

Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Chairman May 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 Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May.

Absent was Councilor Caron. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.

4. Special Recognitions/Presentations

a. Presentation by Lights Out Connecticut Co-Chairpersons Craig Repasz and Meredith Barges regarding the threat of light pollution to the health of humans and wildlife and the environment

At the request of the Conservation Commission, Councilor Sabilia welcomed and introduced *Lights Out Connecticut* Co-Chairpersons Craig Repasz and Meredith Barges who provided a presentation regarding the threat of light pollution to the health of humans and wildlife and the environment.

Lights Out Connecticut Co-Chairperson Repasz thanked the town for the invitation, especially the Mayor and Town Councilors, and was pleased that they were taking steps forward. The nighttime is a time of crucial habitat. Approximately 63% of all species are nocturnal and have evolved to depend on the night sky. Under normal conditions, 50% of the night is lit by stars. However, recent studies have shown that 90% of the European and United States population reside under light-polluted skies, 35% of which is considered wasted sky glow resulting in approximately \$3 billion in wasted energy costs. Moths, birds, and other creatures who rely on the night sky to live are constantly living in the daylight and migrating birds who become entrapped in areas of bright light, deviate from their course by 5° to a full circle, causing them to circle endlessly. A 2019 Study indicates that, since 1970, the United States has lost close to 3 billion birds, some of which are now facing extinction, as a result of such threats as other animals; collisions with glass, buildings, and industrial infrastructure; communication towers; wind turbines; pesticides and other toxins, and; climate change. Of the estimated 722 bird species in North America, 76% migrate and 80% of those who migrate do so at night by using the stars and the Earth's magnetic field. As such, it is paramount that the skies be dimmed during peak migration periods. He cited a 2017 incident in Texas and a 2023 incident in Chicago in which up to 1,000 birds collided with a building as a result of light pollution. As a result of light pollution, species become disoriented, lost, and do not mate or eat, resulting in generations of species being lost. Not only birds, but also moths, which are important apple pollinators, bats, dragonflies, amphibians, and aquatic environments, are affected. Insects not only provide food for the birds, but are also important pollinators. He cited one area in China where, as a result of their decline, farmers have been forced to pollinate their fruit crops by hand. Light pollution also negatively affects the health and safety of humans. Constant exposure to blue light affects the endocrine system and melatonin levels, creating an imbalance, negatively affecting our immune system, and increasing sleeplessness. Studies have also shown that light pollution is a cancer-producing agent.

Lights Out Connecticut Co-Chairperson Barges spoke concerning the policy aspect of the initiative. Regulations have been established in many states and towns to limit light pollution. Since 2004, Connecticut established a set of light pollution controls in which

all outdoor commercial and large residential buildings must have lighting that faces downwards. In addition, there are 19 (nineteen) states in the country that automatically adopt the International Energy Conservation Code, which requires all new commercial buildings and major retrofits to have timers and dimmers on all internal and external lights, as of 2021. As of January 2024, Connecticut passed a “Lights Out Law” or light curfew, requiring all state-owned buildings to turn off their exterior lights when they are unoccupied, at 11:00 p.m. (Public Act 23-143). Their goal is to encourage Connecticut towns and cities to also pass a “Lights Out Law” and join similar programs around the country, including Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Texas. Another method of regulating lights is through a light trespassing law, which requires lights not to spill over to another property. She noted the importance of taking into account the designs of (glass) buildings and areas, such as walkways, that are lit throughout the night, and the need to take into account the importance of maintaining a healthy and sustainable community that balances their fiscal responsibilities with their wildlife and neighbors.

Available Grants (Councilor Sabilia) – Because lighting devices, such as timers and motion sensors, are considered energy-efficient devices, available grants include the Green Bank and state incentives through rebates. Additional information can be provided to the town.

