

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – November 28, 2022 -- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

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 Healthy strongly recommends that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, continue to wear masks indoors.

(Mayor Ronald McDaniel – March 8, 2022)

1. Call to order.

Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners William Bauer, Traci Callaghan, Mickey Gillette, Gary Murphy, Thomas Pedersen, Karen Perkins, and Stephen Stewart. A forum was present.

4. Amendments to the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Perkins to discuss a change for the time of the December meeting or cancellation of it. Discussion: The December meeting falls on a holiday. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

5. Communications:

- Copies of monthly statistics reports from Fire Departments, Fire Marshal, Police, Animal Control and Building Official.

Chairman Murphy confirmed the receipt of the statistical reports for all departments.

6. To consider and act on a motion to approve minutes:

- a.** The Regular Meeting Minutes of October 24, 2022.

Motion by Chairman Gillette; seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve the October 24, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Remarks from the Public.

Chairman Murphy asked three (3) times for comments. Resident Ray Occhialini, 70 Anderson Lane, remarked on plans set for an underground 10,000 fire protection tank on Lot 1 on Millwood Lane prior to his retirement 4 /12 years ago. The location was suitable for laying hose, pumping, and filling trucks as needed. The tank was moved and approved at its current location and is unusable. The tank is underground and has a gauge and vent. Per a diagram

he sent to the Commission, he explained the need for a fill port, a standard and a need for fire suppression according to fire code, NPF 22 and 1142 for rural water supply.

Resident Stephen Frischling 1606 Route 85, Oakdale remarked on the Everbridge Policy. He commented on remarks by Fire Marshal Barnes at an earlier Commission meeting praising Deputy Fire Marshal Milton for his hard work in setting up the system. He also referenced a denial by the Deputy Fire Marshal on the same and an email from Mayor McDaniel as to certifications obtained by the Fire Marshal. He noted the certifications do not include any for Everbridge or integrated public systems. S. Frischling also spoke to a need to determine who was responsible for the EOC launch and its use and management responsibilities stating it needs to be in the hands of people who are accountable. He referenced an inoperable QR Code, and a lengthy URL that is not available to the public and needs to be fixed. Also, the Town system has only been used once for the recent scrap fire with no substantive information provided.

8. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Lt. Radford reported 941 calls for service by the PD for the month ending October 31, 2022. There were also 32 infractions, 2 juvenile summons, 15 misdemeanors, and 66 written warnings for a total of 115 citations. The one (1) applicant who remains in the hiring process and has successfully passed the background phase and is now in the final phases. Commissioners Bauer, Gillette, and Stewart were thanked for assisting with the last round of police candidate interviews. There are two (2) applicants left in the process to date. He also reiterated on the sale of a new version of the “Pink Patches” in support of breast cancer. Recently received were the 2022 Christmas patches that are also on sale for \$10 and proceeds will be donated to the Bristol Heroes Fund. These initial patches were donated by Town Councilor Yuchniuk and the Union purchased some additional ones. Lt. Radford also read into the record a letter of commendation from a Town resident Steven Rocetto concerning Officer Witts. The resident rushed to the scene of the early morning incident awaiting assistance to help as needed for a police cruiser incident where the vehicle was covered with power lines and had incurred damage to the front windshield. Officer Witts, first on the scene, was praised for his calmness toward his comrade and the situation given the perilousness.

Fire Department Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Department calls for service for the month ending October 31, 2022, totaled 256. Of those calls, 179 were EMS incidents. For the year, there are 131 more calls for service than last year at this time. He also reported on the resignation of a career staff person effective January 3, 2023, who has been hired by the Middletown South District Fire Department. He also noticed the Commission on the need for an upcoming committee to conduct interviews for the position. As to the scrapyards fire, he reported on two (2) minor injuries evaluated at the scene and the individuals returned to work. One (1) fire engine was damaged requiring additional repair and three (3) drop tanks were lost. Responding to Commissioner Stewart concerning a list of candidates, Fire Marshal Barnes stated the list is only for a 6-month window.

9. **Committee and Liaison Reports:**

a. **Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)**

Commissioner Perkins reported on and thanked the fire department--Chesterfield, Mohegan, Montville, Oakdale--with the November 16, 2022, scrapyard fire. They were assisted by the following departments: Mohegan Tribal, East Great Plains and Laurel Hill of Norwich, Bozrah, Salem, Gardner's Lake of Salem, Baltic, Franklin, Colchester, Griswold, Lisbon, Center Groton, North Stonington, Ashaway of Rhode Island, Cohanzie and Jordan of Waterford, Preston, East Haddam, Wequetequock of Stonington and East Haddam.. Also thanked was the Salvation Army canteen of Oakdale.

b. **Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)**

The statistical reports for month ending October 31, 2022, submitted by ACO Swanson are as follows:

