

**Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers**

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
Chairman McNally called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in honor of our military.
3. Roll Call
Present were Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.
4. Special Recognitions/Presentations
Montville Youth Football & Cheer Vice-President of Concessions and Fundraising and Coach Kathleen Calash and Vice President Brandon Brown, who worked diligently with President Erica Day to order the helmets for the players, presented an old football helmet donning the signatures of all of the players and a photograph of the players to Mayor McDaniel and the Town Council as a gesture of their appreciation. The items symbolize the League's recent and future changes. She also presented a small thank you gift to the Councilors who were unable to attend their Senior game. She stated that, without the Town's financial support, the League would not have had a football season. She also thanked them for the improvements made to the Concession Stand and looks forward to other future upgrades.

Montville Youth Football & Cheer Vice President Brown reported on the changes that will need to be made to the field as they enter into the Southern New England Youth Football Conference. The proposed changes include the installation of a safer perimeter around the football field from the current metal poles and rope and the enlargement of the field by moving one of the goalposts and bleachers. The changes would allow them to host the Conference Superbowl in mid-November 2023. Should the changes not be made, the Superbowl will be hosted at the High School, resulting in a significant loss of funds from concession sales.

Councilor Bunnell informed them that their proposal should be presented to the Parks & Recreation Commission during their next Regular Meeting.

Montville Youth Football & Cheer Vice-President of Concessions and Fundraising and Coach Calash also expressed their plans to work with both the Parks & Recreation and Public Works Departments to resolve some of issues. Their primary goal is to work together and ensure that their fields and games are accessible and safe for all parties. They also questioned whether the timer for the lights could be overridden.

Mayor McDaniel informed them that there is no cost to the Town for the power used for the lighting.

Councilor Caron commended them on all of their hard work and efforts. Mayor McDaniel thanked them for the gifts.

5. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Rix, to add the following item to the Agenda:

16(g) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to waive the sealed bid requirement in Section 708(a) of the Town Charter and award the contract for the Camp Oakdale Pavilion Replacement Fencing to *The Fenceman* as it is in the best interest of the Town. (Councilor McNally)

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2022

b. The Special Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2022 (Contract Negotiations)

Motion made by Councilor May, seconded by Councilor Caron, to approve the Town Council November 14, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes and November 21, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session – *none*

8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit – *none*

9. Communications

a. Copy of the November 2022 Financial Reports from Finance Director Barbara Griffin

b. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of October 2022

c. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of October 2022

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred – *none*

11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred

Mayor McDaniel reported that an audit extension was requested. Interviews to fill the vacant positions in the Police Department were held and an invitation to an upcoming Swearing-In Ceremony will be sent to the Councilors. The Town's request for a one-year extension for the WPCA's (Water Pollution Control Authority) \$5 million Grant was approved. A meeting was held with the Board of Education (BOE), Bond Counsel, and Financial Advisor regarding the Town and BOE Bonds for the Road Improvement and School Improvement Projects. He also attended an Eagle Scout Ceremony for Calvin LaFrance, a very impressive Williams School Freshman who earned 58 Merit Badges, among other notable accomplishments.

Land Use and Development Director Liz Burdick reported that a Certificate of Occupancy will soon be issued for the new salt storage facility on Depot Road. The facility has also recently received approval to install a cement slab for the storage of materials. The Department has received two (2) subdivision applications, including one for the conversion of an existing building into residential apartments. The medical marijuana facility, *The Botanist*, has received its hybrid medical marijuana license. The Town Attorney is reviewing a set of draft regulations related to retail marijuana facilities. Following the Attorney's review, the regulations will be forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council for review and input before being introduced to the residents at a Public Hearing. A brief discussion ensued regarding the store's impact on the traffic and parking in the area.

Boat Launch & Fishing Pier (Councilor Rix) –The Planning & Zoning Commission approved the site plan for the boat launch and fishing pier during their November Regular Meeting. The engineering for the boat launch and drilling, which is being funded by the Town, is moving forward. The RFP (Request for Proposal) is expected to go out in early

2023 and construction is slated to begin in the Spring/Summer of 2023. The boat launch will be closed during construction. Gateway has agreed to sign a license agreement for additional parking spaces for the public.

Farmhouse (Councilor Caron) – A Zoning Permit(s) has been issued for the site work on the property. A Demolition Permit is expected to be submitted by the property owner in the coming days.

Gas Station @ Routes 163 & 82 (Councilor May) – The owners are planning to construct an addition and remodel the existing building.

