks from the Public (3-minute limit)**

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

**7. Remarks from Town Council Liaison -- *None***

**8. Remarks from the Commissioners -- *None***

**9. Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.