Enforcement (Councilor Jaskiewicz) – Enforcement is one of the biggest challenges they encounter. The primary means of enforcement is through the receipt of complaints from neighbors to the local police department. Other communities have instituted programs in which individuals enforce the laws.

Wattage (Councilor Jaskiewicz) – The organization is working closely with Dark Skies International, which has devised Five (5) Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting. The principles include its usefulness, targeted lighting that falls only where necessary; low level so it is only as bright as necessary; controlled, and; warm colored, limiting the amount of shorter wavelength (blue-violet) light.

Chairman May them for the presentation and the Conservation Commission and Councilor Sabilia for bringing it to their attention.

- b. Presentation by the Registrar of Voters regarding Early Voting
Registrar of Voters Mary Hillman and Jeffrey Rogers discussed the implementation and impact of the State’s Early Voting Program on the town(s). Republican Registrar of Voters Rogers, who provided the Councilors with a packet of information, reported that all towns received a one-time grant of \$10,500.00 to help fund the initial cost of implementing the program. While previous presidential election years were comprised of three (3) elections (presidential preference primary, primary, and general elections) on three (3) days, the Early Voting Program will be expanded to 28 (twenty-eight) days. The preparation involved in planning and organizing the voting days has resulted in increased hours and a heavy financial burden, resulting in a budget request increase of 73.8%. Due to the Early Voting Program, the elections are expected to cost over \$63,000.00 for this year alone. The Grant Funds were utilized to upgrade their aging infrastructure, including the purchase of ten (10) voting booths. The draft plan issued by the Secretary of State is broad and vague and does not accommodate the needs of the different-sized towns, making it neither practical nor feasible. As a result, they have developed a plan, tailor-made to the town based on the Secretary of State’s draft plan. The proposed plan has been shared with the Mayor and Democratic and Republican Town Committee Chairpersons. To date, the Secretary of State has yet to distribute the final plan. He proceeded to explain the plan for the Early Voting process, which was submitted to the Secretary of State's office, would be centered at Town Hall, utilizing the Registrar’s office and equipment room, and the Human Resources Director’s office.

In conclusion, he stated that the position requires extensive knowledge, numerous skill sets, added time, and certification and hopes that the Councilors will extend their continued support.

Stipend Increase (Councilors Jaskiewicz and May) – The Registrar of Voters is seeking an increase of \$8,000.00/each due to the extended hours. Per Town Charter, the Registrar of Voters is not permitted to work more than 20 hours/week. While a presidential election does not occur annually, the Early Voting process will remain for each primary, election, and referendum, which can occur annually.

Early Voting Process (Councilor Yuchniuk) – All Early Voting will occur at the Town Hall. Voting booths will be set up in the current Human Resources Director’s office.

Referendums (Councilor May) – The referendum process will remain the same. Voters must be a taxpayer and are not required to be a resident of the town to vote in a referendum.

Stipend (Audience Question) – The Registrar of Voters receives a stipend, which averages to \$21.00/hour. They are the election officials for the town and ensure the accuracy of the results. The town is unique in that there are three (3) State Representatives and town (2) State Senators, resulting in numerous voting districts. The requested salary increase is due to the increased hours as a result of the Early Voting Process.

Proposed FY2024/25 Budget Request (Chairman May) – The department’s budget request has been submitted to the Finance Director and Committee.

Mayor Bunnell announced and invited the Councilors to attend a meeting with the Registrar of Voters to review the Policy and engage in a walkthrough of the Early Voting procedures on February 20 at noon.

Registrar of Voters Rogers added that it might be possible to create an Early Voting Process Video, but is hesitant to do so until the proposed Voter Handbook is approved by the State. He emphasized that the process continues to be fluid. Additional poll workers and the purchasing of new tabulators might also be necessary.

5. Alterations to the Agenda

Mayor Bunnell requested the following item be added to the Agenda:

Item 16, New Business:

- (h) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize compensatory hours for essential town employees who work during the impending February 13, 2024 snowstorm, to be used within 30 (thirty) days with no overtime hours. (Mayor Bunnell)

No motion was made.

Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Sabilia, to add the following item to the Agenda:

Item 14, Appointments and Resignations

- (e) To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Matthew Suarez to the Building Code Board of Appeals with a term to expire on February 13, 2029.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

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

- a. The Special Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2024

Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- b. The Regular Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2024
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
7. Executive Session
 - a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing a candidate for the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority.
Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Candidate Chuck Longton was interviewed for the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. Chairman May resumed the meeting at 8:06 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session.
8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Ellen Desjardins, 513 Raymond Hill Road, Uncasville, spoke concerning the proposed Animal Control Facility. She questioned whether revised plans were introduced and wished to confirm the figures. She reported, in her research, that only 88 (eighty-eight) dogs have been housed at the facility over the course of one year and questioned the need for a new facility at the proposed cost.
9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the January 2024 Financial Reports from Finance Director Barbara Griffin
 - b. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of December 2023
 - c. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of December 2023
 - d. Copy of the Fundamentals of Municipal Economic Development: Practical Approaches to Sustainable Growth Presentation by Bob Santy & Courtney Hendricson
 - e. Copy of the Town Council Budget Sheet
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 Bunnell reported that he attended the Public Safety Commission meeting during which personal protection gear for employees, Town Hall fire drills, and panic button procedures were discussed. Retired Building Official Dave Jensen has returned as a part-time employee. He met with the Cable TV Advisory Council meeting to discuss the possibility of televising their meetings and visited the East Lyme Town Hall to view their live broadcasting set-up. Grant funding should be available to duplicate their system. He is continuing to work with the IT Department to improve the speaker system and plans are being made to change the microphones. Two (2) firefighters were offered to fill the two (2) vacant positions. Initial discussions with the Unions and Town Attorneys regarding the five (5) contracts that are scheduled to expire in June took place. He also attended the Board of Education's (BOE) Capital Improvement Plan Meeting which included a tour of the proposed projects. The long-time vacant position of the WPCA Administrator has been filled by former Mayor Ronald McDaniel. He also met with the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) regarding the possibility of hiring a trainee for the Building Department. Town Hall will be closed tomorrow for the impending storm.
East Lyme Video System (Councilor May) – East Lyme's system allows for both live and recorded video transmissions through *YouTube*. The system cost approximately \$85,000.00 and was funded through a Grant.

BOE Video System (Councilor Jaskiewicz) – BOE Chairman Wills Pike stated that a student is filming and recording their meetings. The meetings are not transmitted live.

Finance Director Barbara Griffin reported that Town Treasurer John Dunn has resigned and a temporary employee is filling the position as they seek to fill the position. She also reported that the Auditors have requested a second extension; the Audit should be completed by their next Regular Meeting. She proposed the possibility of continuing with their current Auditor, whose contract is set to expire this year, to ensure a smooth Audit process, taking into account the recent departure of their long-time Treasurer. Concerning the upcoming FY2024/25 Budget, she clarified that the Registrar of Voters' prepare and submit their proposed budgets, and any salary changes would require a referendum. The salary line for the Building Department will be adjusted to accommodate Building Official Jensen's return. The preliminary requests will be reviewed by the Mayor who will draft his proposed budget, which will be sent to the Finance Committee for review in March. She will review the budget requirements, per the Town Charter. The Ad-Hoc COVID-19 Impact Study Committee is scheduled to meet next week.

Additional Encumbrances (Chairman May) – Aside from the Fund Balance, additional encumbrances affecting the delayed Audit include the bonding projects.

