

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting – April 19, 2023 -- 6:30 p.m.**  
**Town Council Chambers**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**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 began the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**3. Roll Call.**

Present were Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Jon Chase Noah Carver, Kevin Clang, Deborah Schober, Kate Southard, and Rocky Stone. Absent were Commissioners Noah Carver, Denise Gladue, and Morgan Matthewson. A quorum was not present.

Also present was Recreation Director Peter Bushway and Town Council Liaison Lenny Bunnell.

**4. Adjustments to the Agenda. – *None***

**5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit). -- *None***

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2023.

**Motion** by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

b. The Regular Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023.

**Motion** by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Chase to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

c. The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2023.

**Motion** by Commissioner Stone; seconded by Commissioner Beaupre to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

**7. Recreation Director's Report April 2023.**

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Director Bushway reported an additional update concerning the tennis/pickleball courts. The fence is installed and a gate has been added to the project. The fence has been moved off to the opposite corner at a cost of \$3,500 and a new gate will be installed in another week or so. The original gate in the direction of the Dog Park would create a tight turn that would not accommodate a 8-foot truck and would require moving the benches. The site repair work has been completed. The Director also received an email this morning from the onsite supervisor concerning installation of glue that will level the low spots requires three (3) days of 50-plus degree weather before the paint or lines can be applied. The project is under budget with \$100,000 from ARPA that has been spent, \$500,000 from the State is reimbursement—the original budget was \$383,000 per a question by Commissioner Chase. Walkway access to the Dog Park and padding around the light fixtures may be considered for any surplus. Chairperson Southard reported a behaviorist for summer camp will be put forward by the Finance Committee for \$6,000 as requested and would be included in the summer camp line item. Director Bushway reported he spoke today with an applicant about the position. He also reported on a Monday night TARP meeting when it will review a wage adjustment for summer camp help due to the increase of the minimum wage from \$14.00 per hour to \$15.00, a minor change that will then be recommended to the Town Council. The playground installation will occur on May 8--a crew from Public Works and a company representative will be available for the installation and once the playground equipment is delivered it will be stored behind the Community Center.

8. Report from Finance.

Director Bushway reported the line item adjustments approved by the Commission are finally done. Chairperson Southard and Commissioner Stone noted an overage in the Fair Oaks/Oakdale line item of \$700; Director Bushway attributed the overage to refunds from deposits for rental of Department facilities. The rental deposit is \$100 and \$50 is given back once the facility has been inspected.

9. May Newsletter.

Director Bushway reported receiving an email from Commissioner Stone regarding a golf tournament Project Recreation is holding. The tournament will be noticed in the newsletter and Commissioner Stone will notify the chair of the same.

10. Parks and Facilities

a. Tennis Courts Update

Chairperson Southard reported Public Works Director Carlson was unable to attend tonight's meeting. This item was addressed under Item 7, Director's Report for April 2023.

b. Mostowy Design

Director Bushway remarked on the drawings of open trails that would make sense with holes for frisbee and disc golf in addition to space to just hang out. He asked whether the Commission wanted the Town Engineer, CLA, for a master plan. Commissioner Stone noted discussion for getting cost estimates. Director Bushway reported Groton paid \$22,000 for disc golf but said cost is determined by how elaborate the Commission wants it to be. He also spoke with someone in Town who will provide poles. Commissioner Beaupre asked about the

perimeters for existing trails; only one (1) existing trail has a perimeter and mileage markers will be posted. Commissioner Chase suggested again that the Commission takes informal trips to area trails in Salem and Old Mystic on a Saturday or Sunday to assess what it would like to see at the property. He also mentioned recommendations were previously made by the CT DEEP for parts of the property that he may have; he will search for that information.

c. Dog Park/Tennis Court Bathrooms

Director Bushway reported on the status of the tennis court bathrooms that have new doors, a new roof and the water to the facilities is being tested by DPH. Additionally, there are new sinks, a working hot water heater, and security cameras. He noted the vandalism that used to occur particularly to the back side. Per a question by Commissioner Chase, the Director reported the bathrooms will be open from 8:00 a.m. and close at 11:00 p.m. and will be on timers. Commissioner Stone suggested putting up a temporary sign that the bathrooms are open. The Dog Park was discussed earlier under Item 7, the Director’s Report for April 2023.

d. Pavilion Repair Status

Director Bushway reported Public Works Director Carlson is meeting with individual contractors as there were no bids for the second round in the bid process to determine when the work can be done and the cost for it. He added the timeline for this project may effect the Farmers Market as well as other events and may force the need to do work in November and December.

e. List of Improvements for Public Works

Chairperson Southard reported she will check with Public Works Director Carlson on this item. Commissioner Chase noted the former tennis court area is demolished and he has been checking the work done at Camp Oakdale which he described as great.