Town of Montville Animal Control Report October 2022)

	Month	YTD
# of Animals Impounded	11	54
# of Animals Sold as Pets	5	35
# of Animals D.O.A.	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized	0	1
Total Complaints Investigated	83	335
Total Animal Bites Investigated	2	4
Total Infractions/Summons		2

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (October 2022)

	Month	YTD
# of Animals Impounded	0	2
# of Animals Sold as Pets	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated	6	18
Total Animal Bites Investigated	0	0
Total Infractions/Summons	0	0

c. **Report from Police Department Liaison. (Gillette)** – No report

d. **Report from Building Department Liaison. (Stewart)**

The Building Department statistics report for October 2022 was submitted as follows:

2022-2023 Building Department Report												
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Permits Issued	110	107	171	188								

Pending Permits	159	87	143	136								
Inspections	187	197	167	193								
Plan Reviews	62	70	67	71								
CO's	5	4	0	0								
Violation Notices	2	0	0	0								
Unsafe Notices	2	1	0	2								
Blight Identified	182	184	188	199								
Blight Abated To Date	454	454	459	467								

Commissioner Stewart apologized for the tardiness of the Building Inspector Report and read it into the record for the month ending October 31, 2022. He also reported an Asst. Building Inspector still has not been hired.

10. Remarks from Fire Chiefs.

Chesterfield Fire Chief Keith Truex reported on the scrapyard fire stating there were 22 different fire departments present—18 by mutual aid and 17 that shuttled water that included four (4) from the Town. Everyone was thanked, volunteers and career firefighters, and fuel providers for the 12-hour fire that began at 6:15 a.m. Also thanked was the Salvation Army canteen that provided food and water to keep everyone fed and hydrated. The Chief also reported the Town radio system is getting worse with more dead zones in certain spots. He requested that a subcommittee be formed to discuss the same. His recommendation was for the Town to access the State radio system, the one the police are moving too, although there will be cost, all who respond to calls on the current system must deal with the issues of communication with dispatch. Fire Chief Truex also reported on the loss of a career firefighter at his station once a new one is hired. He suggested the Town look into another way to address this issue that occurs sometimes every six (6) months. Whenever a career staff person leaves from another station, the one from his station moves from his department so Chesterfield always gets a new career person who is away from his station for eight (8) hours a day for training leaving his station understaffed. Also, the Chiefs are not the ones qualifying the staff or on their use of privately owned, company apparatus, nor in the district and in his opinion it is wrong.

11. Unfinished Business.

- a. Update from Mayor McDaniel or his designee concerning the Town of Montville Everbridge System.

Fire Marshal Barnes reported there was no update.

- b. To consider and act on a motion to approve future Commission Committee Assignments.

Chairman Murphy reported no meeting was held.

- c. Report from Town Administration on the progress of the formation of the Montville Police Department.

Lt. Radford reported the process is moving forward as hoped.

12. New Business.

- a. To consider and act on a motion concerning possible action on the water tank installation problem at Millwood on Old Colchester Road.

Fire Marshal Barnes reported he was scheduled to meet with the Millwood representative two (2) weeks ago but the supervisor came down with Covid. He did meet with them last Tuesday, November 22nd and the tank was looked at and an explanation of the situation provided. Proper connections will be ordered and installed and the tank will be filled next week and ready for operation. Per questions from the Commission, the Fire Marshal explained how the situation evolved from review of site for the water tank, the decision to relocate the tank, the design of the tank, and miscommunication concerning correcting the problem. This item will remain on the agenda for further reporting and an update by email requested by Chairman Murphy.

- b. To consider and act on a motion to approve the Commission 2023 Meeting Dates.

Motion by Chairman Murphy; seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve the 2023 Commission Meeting Dates. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- c. To consider and act on a motion concerning discussion and possible action on the DW Scrap Yard fire on November 16, 2022.

Chairperson Murphy reported he added this Agenda item in response to communicative contacts he received concerning water and air quality. He then met with Dave Waddington of CT Scrap who is looking to get an 8-inch water line and hydrant on site requiring contact with the WPCA and Planning & Zoning. D. Waddington is willing to front the cost for the project. Water used for the scrap yard fire was recycled and the DEEP had no concerns. To prevent another fire from occurring, determining how this fire started is acute but the evidence was destroyed and there is the question whether one (1) hydrant will be sufficient. Chairperson Murphy asked Fire Marshal Barnes that the Commission is kept updated on any action.

- d. To consider and act on a motion to discuss a change for the time of the December meeting or cancellation of it.

