

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – January 18, 2023 -- 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 6:36 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Noah Carver (7:24 p.m.), Jon Chase, Kevin Clang, Deborah Schober, Morgan Matthewson, Kate Southard, and Rocky Stone. Absent were Commissioners Matt Beaupre and Denise Gladue. A quorum was present.

Also present were Recreation Director Peter Bushway, Town Council Liaison Lenny Bunnell, and Public Works Director John Carlson.

4. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Clang to add Agenda Items 7a. Public Works Director Report, Item 7b. Little League Presentation, and move Item 7, Recreation Director's Report for January 2023 to Item 7c. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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

Chairperson Southard asked three (3) times for remarks.

Tom Novak, President of the Montville Little League, and Jay Lesniewski, Little League Board Director of Stealth Fast Pitch Softball, remarked on expansion of the Little League to Intermittent 50/70, for kids 12-13 years old and the dimensions to retrofit a field. There is no division for kids in Town for this age group; they either do not play or play in other towns. Interest for this age group has grown since the impact of Covid-19. The goal is to work with Parks & Recreation and Public Works to establish Intermittent 50/70 utilizing the existing Town fields at Camp Oakdale, Tyl Middle School, or Kobyluck at Mohegan Elementary School. Camp Oakdale is the proposed site for modifications to which the Little League will contribute. Thirteen-year-old student Bronson Ashburn read a statement and spoke about playing baseball since he was 6-years old but said he and his friends have now aged out with no place to play in Town. He said, "We

have a team; We have a coach; We have uniforms and equipment; We have a bunch of moms who bring good snacks; What we don't have is a field." In his statement, he also commented on suggestions to play for another town with unfamiliar coaches and the costs associated with AAU baseball, up to \$5,000 per year, that could be used to convert a Town field to 50/70 so all kids could play every year. He asked the Commission to help them make a field. Jay Lesniewski encouraged support for a field.

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2022.

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 21 2022. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7a. Public Works Director Report.

Public Works Director Carlson gave an overview of projects:

- Tennis Courts – removal of the fence, asphalt, and an old, paved basketball court needs to be done. Inlands and Wetland review will be sought for the area.
- Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion – once the fence is removed funds will be sought from the State to supplement overage costs from bids for repair of the columns and the sagging stage roof. Posts to be supported by existing 55-gallon drums with cement and steel brackets between the roof and trusses, intended to be two (2) separate projects. CIP funds for the project do not need to be considered now and are anticipatory to improvement of existing structures. \$55,000 ARPA funds were received. Posts were initially a CIP project until removed to pursue ARPA funds. Is a repair project actually capital improvement was also mentioned.
- Football Field – siding and roofing are done but work is needed to increase field lighting in the parking lot and playground area; he is hoping to get his crew to do most of the work. Expansion of the field by moving goal posts was mentioned but was noted that viewing the field from bleacher rows 1-3 would be a concern.
- Bathrooms – handicap access to bathrooms; paving to accommodate same.
- \$400,000 for repair of pavilion discussed concerning a new roof for the pavilion, paving the small pavilion parking lot, and the need for a new 40' x 80' storage building.

Reduction of the small pavilion paved area for a future playground, removal of the fence and stump removal approved by the Town Council for \$18,000; bathrooms at tennis court area being brought back to life and setup for one use person; and plans for replacing trees that are removed were also discussed by the Commission and Public Works Director Carlson. Removing or repurposing the horseshoe pits at the tennis courts, removal of the pipe that leads to nowhere, casing repair on the well at the large pavilion that will feed to the bathrooms; and relocation of the shed by the volleyball court to the transfer station for equipment use was reported by Public Works Director Carlson. He also noted the next Public Works meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 23, 2023.

7b. Little League Presentation.

Commissioner Stone noted that use of the Kobyluck field and Tyl must be pursued with the Board of Education. Per discussion by T. Nowak and J. Lesniewski with the Commission, their proposal for the 50/70 field includes a 200 ft. fence, moving the pitcher's mound and a temporary cut-in for 70 ft. bases. Two (2) AAU teams based in Montville have asked for the use of the Kobyluck field from summer – August; and softball is played at Camp Oakdale according to Director Bushway including the concern about the proximity to the playgrounds. (Commissioner Chase has a niece who plays on an AAU team.) The Little League representatives stated having no desire to take a field from anyone but indicated Camp Oakdale has more of a Little League dynamic in addition to its concession stand. Chairperson Southard noted her son played Little League described as one of the best games but indicated the Commission will discuss their proposal, speak with Director Bushway, and table the item to the next meeting Agenda.

7c. Recreation Director's Report for January 2023.