Animal Control Facility (Councilor Bunnell) – A price estimate of \$2.4 million was received for the new Facility. Following a meeting with the Animal Control Officer and Councilor Yuchniuk to revise the plans, an updated sketch was delivered to the Architects for a revised estimate. Councilor May raised the possibility of revisiting regionalizing with New London.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

- a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – *no meeting; no report*
- b. Finance – *no meeting; no report*
- c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

The Committee took a tour of facilities and discussed the areas in need of attention.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

- a. Councilor Bunnell: Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission, Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief Fund

Library Committee – *no meeting; no update*

Volunteer Fire Fighters' Relief Fund – *no meeting; no update*

Parks & Recreation Commission – The Public Works Department is in the process of replacing the flooring in the Community Center gymnasium and the front room with the help of a STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant. A successful Trick or Trunk event with approximately 2,200 people in attendance was held. Youth Basketball began earlier this month and Adult Volleyball began in early November. The Department also launched its Polar Bear Scavenger Hunt. The Commissioners' Walk-Arounds are continuing. Once completed, their reports will be submitted to the Public Works Department. Due to the success of their recent Holiday Farmers Market, an additional Farmers Market event is being planned for the February school break at, possibly, the Tyl Middle School Gymnasium. The bid package for the column repairs to the Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion was received. Other necessary repairs to the Pavilion include the siding, fascia, lighting, and roofing. They are in discussions with the American Legion regarding the possibility of partnering together to host a Summer Concert Series of six (6) concerts. The Commission continued their discussions for the proposed ice-skating rink, the formation of a Community Center Exploratory Committee, and the school's use of the Town Hall Gymnasium. Today marks the groundbreaking of the new tennis courts.

- b. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Social Services, Non-Profit Organizations
- Non-Profit Organizations – He is waiting to hear back from the Non-Profit Organizations.

Social Services Building (old Town Hall) – A tour of the building was held with Councilor Mandler and the Public Works Director. The Public Works Director was requested to expedite the project.

Senior & Social Services – The Department has been busy preparing for the holiday season, gathering toys for 500 gift bags, and planning and preparing homebound meals.

They are in the process of requesting additional donations to offset the loss of one their primary donors.

- c. Councilor Mandler: Water Pollution Control Authority, Ad-Hoc Covid-19 Impact Study Committee

Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) – *no meeting; no update*

Ad-Hoc Covid-19 Impact Study Committee – The Committee met this evening; the Committee-approved items are on this evening’s Agenda for Town Council approval.

- d. Councilor May: Conservation Commission

The Conservation elected Commissioner Nick Sabilia as the new Chairman of the Commission. He commended the Public Works Director who was very helpful during a recent meeting regarding some of their projects.

- e. Councilor Rix: Board of Education, Farmers Market Committee, Planning & Zoning Commission

Planning & Zoning Commission – *see Land Use & Development Director Burdick’s report under Item 11*

Board of Education – The Schools are now protected with armed guards. Several individuals were honored as Montville Marvels. Due to the State’s requirement to provide students with a hot meal on half-days, the Board has agreed to reduce the number of half-days in the 2023/24 school year to two.

- f. Councilor Yuchniuk: Economic Development Commission, Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board

Economic Development Commission – *no report*

Youth Services Bureau & Advisory Board – Youth Services and the Youth Action Council will be hosting a Green Out & Luminary Ceremony to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy at the Community Center on Wednesday, December 14, 6:00 p.m. The asbestos removal of the gymnasium floor in preparation for new flooring is progressing; new coverings for the floor heaters will also be installed.

Public Safety Commission – The Police Department reported a total of 941 Calls for Service and 115 citations were issued during the month of October. The Fire Department reported a total of 256 Calls for Service, 179 of which were ambulance calls, for the month of October. Twenty-two (22) Fire Departments assisted in the recent DW Scrapyard fire. The Assistant Building Official/Inspector position remains vacant.

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Sandra Berardy to the Inland Wetlands Commission with a term to expire on February 9, 2027.

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor May. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2022-152. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$154.09 (one hundred fifty-four dollars and nine cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor McNally)

Motion made by Councilor May, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2022-153. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to close Town offices at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, December 23, 2022 in observance of the Christmas Holiday for non-essential personnel and to award four (4.0) hours paid time off for Essential Personnel who must remain on the job to be used by the end of the January 2023. (Councilor McNally)

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor May. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2022-154. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the 2022 holiday bonuses for Town employees on Schedule A. (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor May, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2022-155. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize the Chairman of the Town Council to form an Exploratory Committee comprised of one (1) member of the Town Council, one (1) member of the Public Safety Commission, and the Finance Director to study the feasibility of seeking alternatives and/or the privatization to the IT department to achieve cost savings. (Councilor Mandler)

Motion made by Councilor Mandler, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: Councilor Mandler stated that, in discussing the matter with various town departments, it came to his attention that the department is becoming overwhelmed with projects. The Committee's study would include the input of the Information Systems Director. The purpose of the Committee is to explore all of the available options to save funds. It was noted that various line items within the budget pertain to the department. Councilor Bunnell stated that he has had very positive experiences with the department and did not see a need to outsource the services; he would be interested in viewing the costs and services of comparable towns. Roll Call vote, 6-1. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Bunnell. Resolution passed.