Motion by Commissioner Bauer; seconded by Commissioner Perkins to cancel the December 26, 2022, Commission meeting. Discussion: There was no discussion of moving the date of the meeting nor consideration for a special meeting. The PD and FD were asked to contact Chairperson Murphy should a need arise. Roll Call vote: *In favor*: Commissioners Bauer, Callaghan, Gillette, Murphy, Pedersen, Perkins, and Stewart. *Opposed*: none. 7-0, vote. Motion carried.

13. Remarks from the Public. (Non-agenda items only—three-minute limit)

Chairperson Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. Resident Matt Suarez of 18 Cranberry Drive questioned the rationale for cancellation of the December 2022 meeting given the date change for the December 2023 meeting with an even closer meeting date. He also remarked on a project scheduled for sidewalk installation on both sides of Route 32 from Quaker Hill to

Route 163. He asked the Commission to draft policy to revise the ordinance concerning sidewalk shoveling. The existing ordinance requires sidewalks to be shoveled from Route 2A to the casino where sidewalks currently exist.

Union Firefighter President Tim Condon echoed the comment by Chesterfield Fire Chief Truex regarding a subcommittee concerning the radio system that is not good. He reported on a vendor who tried to log into the system during the summer that took down one of the towers while investigating the status of another tower. The radio system is essential for communication and the reliability of it for safety purposes. Other towns have invested in the State radio system through investigation of it and have committed or gotten grants for it. The scrap yard fire was an indicator of the importance of communication with neighboring towns. Although there is an upfront cost, there is a long-term benefit. The current system is strung out in its existing condition.

Lt. Dave Radford remarked the Town has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State for access to its radio system. The PD currently has a bank of ten (10) channels and more can be added along with the cost for additional radios. He recognized the long-term goal was to add the fire department to the State system. An independent police department will not affect access to the State radio system as there is the ability to obtain more channels per a question from Commissioner Stewart. As to the number of radios needed for the fire department, as questioned by Commissioner Callaghan, it would need to be explored with the Fire Chiefs. As to the MOU, as questioned by Commissioner Bauer, there was discussion between the State and the PD and Lt. Radford remarked he can pass on his State contacts to the FD.

Steven Frischling of 1606 Route 85, Oakdale remarked in detail on oversight of the State radio system, the minimum number of portals per company, who can use the system, converting to the system, maintaining the VHS system for paging, and the process for it that is fairly simple. This information on the State radio system he gave to Chairperson Murphy.

14. Remarks from the Mayor. – *No report*

Mayor McDaniel was absent from the meeting.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Yuchniuk remarked that work on the Animal Control facility is still moving forward with a tentative design that was sent out to determine cost. The project will probably need to be paired down to contain an acceptable cost. Also, the Town Council approved the job description for the Chief of Police for the independent police department. It is his understanding Mayor McDaniel and Lt. Radford have contacted the CT Chiefs of Police Association who will send out the posting for the position that will be sent nationwide for the best possible candidates.

16. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Callaghan thanked all who were involved with the scrap yard fire and was glad to learn the two (2) firefighters who were injured were okay and able to return to work. She also thanked the Salvation Army canteen who were present for 14 hours. Commissioner Perkins reported the fire stations will participate in the Santa Run this year. Montville and Mohegan fire stations will participate on Saturday, December 17. The hours for the Mohegan station will be from 2-5 p.m. followed by a Christmas Party with Santa at the station from 6-8 p.m. The Chesterfield station will have its Santa Run Sunday, December 4 and Oakdale station will have its Run on December 18 at 5 p.m. The Holiday Parade will take place on Sunday, December 4 at 5 p.m. and all the fire stations will be involved. Commissioner Perkins also thanked everyone involved with the scrap yard fire and on a personal note publicly thanked Officer Rebelo for his kindness concerning the breakdown of her children's car on a night in October. The officer remained on the scene until the tow truck arrived. She also received a communication from former Commissioner Vic Lenda who wanted to thank the wonderful fire and EMT service in Town for their kindness when responding to his parents' needs and brother's over the past year. She also wished everyone a safe, happy holiday. Commissioner Stewart wished everyone a happy, safe holiday and remarked he fully supported a subcommittee for an upgraded fire department radio communication system and understands the problems with the current system made fully recognizable this evening. Chairperson Murphy noted 1½ million gallons of water was used to contain the scrap yard fire and commented on the calls received concerning smoke and the calmness of the dispatcher who handled the calls. He sent Dispatcher Larry a message about his demeanor during the calls. He also agreed with the comments by Fire Chief Truex regarding paid staff and Chesterfield having to take the brunt that encourages the need to hire more paid staff. Chairperson Murphy also remarked the Town radio system is terrible as well as cellular service but recognizes the expense to upgrade. As to shoveling sidewalks, he remarked if you have them pored then take care of them. He then wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

17. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0; all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Gloria J. Gathers
Recording Clerk, Town of Montville

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