

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE**  
**Parks & Recreation Commission**  
**Regular Meeting – May 15, 2024 -- 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 Stone called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**3. Roll Call.**

Present were Chairperson Rocky Stone and Commissioners William Barlow, Noah Carver, Mary Hillman, Morgan Matthewson (6:33 p.m.), and John Plikus. Vice-Chair Matt Beaupre and Commissioners Jon Chase and Deborah Schober were absent.

Director Peter Bushway, Town Council Liaison Kate Southard and Mayor Lenny Bunnell were also present.

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

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

Chairperson 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 April 17, 2024.

**Motion** by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Matthewson to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2024. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried.**

**7. Recreation Director's Report May 2024.**

Recreation Director Bushway summarized items from his March 2024 report as follows:

1) Construction at the large pavilion began today and should be completed by next weekend. He viewed the location today with Public Works Director Carlson. Events are scheduled there Friday – Monday; the columns are to be fenced off on both sides. People can/will use the facility, otherwise those who object will have their rental fund returned.

2) Chairperson Stone reported that he saw the robot, a small device, in action and Vice-Chair Beaupre was there and showed him how it worked. He also saw firsthand the lack of

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storage had by Public Works that he will bring up at the next Public Works meeting. Director Bushway reported the savings on paint is incredible with the use of the robot.

3) Chairperson Stone asked whether there was any discussion at the Town Council meeting regarding in-kind services; Director Bushway reported there was no discussion about the topic.

**8. Report from Finance.**

Chairperson Stone reported on the discussion and vote at last month's Commission meeting to expense \$25,000 from the Special Revenue Account but it looks as though that will not happen right now.

**9. June Newsletter.**

Director Bushway reported on Newsletter items as follows:

1) The Community Tag Sale has garnered a lot of response and an advert will be put in the newspaper about the Carnival and the Farmers Market.

2) The Director has 20 posters for the upcoming Summer Concert series for posting or drop off—one (1) will be dropped off at Rand Whitney, a sponsor of the event.

3) Any additions or deletions to the Newsletter should be reported to Director Bushway by May 31.

4) June 3<sup>rd</sup> is Carol Bunnell's last day; she will be retiring and a party will be for her at noon on that date. Chairperson Stone asked whether the position will be filled before Carol's departure; Director Bushway reported having received over 40 applications for the position and that he, Mayor Bunnell, and Human Resources have scheduled interviews. It is hoped that the position will be filled so Carol can provide some training.

**10. Unfinished Business.**

a. Discussion of projects and funding status

Report was made by Chairperson Stone that budget finalization has been quiet and the Department is in good shape for completion of some projects. Director Bushway noted that \$20,000 was originally planned for playground updates but an additional \$5,000 has been requested. The Chairperson also reported that cameras for the facilities may be deferred until FY 2025-2026 in addition to upgrades to the Community Center bathrooms. This delay would deem these projects more expensive but these are Public Works projects.

b. Community Center Exploratory Committee Update

Commissioner Barlow reported he is in the process of discussing three (3) different phases for the Community Center for Mayor Bunnell. Chairperson Stone, Commissioner Barlow and Director Bushway came up with ideas for a bid process for architectural design. Town Councilor Southard reported that she has discussed the project with Town Council Chairperson May and it is not a project that has been sent out to bid. Additionally, the cost for the project precludes that the bid process will prevent any impetus of favoritism. Commissioner Barlow asked who was responsible for the bid process; Chairman Stone responded that it was Mayor Bunnell.

c. Farmers Market Update

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Commissioner Matthewson reported on decoration plans for the upcoming Memorial Day Parade this weekend and having all the food trucks needed. A visit was made to Ocean Beach for their food truck event where information concerning the Farmers Market was left to garner more food trucks. Director Bushway asked to have the schedule for the food vendors so they are not duplicated for upcoming events, i.e., the Farmers Market and Summer Concert Series.

