

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – July 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 called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners Jon Chase, Mary Hillman, Morgan Matthewson, Deborah Schober, Kate Southard and Rocky Stone. Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver and Kevin Clang were absent.

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

4. Adjustments to the Agenda. – *None*

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

Chairperson Southard asked three (3) times for remarks. Robert Yuchniuk of 478 Fire Street, Oakdale remarked in favor of Agenda, Item 12b, Improvements to the Dance Room at the Community Center. He was contacted awhile back about this endeavor and noted the potential removal of a wall that is not load bearing to provide additional space to the dance area. The existing floor tiles have tested positive for asbestos; a new floating, tile floor would cover the chipped, asbestos laden tiles. He recommended this remedy to the Town Council.

Britney Casey, 717 Raymond Hill Road, Oakdale is a mother of three (3) who all participate in the Montville dance program that includes 144 dancers and 23 classes beginning in 2021 to present and spoke of the parties and meals cooked among those in this program. The dance program helps kids in Montville and also those outside of the Town although there was a slowdown during the pandemic. A dance performance was recently held at the Farmers Market. The current dance room at Fair Oaks is tiny, the floor outdated and slippery and the cause of injuries as confirmed by a chiropractor concerning potential longtime damage to the body. Improvements to the dance floor are being sought for the kids.

Nicole Holland, 126 Buckeye Road, Groton, is a Navy spouse with a daughter who recently moved back to the area in 2017. The dance program has helped her daughter to dance again

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by challenging her to be a successful by working hard. The Town needs a safe dance floor for the kids.

Robert Yuchniuk, 478 Fire Street. Oakdale has two (2) daughters in the dance program that has been good for the community and has brought about close friendships. His middle school daughter wants to be a dance teacher. He remarked on complaints about the existing dance floor at the Community Center that is chipped, cracked resulting in kids getting hurt. Of the 144 students, some take multiple classes and deserve a safe place to dance.

Brianne Mooney, 34 Arrowood Drive, Groton is a Navy spouse with an 8-year old daughter who participates in the dance program wearing points on the floor. A new floor is needed so the kids can dance safely.

Marley and Jessica Hayner, 14 Hunters Road, Oakdale, are a mother and her daughter who has been dancing since 2019 . Jessica remarked on the need to have the dance floor repaired. Marley wants to keep Jessica and her friends safe and the condition of the existing dance floor is hard on the body. Specifically, “there is no need to cause health issues for something so loved.”

Rebecca and Avery Rothholz, 63 Beechwood Road, Oakdale, a mother who takes an adult tap class and her daughter who also dances. Wearing dance shoes on the existing dance floor can be slippery and spills can happen so a safe floor is needed. Avery, who wants to be a dance teacher, wants to try harder and to do what makes her happy.

Claire Millhouse, 75 Sunnyside Road Ext., Norwich remarked the existing dance floor is dangerous and making it safer so no one needs to worry.

Misty Cermak-Ganoe, 12 Amanda Court, Uncasville remarked the dance program is good for the Town creating a sense of community. The aim is to make the dance floor safe for kids by removing asbestos with kids present who are jumping up and down. She asked the Commission to invest in the program.

William Scott, 558 Fire Street, Oakdale is a dance dad of 10-year old who has been dancing for 8 years and an 8-year old who has been dancing 6 years. His daughters are consistent and have participated in recitals. He gave kudos to the moms who work together and assist in any way.

Ella Scott, 558 Fire Street, Oakdale, read her letter of support for repairing the dance floor into the record. She praised her “best dance teacher” stating her desire is to be a ballerina. She also remarked she has slipped when dancing and her legs hurt as well.

Letters in support of improving the Community Center dance floor were received from the following: Mackenzie Holland, 126 Buckeye Road, Groton (daughter of Nicole); Zen Ganoe, 12 Amanda Court, Uncasville; Misty Cermak-Ganoe, 12 Amanda Drive, Uncasville; Ella Scott, 558 Fire Street, Oakdale; Brittany Casey, 171 Raymond Hill Road, Oakdale; Nicole

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Holland, 126 Buckeye Road, Groton; Mary Ella Casey, 717 Raymond Hill Road, Oakdale; Sarah Cole, 4 BMW Drive, Griswold; Kayla Turker, 3 Lake Road, Bozrah; Stephanie Lombard, 34 Maple Avenue, Uncasville; Kathy So, 22 Rhode Island Drive, Oakdale; Christine and Steve Monroe for the their 4-year old daughter Ella, 82 Jerome Road, A-213 Uncasville; and Tammie Scott, 558 Fire Street, Oakdale.