- e. **Resolution #2022-156. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the proposed list of expenditures related to the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds, as recommended by the COVID-19 Impact Study Committee. (Councilor Mandler)

Motion made by Councilor Mandler, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: The proposed list of expenditures is as follows:

Police Department IT Upgrades	\$ 85,000.00
Boat Launch Engineering	\$ 60,000.00
Police Department Fence	\$ 2,500.00
Camp Oakdale Fencing	\$ 19,000.00
Police Department Radios and Tasers	\$ 32,000.00
Parks & Recreation Summer Concert Series	\$ 10,000.00
American Legion Upgrades	\$ 20,000.00
Polish Club Upgrades	\$ 27,000.00
Housing Authority Bathroom Upgrades	\$ 30,000.00
Senior & Social Services Mental Health Counseling	\$ 15,000.00
FY2022/24 Budget	\$ 500,000.00
Re-Allocation of Funds from the drafting of the Affordable Housing Plan to the Plan of Conservation & Development	\$ 5,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 805,500.00

Discussion: Councilor Rix felt that the amount allocated for the Parks & Recreation Summer Concert Series was embellished. Based on her experience, bands in the area range from \$300.00 to \$1,000.00. Councilor McNally stated that the amount was reduced from the original request of \$15,000.00 and any unexpected funds would be returned to the Town. The day and location of the Concert was briefly discussed.

Motion made by Councilor Rix, seconded by Councilor Yuchniuk, to amend the motion to reduce the allocation of funding to \$5,000.00 for the Parks & Recreation Concert Series. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 3-4. Voting in Favor: Councilors Mandler, Rix, and Yuchniuk. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Bunnell, Caron, May, and McNally. Motion failed.

Discussion: It was clarified that the funds allocated to offset the FY2023/24 Budget will help avoid the possible need for a mil rate increase. Roll Call vote, 4-1-2. Voting in Favor: Councilors: Bunnell, Mandler, May, and Yuchniuk. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Rix. Voting in Abstention: Councilors Caron and McNally. Resolution passed.

- f. **Resolution #2022-157. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Ron McDaniel enter into an agreement with the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association to aid in the vetting process for the selection of a Chief of Police. (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: Councilor Bunnell stated that the Resolution would allow them to utilize the resources available to them. The Connecticut Police Chiefs Association will provide their recommendations to the Mayor, who will then provide his recommendations to the Public Safety Commission to conduct the final interviews, per the Town Charter. The service would be provided free of charge. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors: Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- g. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to waive the sealed bid requirement in Section 708(a) of the Town Charter and award the contract for the Camp Oakdale Pavilion Replacement Fencing to *The Fenceman* as it is in the best interest of the Town. (Councilor McNally)

Motion made by Councilor May, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Chairman McNally reported that Public Works Director John Carlson received three (3) verbal agreements over \$10,000.00, requiring the project to go through the sealed bid process. Because the process is both expensive and time-consuming, he is requesting the contract be awarded to *The Fenceman*. Councilor Bunnell stated that the item was discussed at their recent Parks & Recreation Commission meeting to replace the fence, which borders Route 163. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors: Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, May, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

17. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit
Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, Oakdale, expressed his support for the Exploratory Committee to outsource the Town's IT needs, which could benefit the Town. Based on personal experience, he has found that, oftentimes, such companies have the manpower to provide the required support during busy periods. He also agreed with Councilor Bunnell's recommendation to gather comparable costs and was curious in comparing them to the Board of Education's costs, which is similarly staffed.
18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Mayor McDaniel confirmed that the Swearing-In Ceremony for two (2) new Officers will be held on Thursday, December 22, at 10:00 a.m., in Town Council Chambers. He suggested the possibility of the BOE also looking into outsourcing their IT services. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the holiday season.

Councilor Bunnell clarified that he recommended they gather the IT costs of comparable towns, per their usual practice. He wished everyone a Safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Councilor Caron wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Councilor May also wished everyone Happy Holidays and commended his colleagues on a good job this year.

Councilor Rix wished everyone a Merry Christmas and looks forward to seeing everyone next year.

Councilors McNally, Yuchniuk, and Mandler also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Mandler, seconded by Councilor May, to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – MEETING RECORDINGS