11. Unfinished Business.

a. Montville Carnival 2023

Chairperson Southard reported the Carnival Committee met earlier this month and work continues to obtain vendors and performers. Director Bushway reported on a proposed rock wall that was noticed to the Masons on partnering with the Department. He noted Fantastic Inflatables in Colchester has some that can be rented for \$1,450 per day or \$2,400 for two (2) days and said \$3.00 would be charged. Membership with the Masons has fallen and the Department would split the cost of an inflatable but the Masons only have \$500 in their checking account. They will provide staff of three (3) other people all weekend but expenses and revenue would come from the carnival. Commissioner Beaupre suggested raising the price to \$5.00 instead of \$3.00 and a tryout of the inflatable for one (1) day. Chairman Southard reported on a meeting with the carnival company next week; Director Bushway noted the changes to the facility may mean having to move the stage to a different location on a 45-degree angle near the well and facing the building. The ride machine has been repaired as well as the Ferris wheel. Commissioner Stone reported the Boosters want to do a dunk tank or a bounce house which cannot have a roof on it per Director Bushway.

b. Summer Concert Series

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Director Bushway reported four (4) contracts have been received from bands and others were sent but not yet returned. The first concert is scheduled for June 29<sup>th</sup> at the large pavilion. He will be responsible for the food trucks.

c. Farmers Market 2023

Chairperson Southard reported a meeting was held the beginning of the month and vendors are being sought and all theme nights have been set. Food trucks are also being pursued.

d. Youth Sports MOAs

Chairman Southard reported this item will be discussed. Director Bushway reported two (2) sports events are going on currently and the next two (2) will be football. He also received an email about reinvigorating the wrestling program—thus, football, wrestling, soccer, and lacrosse would be the four (4) fall sports. Commissioner Stone noted wording is needed for parking signs; Commissioner Chase offered to help.

12. New Business

a. Skateboard Park

Chairperson Southard reported on a member of the community who attended last month's Commission meeting made remarks about having a skateboard Park in Town. She spoke with Director Bushway about the suggestion who commented the cost would depend on the kind—ramps on a flat surface that had a cost of \$128,000 in the early 90's when he resided in Maine or having one with a pool at a cost in excess of \$300,000. Commissioner Stone remarked on whether a skateboard park was once proposed behind the tennis courts; Commissioner Chase suggested a hybrid approach elevated for permanency as a compromise. The Commission then discussed use of the Dog Park and whether the public was satisfied with it; Commissioner Beaupre noted it is used a lot; Director Bushway noted some of the equipment is not used. Providing water to the park was discussed by the Commission and a proposal for the same as a potential Eagle Scout project was suggested by Commissioner Chase.

b. Fitness Wall

Chairperson Southard liked this idea two (2) years ago when initially hearing about the fitness wall. Representatives of National Fitness Campaign contacted Town Council Chair McNally about it. There are currently fitness walls in Lewiston,, ME and Plainville, CT is getting one and she plans to reach out to them. The fitness wall is approximately a half court, a free workout area, with equipment that includes pull up bars, rings, box jumps, push bars, and other agility equipment secured to a wall. A handout of the company's PowerPoint presentation about the fitness wall was distributed to the Commission. The company is looking to expand its reach and has a \$30,000 grant available that does not cover the cost of much. A standard fitness wall is \$155,000, the concrete slab for it is \$20,000 and the installation is \$25,000, thus \$130,000 -- \$170,000 would be needed. The Commission discussed/learned the following : it is a company selling point (*Commissioner Chase*); it is willing to train people to be trainers, it can be included in the CIP down the road with 10 fitness stations and consideration for a trail to it (*Commissioner Stone*); use of special revenue fund for upgrades or to partially fund the wall (*Commissioner Beaupre*); plans for the area near the tennis courts would be important for future use and the idea has merit (*Commissioner Chase*). As far as ongoing costs and

deterioration as questioned by Commissioner Clang, Director Bushway commented the fitness wall structure is mostly metal and concrete and it offers a more intense workout. There is one in Bridgeport worth looking at. The company would also help to attain sponsors to reduce the cost of the project. Chairperson Southard researched the ones in Massachusetts and noted they were all sponsored by Massachusetts Health.