Montville Chief of Police Wilfred Blanchette, III, announced that a *Running for Heroes* benefit event will be held this Friday, February 16, at 6:00 p.m. at Camp Oakdale Pavilion. The nationwide organization was founded to raise awareness and funds for those who have fallen in the line of duty. The event will be held in honor of Montville Police K-9 Barrett and Connecticut State Police K-9 Brocko. Everyone is invited to express their support and/or participate in the two-mile event, one mile for each K-9. Portions of Oxoboxo Road will be closed. The Fire Departments will be present and a Flag Presentation will be held following the race.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure

The Committee reviewed and approved the two (2) job descriptions which are included on this evening's Agenda for approval.

b. Finance

The Committee will begin working on the proposed FY2024/25 Budget.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

The Committee discussed the status of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funded projects, the rental of a bucket truck for tree clearing purposes, upcoming capital projects for the Town Hall building, and the forwarding of the plans for the Youth Services bathroom project to Councilors Caron and Lathrop for review and possible cost-saving adjustments.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services, Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund – *not present; no report*

Mayor Bunnell reported that the Social Services Department will soon be moving into the old Town Hall.

b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education, Planning & Zoning Commission

Board of Education – Superintendent of Schools Laurie Pallin announced her resignation. He praised the outstanding Montville Marvels program which recognizes and honors the students, staff, parents, and volunteers who go above and beyond what

is expected. New hires include Director of Facilities Willie Quiñones and two (2) School Resource Officers. The proposed Capital Plan was presented.

Planning & Zoning Commission – Regulation text amendments related to Family and Group Childcare Home and Childcare Centers were approved; and discussion regarding the growth of multiple families residing in single-family homes, which, he felt, signaled the increased need for affordable housing, was held, and; the Zoning Enforcement Officer reported the receipt of 153 zoning complaints.

- c. Councilor Lathrop: Economic Development Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority

Economic Development Commission – A presentation regarding the types of businesses that individuals establish in the town and their reasons for establishing a business in town was presented to the Commission. The Commission has gained new momentum and is looking forward to further growth. He invited everyone to attend their meetings and provide input.

Water Pollution Control Authority – Discussions included the new Cook Hill Water Tower, which will soon break ground with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, their plans to expand the sewer and water connections, and conducting a Rate Study to ensure the adequacy of the water rates.

- d. Councilor Sabilia: Conservation Commission, Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board

Conservation Commission – Appreciation was expressed to the Montville Lions Club who donated a new bench. Everyone was encouraged to visit the Center and experience the recent trail-blazing project that will provide access towards Black Ash Road.

Public Safety Commission – The Police Department's Tier I State Accreditation Status is expected to be finalized in March, per the 2019 Police Accountability legislation. K-9 Barrett will be added to the Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C.

Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board – Everyone was encouraged to support their Annual Penny Drive.

- e. Councilor Southard: Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission

Farmers Market Committee – The weekly Farmers Market events will be held on Tuesdays, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., from June 18 to September 24. Applications are being accepted for vendors and musicians.

Library Committee – *no meeting*; Councilor Southard met with Director Kari Wall and two (2) Board Members who provided an orientation, including a history of its past processes and their plans.

Parks & Recreation Commission – Director Peter Bushway is in the process of drafting the Rules and Procedures to allow food trucks to be set up at the Community Center during the weekends. Once approved by the Commission, the document will be directed to the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee for review and approval. The dance room floor was completed and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held. The Commission approved their FY2024/25 Operating and Capital Improvement Plan budgets. The tuition for the Summer Camp program will be increased by \$5.00/week.

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Isaac Michael Tait to fill a vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission with a term to expire on May 9, 2024.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- b. To Consider and Act on a motion to nominate and appoint either Alfred Mandler, Brian Baker, Matthew Suarez, or Mark Richard to fill a vacancy on the Public Safety Commission with a term to expire on April 9, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard, to nominate and appoint Brian Baker. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried. Brian Baker was appointed to serve on the Public Safety Commission.