Director Bushway asked if there were questions about his report. He noted having seen only one (1) person playing horseshoes during his 13 years of employment and the thought to moving the horseshoe pit. Commissioner Stone inquired about the importance of the stage rail; Director Bushway said the \$1,460 cost for the rail would be expensed from Special Revenue. Commissioner Chase spoke about the potential for an Eagle Scout project concerning the horseshoe pit to evolve into a steel cornhole board; Director Bushway has seen concrete ones but stated the steel ones may be too noisy for neighbors.

8. Report from Finance.

Director Bushway referenced the three (3) transfers of funds scheduled for this meeting but said all other accounts are going quite well. He also reported the cost for the Holiday Parade was more this year as more people attended the event and there were more giveaways.

9. December Newsletter.

Chairperson Southard inquired about the new classes for Montville Florist; Director Bushway is awaiting pictures.

10. Parks and Facilities

a. Walk Arouns

Chairperson Southard reported there are two (2) areas of Department facilities that need to be reviewed but have not yet been done but will be before the next meeting. Commissioner Matthewson reported she did tour the dog park that looks great and was in use. She mentioned the lack of activity for small dog owners and suggested that area should be added in addition to signage about picking up after your dog.

b. ARPA Funds

Chairperson Southard noted for the record that Public Works Director Carlson reported on these items this evening. Director Bushway remarked on proposed changes to the football field from 80 ft. to 100 ft. that would be managed by the Department and Public Works, respectively. Moving goal posts may create a drainage issue on the west side of the field and his search of the football league website found no reference to fencing that limits use of the field. Additionally,

there are no funds to do improvements and thus would depend on the Town. A fence would hinder viewing of the field as stated by Public Works Director Carlson this evening.

11. Unfinished Business.

a. Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion Repairs

Chairperson Southard reported this item was reviewed earlier by Public Works Director Carlson.

b. Montville Carnival 2023

Commissioner Matthewson reported she did not have the date for 2023 carnival voted upon by the Commission. Chairperson Southard will include a motion for the same on the next agenda. Director Bushway reported receipt of the contract for the carnival from Scott.

c. Exploratory Committee for a New Community Center

Commissioner Stone reported the exploratory committee met this evening and got plans and information from New London on its center. It is questionable whether a new Community Center will fit in the existing footprint until more formal plans are done. The Committee spoke tonight of contacting Youth Services and Recreation; Director Bushway will also reach out to Youth Services on its needs in addition to Recreation. Per the prior survey for a new community center, a pool was a priority item. The Committee has reached out to Waterford, New London, and Mansfield concerning information on the yearly costs and day-to-day operations, maintenance, that is needed for a recommendation to be made. Commissioner Stone also spoke of a 2-fold gymnasium that can be divided into four (4) areas with a rollaway turf for soccer as suggested by Commissioner Matthewson.

d. Stage/Tent Canopy

Chairperson Southard commented that Public Works Director Carlson reported on this item earlier in the meeting.

e. Summer Concert Series

Chairperson Southard and Director Bushway have gotten no feedback on the series nor has the Director contacted potential bands for summer events.

f. Archaeological Study

Commissioner Stone commented that plans need to be obtained in order to move forward on this item that has been ongoing for two (2) years. Contact with the CLA, the Town Engineer was suggested; it will be added to the next meeting agenda by Chairperson Southard.

12. New Business

a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Elect the 2023 Parks and Recreation Commission Officers.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Clang to approve the current Commission Officers for 2023 as follows: Chair: Kate Southard, Vice Chair: Rocky Stone; and Secretary: Morgan Matthewson. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve the 2023-2024 Recreation Budget.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Stone to approve the 2023-2024 Recreation Budget. Discussion: Director Bushway made a couple of adjustments to the Budget to reflect current expenditures. He received a request for a Behaviorist for Summer Camp, a cost of \$6,000, for children ages 5-8 years old who have one-to-one interaction in school but not during the summer. The concern is these children are taking away from the summer camp experience for other kids. Commissioner Chase inquired about alternative options to address the issue and asked whether a Behaviorist would help. Director Bushway explained there are no other options nor are parents identifying children who have issues. There are usually three (3) staff persons, two (2) are dealing with 30 kids and the other is doing one-to-one interaction. The cost for the behaviorist for seven (7) weeks at 40 hours. The Assistant Camp Director is paid \$20 per hour. Commissioner Stone remarked the budget looks okay but said a 100% increase for a Behaviorist may not go over well and suggested its time to increase the cost of summer camp. Prior Recreation budgets have come in at zero percent or less; they have been conservatively frugal. Chairperson Southard suggested that with 200 kids attending each week a \$5.00 increase per week to defray the cost of the behaviorist. It was noted there have been more behavior issues since the onset of Covid. It is important to address and will remove/enhance the experience for everyone else per Commissioner Chase. Commissioner Clang suggested presenting the budget as is and increasing the summer camp fee by \$5.00 thereafter if budget is not approved. The adequacy of \$5,000 for scholarships was questioned by Commissioner Chase; Director Bushway reported funds were taken from Special Revenue to make up the difference. The Director also commented the Town Council has always been supportive of the Recreation Program. **Motion** by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Stone to amend the 2023-2024 Recreation Budget to add \$6,000 increasing the total budget from \$318,445 to \$324,445. Discussion: none. Roll Call vote: *In favor*: Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed*: None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried. **Original Motion**: Roll Call vote: *In favor*: Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed*: None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried, as amended.

c. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve the Capital Improvement Plan for 2023-2028.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Stone to approve the Capital Improvement Plan for 2023 – 2028. Discussion: Commissioner Stone noted there are four (4) items scheduled for 2023-2024 totaling \$900,000; the remaining four (4) years were discussed by the Commission this evening. Roll Call vote: *In favor*: Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed*: None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

d. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve Moving \$2,075.24 from Programs #10730-53038 to Summer Camp Program #10730-53070.

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Carver to approve the transfer of \$2,075.24 from Programs #10730-53038 to Summer Camp Program #10730-53070. Discussion: Commissioner Stone noted the transfer is to zero out the Summer Camp Program using Program funds that has a sufficient amount to cover the deficit. *In favor*: Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed*: None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- e. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve Moving \$409.01 from Programs #10730-53038 to Holiday Parade #10730-52007.

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Carver to approve the transfer of \$409.01 from Programs #10730-53038 to Holiday Parade #10730-52007. Discussion: none. *In favor:* Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed:* None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- f. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve Moving \$167 (reimbursement for rentals) from Programs #10730-53038 to Fair Oaks/Camp Oakdale #10730-53053.

Motion by Commissioner Clang; seconded by Commissioner Carver to transfer \$167 (reimbursement for rentals) from Programs #10730-53038 to Fair Oaks/Camp Oakdale #10730-53053. Discussion: none. *In favor:* Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed:* None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- g. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve a new line item 2023-2024 Recreation Budget to include \$5,000 for Recreation Camp Scholarships.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve a new line item 2023-2024 Recreation Budget to include \$5,000 for Recreation Camp Scholarships. Discussion: Chairperson Southard reported she spoke with Director Bushway who then spoke with the Finance Director. The Finance Director indicated the scholarship funds should be in the Recreation Department budget not Social Services. Director Bushway reported the Recreation Department would have more information per approval from Social Services to help a parent with a payment plan. Social Services would vet everyone and send a recommendation to Recreation. Commissioner Chase stated the Commission would have the option to add more funds to the line item. *In favor:* Commissioners Carver, Chase, Clang, Matthewson, Schober, Southard and Stone. *Opposed:* None. 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- h. Discussion of Memorandums of Agreement with Youth Sports Programs.

Motion by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Carver to table discussion of Memorandums of Agreement with Youth Sports Programs to the next Commission meeting. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

13. Communications. -- None

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 Bunnell.

Town Councilor Bunnell apologized for being late due to a conflict with another Commission meeting. He urged the Commission and/or the Recreation Department to stay in contact with youth football on the status of their request and to explain its stance regarding the field perimeter discrepancy. The contract with the Bradley School will be in place and was signed today by Director Bushway. Town Councilor Bunnell asked about the percentage increase to the 2023-2024 Recreation budget; approximately 10% according to Commissioner Stone. Since the date is

unknown for presentation of the budget to Finance, Town Councilor Bunnell urged the Commission to attend the meeting and voice its support of the budget. Also, he said he will rely on Gloria's notes to update him regarding the discussion of Agenda Items 7a. and 7b.

16. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway.

Director Bushway remarked the Bradley School will be using the Recreation gym per the contract signed by Mayor McDaniel today and forwarded it to the Town Clerk for public records. He and Public Works Director Carlson will attend a Wetlands meeting tomorrow night January 19th to answer questions concerning the removal of the asphalt from the old basketball area and the tennis courts asphalt that fall into a wetlands area. Director Bushway also remarked on having spoken with John Ventresca, president of the lacrosse program in Town. J. Ventresca has contacted the ARPA Committee regarding a proposal for \$30,000 to build a wall at Camp Oakdale to be used for lacrosse practice by the players that bounces back. He presumes the wall will be made of concrete but he is not sure. Tomorrow at 11:00 a.m., the Director and the Public Works Director will meet with Mr. Ventresca to discuss the lacrosse wall and information obtained will be forwarded back to the Commission.

17. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Carver apologized for his tardiness; Commissioner Chase concurred with the comment by Town Councilor Bunnell about attending the Finance meeting and supporting the upcoming budget. He also asked that the Commission receive feedback as to the results from the meeting. Director Bushway reported three (3) Town Councilors and Mayor McDaniel are present to ask budget questions. Chairperson Southard thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Clang to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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.**