

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – December 20, 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.

Vice-Chair Stone called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Commissioners William Barlow, Jon Chase, Morgan Matthewson, John Plikus, Deborah Schober and Vice-Chair Rocky Stone. Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver, and Mary Hillman were absent.

Town Council Liaison Kate Southard was also present. Director Peter Bushway was absent.

4. Adjustments to the Agenda.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stone; seconded by Commissioner Schober to amend Item 6a, to read “November 15” not “November 19.” Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor.
Motion carried.

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

Vice-Chair Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of November 15 , 2023. (AMENDED, see Item 4.)
Motion by Commissioner Barlow; seconded by Commissioner Schober to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 15 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor.
Motion carried.

7. Recreation Director’s Report December 2023.

Vice-Chair Stone summarized the December Director’s Report highlighting the scavenger hunt, youth basketball, basketball clinic, floral class, budget, and the Community Booklet. Commissioner Chase remarked that the report can be added to the minutes as done by some other commissions or posted with the meeting materials, i.e., for public hearings to make them more readily available. He suggested making an inquiry with the Town Clerk on the same.

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8. Report from Finance.

Vice-Chair Stone noted that the negative line items from the report last month have been cleared up although he thought motions from the Commission were required for the same. He did notice another negative line item, Fair Oaks, that will clear itself once funds are received.

9. November Newsletter.

Vice-Chair Stone remarked that no new programs are mentioned in the newsletter. He noted that he had asked Director Bushway to include all ongoing and upcoming programs. Commissioner Schober noted a correction to the newsletter; to move Town Councilor Southard to the bottom of the list of commissioners as the liaison.

10. Unfinished Business

a. Walk Arounds

Vice-Chair Stone reported that he had not put together a list of the walk arounds. Commissioner Schober noted it was agreed to readdress this item in the spring due to the weather. This item will be removed from the agenda.

b. Discussion of projects and funding status

Vice-Chair Stone reported he wanted to compile a list of all current and planned projects in one place to include ongoing plans and funding for them. He was not sure if his list of projects was a good format but said it could be developed over the next few months so that it works for everyone. Commissioner Barlow inquired if the list was currently being worked on; Vice-Chair Stone gave a detailed overview of the project list stating columns could be added to it. Commissioner Chase remarked the list was helpful and noted a lot of items on it was a result of the walk arounds. He also noted that some of the projects can be accommodated through Public Works but said it was also a means to identify projects done over several years.

c. Dance Room Update

Vice-Chair Stone reported on an email from Public Works Director Carlson that dance room would be closed down the week of January 8. Floor and ceiling tiles and sound acoustics will be installed. A local business has offered space to the dance program for that week. Commissioner Barlow asked whether the business was a public works location or a private contractor; Vice-Chair Stone noted the timing was opportune as the class is near its end so stopping classes was not an option.

11. New Business.

a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to form a Nominating Committee to Approve the Slate of Nominees of the Parks and Recreation Commission Officers for Election at the January 17, 2024, Meeting.

As a point of order, Commissioner Chase remarked this topic was discussed last month and per the Commission bylaws he has been critical as to authority and compliance to the same. He noted he had not seen an agenda or minutes posted for the committee meeting. Thus, to comply with the FOIA, he proposed that the committee submits agendas and post minutes to comply with a FOI request. Commissioner Chase recognized it was an oversight on the part of the committee but noted the word of the Commission is a bigger problem.

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Motion by Commissioner Chase; seconded by Commissioner Barlow to table this motion until the next Commission meeting on January 17, 2024. Discussion: Commissioner Chase commented on the instruction received by the Commission from the Town Attorney three (3) years ago regarding the FOIA. He noted the delay of approval would be a good opportunity to bring the matter into proper order. Vice-Chair Stone noted the Commission tries to follow the bylaws stating that often does not make since but said a formal committee meeting will be held and minutes taken. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. **Motion carried.**

b. FY 2024-2025 Budget discussions.

Vice-Chair Stone reported he was notified budgets are being requested by January, noting the Commission will only have one (1) meeting before submittal of the budget and the CIP. He remarked that the budget is prepared by Director Bushway as he is aware of the needs and requirements of the Department. The Vice-Chair noted the budget submittal was included in the meeting packet he sent.

c. FY 2024-2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) discussions.