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

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2023.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stone; seconded by Commissioner Chase to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0; all in favor. **Motion carried.**

7. Recreation Director’s Report June 2023.

Director Bushway gave updates on all Department projects identified in the Director’s Report. The report is not included in the meeting minutes per a question by Vice-Chair

8. Report from Finance.

Director Bushway reported he has been at the Finance Office every day for the past week regarding Department finances year end. The June financial report and the FY2023 year-end financial report should be complete by the end of July. Per his meeting with the Finance Director today, the line item transfers will be executed. Vice-Chair Stone remarked that with the \$23,000 Department balance discussed last month it was thought it would be sufficient to accommodate the transfers. Director Bushway reported that mold wiped out half of the Department equipment and those for special needs children. Vice-Chair Stone noted the special projects account may be used for the same.

9. June Newsletter.

Director Bushway reported the list of dates for the Summer Concerts series will be updated in the newsletter. An Inferno Food Truck Festival is scheduled for July 29 and each truck will have a spicy food offering. There will also be live music, free parking and entry to the event. The band Rusty Nuts will perform on June 20 and food will be available for purchase. . Commissioner Hillman remarked adding information about whether cash or card are acceptable prior to the event would be helpful. Concert attendance was 217 for Wicked Peach and 103 for Heartland.

10. Parks and Facilities

- a. Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion

Chairperson Southard reported that additional funds were provided by the Town for the large pavilion structure repair and painting. Specifications for the project will go out to bid. Commissioner Chase remarked it was disappointing that projection has taken so long.

- b. Basketball Courts at Camp Oakdale

Chairperson Southard reported that funded money was obtained for the basketball court; Director Bushway reported no events will be booked for the pavilion after November 27. He also responded to Vice-Chair Stone regarding the cost per basketball court of \$23,000. Vice-

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Chair Stone spoke to the urgency for the bid to go out; Director Bushway is working Public Works Director Carlson on the same.

c. Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Vice-Chair Stone reported 350 members using the courts and he visited there tonight and noted the handicap parking sign is done. Signs espousing the use of tennis shoes on the courts will be installed as well as signs for tennis/pickleball court activities. Signs will be obtained from Fast Signs per Director Bushway. Commissioner Chase remarked that 1 ½ years ago there was discussion about the signs being uniform in appearance and consistent in size and color. The address of the courts was searched on Google Maps and asked for suggestions—signs are the Camp are now loaded into this application according to Vice-Chair Stone. Commissioner Chase gave credit to the Town Assessor for formulating addresses to locations on the same property. Chairperson Southard inquired about squeegees; Director Bushway reported he is working on obtaining two (2) of them in addition to 20 bag hangers to attach to the fence that will not be too heavy as to preserve the fence. Chairperson Southard remarked on the free pickleball event scheduled for July 29; Director Bushway reported that up to 24 adults will be accommodated.

d. Desjardins Park

Vice-Chair Stone reported on allocated funds for refurbishing this park and his having met with five (5) residents regarding improvements for the same. Items such as benches are needed, one (1) or two (2) picnic tables, and maintenance of the grass that was discussed with Public Works Director Carlson in addition to the runoff issue on the basketball court. Director Bushway reported on improvements to the Park 10 years ago that included a slide and a swing set that will be moved down at a cost of \$18,000 and any remaining funds will be used to clean-up the basketball court and for painting and sealing cracks. Two (2) signs for the park will arrive in a couple of weeks and will include the address on it as well as the signage at the street that will be affixed so it can be seen. Chairperson Southard thanked Vice-Chair Stone for his help on this item.

e. Camp Oakdale Expansion Plan (Mostowy Property)

Chairperson Southard remarked on the plan from the Town Engineer CLA on the access road and walkway to Camp Oakdale that awaits funding to move forward. Vice-Chair Stone asked why the need to open up the Mostowy Property for an access road and wall toward the trail at a cost of \$60,000. Director Bushway responded that the need is for access by maintenance vehicles. Vice-Chair Stone suggested keeping the area mowed for a future field, opening the wall, and to consider using the area for disc golf. Commissioner Chase noted that DEEP had a good recommendation and also mentioned prior talk by the Commission to visit similar disc golf areas out-of-town but remarked fuller discussion is needed. Once the map for the property is obtained Commissioner Chase can take a look at it remarked Vice-Chair Stone who is additionally concerned about the ecological study. Director Bushway noted there is still money in the account for revisions to the plan.

11. Unfinished Business.

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- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to accept changes to the Montville Youth Sports Memorandums of Understanding.