- c. To Consider and Act on a motion to waive the waiting period for appointments, Rule 14C of the Town Council Rules of Procedure*, for the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- d. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Chuck Longton to fill a vacancy on the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority with a term to expire on February 12, 2026.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- e. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Matthew Suarez to the Building Code Board of Appeals with a term to expire on February 13, 2029.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business

- a. To Consider and Act on a motion to discuss the progress of the Animal Shelter Project. (Councilor Yuchniuk)

Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell reported that he investigated the possibility of regionalizing with the New London Animal Control Facility and, after speaking with the Mayor, found that the Town would need to add an addition to their existing Facility to accommodate both Montville and Salem. The cost for the addition and the monthly charges are being determined. He also spoke with Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, the offices of U.S. Representative Joe Courtney, an aide to U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, State Representatives Holly Cheeseman, and State Senators Martha Marx and Cathy Osten regarding the possibility of obtaining funding for the project. He also submitted a letter to Lt. Governor Bysiewicz to be forwarded to Governor Ned Lamont. The meetings were followed up with letters stating not only their need for funding for the Facility, specifically, but for all of the town's funding needs. He is also in discussions with three (3) municipalities regarding the possibility of regionalizing and sharing services to help increase their funding for the Facility. He also investigated the possibility of purchasing a pre-fabricated Animal Control Facility building, which he found is not as inexpensive as first thought. In addition, he is awaiting cost estimates for the renovation of the existing facility. They hope to receive their primary funding for the project through the Community Investment Grant, which will not be known until the Governor's final decision in May. Councilor Yuchniuk clarified that the New London Facility has enough kennel space, which is the most expensive part of the building, but does not have enough small animal, office, or storage space. As such, he felt that the costs would be minimal, adding that the monthly charge would be for utilities. He did not feel that renovating the existing building was feasible due to the state's requirements. He reported that he has spoken with the Town of Colchester which utilizes NECCOG (Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) for \$93,000.00/year and strongly

discouraged engaging their services, stating that they will pick up a dog that is being detained by a resident, but will not search for a stray dog. Mayor Bunnell added that, according to his discussion with the Mayor of New London, dog runs would also need to be added. Councilor Yuchniuk disagreed, stating that the Facility houses 24 (twenty-four) dog kennels and it has never been filled to half capacity.

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2024-05. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$5,401.05 (five thousand four hundred one dollar and five cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2024-06. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the position description for the Director of Land Use & Development Department, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: Councilor Jaskiewicz commended the Human Resources Director and stated that minor edits, including updates to make the document more current, were made to the position description. He added that the Director has also been tasked with reviewing all of the town's job descriptions for any necessary updates. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2024-07. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the position description for the Administrative Assistant position, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Similar to the previous position description, the document was updated with minor edits, including changing the title from Administrative to Executive Assistant. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2024-08. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to accept the road widening strips as approved as part of the subdivision application number 23SUB2 for Old Colchester Road (Parcel ID: 037-006-000), Oakdale, CT. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: The road widening strips will be installed at the corner of Old Colchester and Moxley Roads and will facilitate future road maintenance in the area. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- e. **Resolution #2024-09. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., to execute the Agreement entitled "Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects" and any documents related thereto. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: The Agreement is approved annually by the Town Council and authorizes the Mayor to sign agreements related state's road construction/improvement projects. Roll Call vote, 6-0,

all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- f. **Resolution #2024-10. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the transfer of \$18,880.00 (eighteen thousand eight hundred eighty dollars) from the General Fund to Capital (Line Item 10960-54187) for foam removal and cleaning for the Chesterfield Volunteer Fire Company Truck Number M31 and Oakdale Volunteer Fire Company Truck Number M41. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Requested by the Chesterfield and Oakdale Volunteer Fire Companies' Chiefs, their approval would provide funding for the removal and cleaning of the foam by a certified professional, which is known to be toxic and hazardous. The Fire Companies will be applying for grants and will, hopefully, be able to reimburse the Town for some, if not all, of the costs. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- g. **Resolution #2024-11. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize the Finance Director to send out an RFP (Request for Proposal) for Economic Development Consultation. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell stated the need to hire a consulting firm to help the town attract and handle development dealings, including any proposed tax exemptions. They are hoping to receive proposals stating the scope of their services and related costs. Councilor May concurred, adding that such firms may provide suggestions including any regulation changes and necessary water & sewer system expansions. The RFP would be an initial step to help make their town more attractive to businesses and developers and expand the town's tax base. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

17. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit

Conservation Commission Alternate Member Kari Wall, on behalf of herself and the Commission, thanked the Town Councilors for inviting *Lights Out Connecticut* to provide a presentation. She felt it was an ideal opportunity for the town to begin considering turning off the lights on municipal buildings and properties after a certain hour, saving funds and helping the human and animal populations.

Krista Serra, 46 Doyle Road, Oakdale, warning the Councilors of the possible service they would receive should they opt to hire NECCOG (or similar) service, stating that she contacted them regarding a desperate situation for two (2) dogs living in deplorable conditions in Jewett City three (3) hours ago and has yet to receive a callback.

Rebecca Maurice, 1567 Route 85, Oakdale, Owner, of *All Bright Canines*, also discouraged the Councilors from considering NECCOG, stating that she submitted a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request to NECCOG five (5) weeks ago and has not yet received a response. She questioned whether they sought the possibility of leasing a newly established or existing kennel that has passed inspections and whether the town would like the residents to conduct any polls, petitions, and the like to help the process.

Ellen Desjardins, 513 Raymond Hill Road, Uncasville, invited the Councilors to visit her boarding kennel, which has been in operation since 1960 and never received any citations.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Mayor Bunnell expressed his appreciation to the public for attending this evening's meeting, reflecting the importance of the issue. He stated that he would investigate some of the suggestions provided this evening, adding that their goal is to, ultimately, have their

own facility, rather than utilizing another's. He is hoping to establish a regionalized facility to help with the costs. He also thanked the representatives from *Lights Out Connecticut* for providing a very informative presentation. He wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

Councilor Yuchniuk, in response to Ms. Desjardins, stated that the cost of the Facility is unknown at this time. Multiple estimates ranging from \$2.3 to \$3 million were received for the new proposed Facility. Petitions are a valuable and useful tool, similar to their attendance at their meetings. He plans to request that the item remains on the Agenda until the issue is resolved and stated the value and importance of their presence and input.

Councilor Lathrop also commented on a good presentation, which provided "seeds for thought" that will allow future generations to enjoy the existing wildlife. He added that they are elected by the residents to represent them and encouraged them to continue attending their meetings and voicing their thoughts.

Councilor Sabilia echoed Councilor Lathrop's comments. He also recommended that the residents write to Governor Lamont's office in support of the Town's receipt of the Community Investment Fund Grant. He felt that such simple solutions as adding timers and motion sensors to the town's facilities would be helpful.

Councilor May also recommended that the residents contact not only the Governor, but also their state and local legislators. He reported that the average monthly cost for electricity at Camp Oakdale is \$4,000.00, adding the importance of investigating the possibility of installing timers on the lights. With the Mayor's and the public's help, he was optimistic that the funding for the Animal Control Facility would be received.

Councilor Jaskiewicz commented on the effects of Early Voting and was confident that the process will work smoothly once the system is in place. He commended the Mayor on the progress he has made on the Animal Control Facility and will discuss his thoughts with him.

Councilor Southard thanked everyone for reaching out to her, realizing the importance of the Facility. She also thanked the Conservation Commission for recommending the presentation, adding that, with no birds or pollinators, there would be no food, no farmers, and no Farmers Markets. She wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and to stay safe during the upcoming storm.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. to adjourn the meeting at 9:11 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

* Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, Rule 14(C): No applicant for appointment shall be appointed to a Town Agency at the same meeting in which they are interviewed. A minimum of 24 hours shall elapse between the time an applicant is interviewed and the time they are appointed.

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