13. Communications.

Chairperson Southard received an email from Heather Tennison about having workout programs in Town and stated her son has benefited from one. A handout of the workout program was distributed to the Commission. Lamar Mikel, CEO of DHW Athletics, heads a athletics mentoring program that is open to middle and high schools students that promotes health and fitness for kids. According to his brochure, *The mentor serves as a coach, helping the student focus on the important steps of the academics, personal growth, career development, goal setting, life skills, weight loss through sports.* L. Mikel spoke to the success of his program in that kids trained through his program come back to the community and emphasized it does not depend upon funds from other programs but is run in coordination with the Norwich Recreation Department. He also spoke of confidence building of youth to the hard realities of life, running a basketball program at St. Bernard's and the start of an AAU program that travels and has four (2) teams this year whose costs are reduced for parents. Responding to questions from the Commission, L. Mikel stated the facilities needed by the program are a gym or an outside area and he is assisted by other coaches. He is involved in a water wars event with the Norwich Chief of Police and the Mayor that includes food trucks, an ice cream truck, a bouncy house and possibly a water slide for this third year of the event; an event that is run with other nonprofits. Per a question about marketing, the program would be included in the Town red book and website, Facebook, and other social media. As to whether there is an interest in Montville for this program, L. Mikel spoke of having kids evolve in a safe way. Commissioner Stone thanked him for his presentation; Director Bushway remarked that he had spoken with his DHS Athletics vice-president and is waiting on information from him.

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 reported the Finance Committee met yesterday and reviewed the Department budget. The Mayor's proposed budget comes with a 2 mill increase. The Department budget was cut as follows: 1) Part-time recreation programs, \$13,000 to \$7,500; 2) Part-time Camp Oakdale, \$120,000 to \$110,000; 3) Advertising, \$2,000 to \$1,500; and 4) Basketball referees, from \$4,000, although it was originally allocated at \$4,000. There will be more meetings and a Public Hearing next week that he urged the Commission to attend and voice their support. TARP will meet next Monday with Director Bushway concerning modification of the pay scale for summer help to be in line with surrounding towns. The Town Councilor also spoke of an opening on the Commission and Mary Hillman has expressed interest. He suggested the Commission attend the Town Council meeting to support her appointment for the Commission to continue in harmony, calmness, and the spirit of

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cooperation and not the history of problems that follow the other candidate. Commissioner Schober asked whether candidates are interviewed; Town Councilor Bunnell stated one applicant was available by cell phone, Mary Hillman was interviewed. Commissioner Chase asked whether the Department budget cuts were random; Town Councilor Bunnell reported the next meeting of the Finance Committee will be a line by line review of the budget. Commissioner Stone asked if he would make a copy of the cuts and send them to the Commission. Director Bushway was perplexed as to why the Department had not been contacted about the cuts. He said in the past a percentage for cuts was laid out and the Department was then asked where it wanted the cuts to come from,. He also remarked that line items with balances are not spent are generally for a specific reason thus it forces departments to spend when not needed. Commissioner Chase asked for the best way the Commission can be involved; Town Councilor Bunnell responded for the Commission o attend the next Finance meeting.

16. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway. -- *None*

17. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Stone remarked on progress on numbering the unnumbered park areas that he will review with Commissioner Chase. He also commented on the celebration for the new tennis/pickleball courts which Chairperson Southard said is being planned. Commissioner Beaupre referenced the three (3) budget cuts and recalled it was expressed a couple years ago the need to use the special revenue funds that cannot be used to replace the budget items that are cut. Commissioner Chase concurred with Commissioner Beaupre’s comments and inquired of Director Bushway how the special revenue is used. Commissioner Beaupre remarked the fund was used to purchase the stage, trailer , and screen at a cost of \$14,000, \$8,000, and \$1,400, respectively according to Director Bushway who explained the fund is primarily used for large purchases. Commissioner Chase noted the concern by Commissioner Beaupre has merit and should be looked at in a more integrative way. Chairperson Southard inquired if the fund could be used for the rock wall for the carnival; Director Bushway noted donations were obtained for the van.

18. Adjournment.

**Motion** by Commissioner Beaupre; seconded by Commissioner Clang to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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.**