Vice-Chair Stone reported that the CIP was developed from last year's plan as nothing from it was funded last year. The items from it were moved to the fiscal year, 2024-2025. The Vice-Chair reported those CIP items were pulled as it was thought they would be funded through local capital improvement funds so price estimates were obtained. However, the local CIP funds could not be used for the items as they had been removed from that year's CIP. Currently, the Commission was asked to resubmit the items to its CIP pending approval by the Town Council and then moving them to local CIP. The Commission discussed the circumstances of the items removal as questioned by Commissioner Matthewson noting the action was not fully understood and included the large pavilion for the third year in a row. The last quote received for the items was \$247,800 but some Town Councilors were looking for a more cost effective amount. Commissioner Chase explained that the 12 x 12 posts for the large pavilion were poured in concrete in the 1970's; but now they are rotting and discussion ensued about digging out the rot and with the Town Engineer involved the situation became more complicated. Commissioner Plikus asked whether the posts had been tested; Vice-Chair Stone noted they were thoroughly done by the Town Engineer. The Vice-Chair reported that the large pavilion needs a new roof in addition to the posts and a new bid package is been worked on for the same. Commission Plikus remarked it would be cheaper to demolish the structure—Vice Chair Stone reported the price for the same two (2) years ago was \$400,000. Demolition would also prevent rentals and the Farmers Market according to Commissioner Matthewson. The Vice-Chair reported looking to have the posts repaired for less than \$100,000—there is currently \$65,000 in the Public Works budget for the same and work would be done after the Farmers Market et al. He clarified for Commissioner Barlow that the project is a Public Works project and there is not \$300,000 to complete all of the work which Commissioner Matthewson was reluctant to do and suggested reverting back to the full bid of \$300,000. Vice Chair Stone relayed that the Commission was not consulted on the matter, i.e., funds for the basketball courts and the large pavilion repairs. Commissioner Matthewson noted the guidance sent by the Finance Director concerning the CIP items. Commissioner Chase inquired how the project became a part of the CIP given it is a repair and is not an item typically included in CIP. The

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Vice-Chair remarked that the Commission will eventually vote on the items with a figure that will be developed with input by Director Bushway and Public Works Director Carlson. Commissioner Chase questioned whether the small pavilion will be considered given it was built at the same time as the large pavilion. Town Councilor Southard reported the topic was mentioned at a Public Works meeting so she feels it will be worked on. Commissioner Barlow suggested obtaining a contractor to review both pavilions although chances for approval are slim. According to Vice-Chair Stone, although it would be important to have someone look at all the facilities it will eventually require a vote of the Commission with commentary on each item individually.

d. Farmers Market Committee appointment

Vice-Chair Stone remarked he was looking for a volunteer for the Farmers Market; Commissioner Chase noted Town Councilor Southard did a great job with that appointment. Town Councilor Southard remarked that since she pushed for revival of the Farmers Market she will continue to work with everyone involved, attend meetings that will begin in January/February and end in November and be a liaison between the Farmers Market and the Commission. Vice-Chair Stone reported he was told by the Town Clerk that someone from the Commission must be appointed to the Committee as it was appointed by the Town Council. Town Councilor Southard reported the committee consisted of vendors, farmers, and people interested in making the Farmers Market better. Commissioner Chase suggested a second, nonvoting volunteer. Commissioner Matthewson volunteered for the appointment to the Committee and Commissioner Schober volunteered to be an alternate and they will be recommended by Vice-Chair Stone. A vote on the same will be made at the next Commission meeting.

12. Communications.

Vice-Chair Stone reported that Director Bushway sent notice today of a company that is looking to put a clothing box at the Town Hall per a recommendation and initiative by Public Works Director Carlson. The company donates clothing to Goodwill and ripped clothes are made into rags. There is currently a clothing box at the landfill. The Vice-Chair determined the box would be a good idea if the company is responsible for organization and clean-up of areas. He suggested the item be tabled until next month in order to get more information and to determine whether Public Works will clean up any mess a, trial 1-2 month period, according to Commissioner Barlow. Commissioner Chase suggested it could be placed at the transfer station since it is supervised and given that Fair Oaks is used for different reasons. Commissioner Matthewson suggested the box be placed near Public Works and that it is not an eyesore per Commissioner Barlow.

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

Vice-Chair Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

14. Remarks from Town Council Liaison Southard.

Town Councilor Southard remarked that the Tree Lighting was really nice and that it was too bad the Holiday Parade was cancelled. She also reported that budgets will be tight and scrutinized by Finance. She will also continue to attend Public Works meetings. The Town

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Councilor also thanked Commissioner Morgan and Commissioner Schober for volunteering to help with the Farmers Market. Lastly, she concluded by asking everyone to enjoy the holiday and to stay safe.

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

16. Remarks from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Chase welcomed new Commissioners Barlow and Plikus. He noted that the Commission makes the effort to get along with each other and to work out disagreements through discussion about the Department. Commissioner Plikus inquired whether the Town has an open budget; Vice-Chair Stone remarked that the budget had by the Commission is what is submitted by Director Bushway. The Vice-Chair further explained that items can be requested but they must be justified and thereafter have to be approved by Finance, the Mayor, and the Town Council. Town Councilor Southard noted that the budget will need to be defended by Director Bushway and Vice-Chair Stone. Commissioner Chase referenced the Commission bylaws and ordinances that indicate the duty of the Commission to approve the Parks & Recreation Department budget, but the Commission budget is utilized for payment of the Recording Secretary. Commissioner Schober welcomed the new Commissioners. Commissioner Barlow remarked he was glad to be aboard, looking forward to working with everyone, and to get more involved. Commissioner Matthewson welcomed Commissioners Barlow and Plikus, remarked she was looking forward to working with the Farmers Market Committee and wished everyone happy holidays. Vice-Chair Stone welcomed the new commissioners who he remarked will be great assets and emphasized the hard work of the Commission that has tried to update all matters related to the Commission and its connection to other departments. He then thanked the Commission for putting up with him.

17. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stone; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, 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.**