Motion by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Commissioner Chase to accept the Montville Youth Sports Memorandums of Understanding. Discussion: Chairperson Southard remarked the MOU was reviewed by subcommittee that noticed the three (3) were all different. Chairperson Southard, Commissioner Chase and Town Councilor Bunnell reviewed them item by item and thought it was a solid document. Commissioner Matthewson noted a lacrosse note at the top of the document then questioned her understanding that the fences were to be locked and not just for softball and that having one (1) gate open allowed no real space for a vehicle to turn around. Commissioner Chase responded that she may be right but the subcommittee focused its attention on the areas highlighted by the Town insurance carrier and said the agreements were brought into uniformity and have a one-year term that can be extended to a year and a half. The subcommittee aimed to address the enforcement of parking rules and traffic rules mentioned a month ago, parking signage, in addition to spelling errors. Provisions will allow for the drop-off/removal of items one-hour prior before and after an event but may not work if there are overlapping events. That concern would only be an issue during the weekend not during the week when there is less activity. Town Council Chair McNally remarked having gates would be problematic for ambulance entries and exits and the insurance carrier was concerned about kids running thru the cars. He added there had never been a problem for football event to have access two to three hours prior to its start. The subcommittee also focused consideration on pedestrians and eliminating traffic on the access road per the insurance company. The Commission will have Director Bushway fill in the blank areas of the MOU for football, lacrosse, and soccer. A vote on the final drafts of the MOU will occur at the next Commission meeting. Town Councilor Bunnell asked why the vote was being tabled. Vice-Chair Stone responded it was to review whether parking regulations need to be included in the MOU. **Motion** by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Commissioner Stone to withdraw the motion and table it until the August Commission meeting.. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. **Motion carried.**

- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Expand Field 5.

Motion by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Commissioner Chase to expand Field 5. Discussion: Vice-Chair Stone noted the Commission needs to know the cost and timeframe for this project. Chairperson Southard reported having discussed the issue with Land Development Director Burdick noting the process make take a few months. She added Public Works Director Carlson said the cost could be up to \$100,000 and the project has never been in the CIP. The Commission listened to supporters of the project at its last meeting but did not hear how it would be moved along remarked Vice-Chair Stone who also remarked the scope of the project is unknown and there would be interference with the soccer field. Commissioner Chase remarked a hearing would be requested with the Inland Wetlands Commission that has a process and timeframe. After approval there is an appeal period that would conclude at the end of October which would put the project out of the time frame for this season and would also depend on the availability of funds. Chairperson Southard remarked the issue is not doable now; Town Council Chair McNally remarked the aim to obtain approval for the concept and Director Burdick will discern if it can be done and could be a 2-3 year project. Chairperson Southard noted the aim is to do the project without it effecting another field and she will work

with Town Council Chair McNally on the same. **Motion** by Commissioner Matthewson; seconded by Vice-Chair Stone to withdraw the motion. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. **Motion carried.**

12. New Business

a. Community Center Name Change

Chairperson Southard remarked that the name of the community center would be changed to Fair Oaks the Home of Parks & Recreation and Youth Services Bureau. The Commission was notified of the change as a courtesy in compliance with the Town Charter. The concern by Commissioner Chase was that the space is considered a recreation in accordance with the Town Charter and may affect the potential for grant funds although it would have none according to Mayor McDaniel. Town Council Chair McNally remarked the blessing of the Commission was being sought and the ordinance can be changed if the Commission desires. Town Councilor Bunnell noted The Community Center at Fair Oaks was the name change done two (2) years ago and is currently used by Youth Services and Parks & Recreation; per Commissioner Chase there is not a recreation department there. Town Councilor Bunnell commented that the sign for the community center would be very large and suggested letting the Town Council figure it out.

b. Improvements to Dance Room at the Community Center.

Chairperson Southard remarked Town Councilor Yuchniuk brought the condition of the dance room to the attention of the Commission and Public Works Director Carlson. There was no plan to remove the wall a few years ago due to asbestos. It is felt that the dance program is successful. Britney Casey explained the proposed replacement flooring required no drilling and is a do-it-yourself floor that dance moms and dad would volunteer to install. The floor can remain in place and has a 10-year warranty. Commissioner Chase was concerned the work would not occur fast; Vice-Chair Stone remarked dance events are great and will have special funding. Town Councilor Bunnell has checked with Youth Services; they would have no problem with it and would not interfere with the program. Commissioner Matthewson spoke of her 14 years of dance experience and stated a better floor would be life changing. **Motion** by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve improvements to the dance room at the Community Center. Voice vote: 6-0-0; all in favor. **Motion carried.** B. Casey will help find and fund the improvements to the dance floor.

13. Communications.

Chairperson Southard reported receiving a message online from James Wood concerning having a men softball league in Town. Director Bushway will contact him and noted there was such a league

14. Remarks from the Public of Non-Agenda items (3-minute limit).

Chairperson Southard asked three (3) times for remarks. Robert Yuchniuk, 478 Fire Street, Oakdale thanked the Commission for its thoughts and actions regarding the Community Center dance room floor.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison Bunnell.

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Town Councilor Bunnell remarked the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was reviewed in its entirety for content and language and noted the objection stated this evening to make the document uniform and for control of the driveway should not have prevented a vote. He added he was happy to act on the request by the dance group and suggested removing the wall later and moving forward with installing a new floor.

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

17. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioners Hillman, Matthewson, and Vice-Chair Stone thanked the public for its participation this evening. Commissioner Chase remarked on his concern regarding the unclear items having to do with the MOU and noted work was done with the Town insurance carrier and Town Councilor Bunnell to bring it to conclusion. He also remarked there is now clarity about the football field request and the impression that it needed to happen immediately.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stone; seconded by Commissioner Schober to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, 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.**