

Town of Montville  
Town Administration/Rules and Procedures Standing Committee

Monday August 22nd. 2022 @ 5:00PM

Montville Town Hall - Room 102

# Meeting minutes

**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.**

- 1: Call to order.

Meeting was called to order at 5 PM.

- 2: Pledge of allegiance.

All stood for the pledge.

- 3: Roll call.

Councilors Mandler, Bunnell and Yuchniuk present. Also present were MPD Lieutenant Dave Radford and Montville Town Councilor Billy Caron.

- 4: Amendments to the agenda.

There were no amendments to the agenda.

- 5: Approval of meeting minutes from TARP meeting July 25th 2022.

Motion to approve minutes by Councilor Bunnell, second by Councilor Mandler, vote, 3-0 in favor.

- 6: Remarks from the public, agenda items (3-minute limit).

Billy Caron speaks in favor of item 7a, 8a and 8b.

- 7: Old business.

7a. Discussion and possible action on adding wording to blight ordinance regarding property owners maintaining donation boxes on their property.

Councilor Mandler had created a lengthy document with the intent of adding it to the blight ordinance. Discussion ensues regarding enforcement of the blight ordinance, it is noted that there is nothing in the ordinance or state there are any enforcement options if there is a violation. Motion by Councilor Bunnell, seconded by Councilor Mandler to send ordinance to

town attorney for their input on wording and enforcement options. Motion passes 3-0. Item will remain on old business and be revisited at the next TARP meeting.

8. New Business.

8a. discussion and possible action of increasing the Mayor's salary.

This was a bi partisan proposal put together by Councilors Mandler and Caron.

Discussion ensues.

Councilor Bunnell recognizes that the Mayors salary is currently set at \$80,000.00, they wish to increase the salary by another \$30,000.00. He also notes that the Mayor is handling extra duties such as Human Recourses and the finance director position and that he writes and gets grants that bring in money to the town. He also notes that the Mayor has not had a raise in nine (9) years.

Councilor Mandler notes that the Mayor does not even get a cost of living raise yearly, and that "no one "would work a job for nine (9) years without a raise. He suggests the council should not look at the performance of the person in the Mayors position, but rather at the position itself, as the CEO of the town the position is far behind other area mayors/first selectmen. A comparison is made to the towns of Waterford and East Lyme which pay their first selectmen over 100 thousand dollars yearly.

Councilor Yuchniuk notes that the towns of Waterford and East Lyme cannot honestly be compared to Montville because their tax base is 2 to 3 times that of Montville. While it is true that most if not all Montville employees are paid less than their counterparts in other towns. He notes that the funds could be better spend on hiring an HR director, and a new Finance Director. The current town council has already approved the hiring of two (2) additional Police Officers and additional armed school security officers. These positions, as they were not budgeted for the fiscal year are going to cause a tax increase to the citizens and he strongly disagrees with increasing the Mayors salary by that much at this time.

Motion by Councilor Mandler to increase the Mayors salary to 105,000.00 effective July 01, 2023, seconded by Councilor Bunnell.

Voice vote: Mandler- Favor, Bunnell- Favor, Yuchniuk- Opposed.

Motion passes 2 to 1, will be presented to full council for a vote.

8b. discussion and possible action on independent Police Department ordinance.

Councilor Bunnell states this is the right time to move forward with making the Montville Police Department independent from the State Police. He cites the public safety building is mostly ready to proceed and much of it sits unused. He states that the cost of the resident State Trooper program will more than cover the cost of a Chief of Police. Motion by Councilor Bunnell, seconded to Councilor Mandler to send this proposed ordinance to the public safety commission for approval.

Discussion ensues:

Lieutenant Radford remarks that the ordinance needs to contain wording that the Chief of Police would be responsible for control and oversight of the dispatch center. This is state mandated by the COLLECT computer system so the Police Department has control of those sensitive records and to ensure they are not misused.

Councilor Yuchniuk remarks that there are still issues that are being worked on by the MPD to prepare for this transition, these include the accreditation of the PD and the updating of the department policies, the update of some computer systems and the hiring of additional dispatchers.

Councilor Mandler expresses concern over ordinance proposal section 2 c regarding the wording that says "The Chief may be assisted by Deputy Chief and Captains" he feels this may cause some in the public to be concerned over additional positions and cost. Councilor Bunnell replies that the section says "may" and that would be subject to budgetary constraints.

Councilor Bunnell rescinds his motion and will revisit the proposed ordinance with the town attorney to add changes to section 2c and to add a section 2.b.8 to include wording on the dispatch center. This matter will be tabled until next meeting.

9: Remarks from the public, non-agenda items (3-minute limit).

Lt. Radford questions if there are ARPA funds available that could be used as a one-time pay out to first responders (Police, Fire, Dispatchers, Animal Control) as the current federal program giving funds to essential workers who worked through the Covid-19 pandemic specifically excludes municipal employees. Councilor Mandler remarked that there are some funds remaining and asked Lt. Radford to put his request in writing to the finance committee for consideration.

10: Remarks from councilors.

No remarks from councilors.

11: Adjournment.

Motion by Councilor Bunnell, seconded by Councilor Mandler to adjourn. Vote 3-0 motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 1756