d. Carnival Committee Update

Commissioner Matthewson reported that plans for the Carnival have been confirmed the ride company and the fireworks company. Eight (8) food vendors are scheduled and she is waiting to hear back from four (4) more. Have a new contact for a magician for this year. Volunteers are needed for the event per the list with dates and time blocks sent out by Director Bushway; otherwise, someone would need to be paid to work the event. The Fire/Police participants are not paid volunteers nor do they require remuneration. Attendance also needs to be taken. This year numbered stickers will be used to facilitate the process hopefully more quickly. Per a question by Chairperson Stone, Commissioner Matthewson spoke about having a tent that will be used to display information about Department programs etc. and would be more assessable to take care of issues at the event according to Director Bushway.

e. Facility Walk Arouns Presentations

Chairperson Stone reported that neither he nor Commissioner Matthewson have completed their tours of their assigned properties. Commissioner Hillman also remarked that she was not able to report either. They all concurred their reports would be ready for the June meeting. Commissioner Plikus reported on the Camp Oakdale large and small pavilions and provided pictorial handouts for review by the Commission. He noted having used the facilities for boy scout activities but not having thoroughly looked at them. The Commissioner reported the small pavilion is showing wear and lacks curb appeal. Chairperson Stone noted that the pavilion posts go into the ground and may need similar work as that being done at the large pavilion. Commissioner Plikus commented whether the posts are pressure treated; Director Bushway reported the large pavilion was built in 1978 and the small pavilion thereafter. Chairperson Stone also acknowledged a trail at the small pavilion that we was not aware of until pointed out to him by Vice-Chair Beaupre. He suggested that the starting and ending points of the trail should be marked. He also acknowledged his failure to make Commissioner Plikus aware of Department Facility List that outlines proposed projects previously identified and the goals for maintenance of them. Commissioner Hillman inquired as to how often the pavilions are used; Director Bushway reported their use is mostly on the weekends and at least three (3) times per month during peak season. He noted the available parking and the grills on site—two (2) at the large pavilion and one (1) at the small pavilion. The Commission discussed landscaping plans for the pavilions including flowers; Town Councilor Southard noted it as a project for the Beautification Committee where the small pavilion was damaged by a plow. Taller trees were suggested to hide the bathrooms at the large pavilion; Commissioner Hillman suggested that it could be a potential boy/girl scout project or the Eagle Scouts as suggested by Commissioner Plikus. Director Bushway noted projects done by the Eagle Scouts on certain trails. Commissioner Plikus questioned what was the projection for long-term plans for these facilities. Chairperson Stone appreciated Commissioner Plikus' input noting the Commission has been trying for two (2) years to get the issues fixed. Furthermore, the Chairperson noted that Town Councilor Caron wants to meet us at the pavilions. Commissioner Plikus also noted the lack of

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parking; The Chairperson reported that parking was also on the list two (2) years ago including handicap parking but reported that Public Works does not want paved surfacing and Chairperson Stone spoke of possibly meeting with the Town Planner on the same. Commissioner Barlow asked if there were millings available that can be paved and have lanes designated; Director Bushway reported there is some at Public Works referring to an impervious surface. Commissioner Plikus also recognized the need for a curb to designate parking that now blends with no organization. He added that the fascia on the large pavilion is rotted, the stairs are shot, noted the damaged fascia along the roof, and an electrical trip hazard, a liability concern. Commissioner Plikus again asked the Commission what do we want to do with our facilities. Chairman Stone outlined the pavilion projects—the columns, the roof and its fascia, and the stage area. It was noted that the roof work will be put out to bid as it is believed funding is available.

Commissioner Carver deferred his facility report until the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Barlow reported on having visited the Community Center and walked the property. He stated the bathrooms need work but are kept really clean and noted the youth center is well organized. There is new flooring in the dance studio and the need for ground maintenance was noted. Director Bushway reported on occasional leaks. Commissioner Barlow also suggested uniformity by painting all the doors the same color and having more barrels for trash. Overall, he remarked the Center was in decent shape. Director Bushway commented on the three (3) picnic tables and the need for a couple more for the playground.

f. Horton Trail Discussion

Chairperson Stone reported that Mayor Bunnell had passed on his request to the Town Attorney on authority for the Horton Trail. After the budget season, the issue will be reassessed as the Chairperson feels the Trail is a Parks & Recreation item.

g. Job Descriptions Subcommittee

Chairperson Stone remarked there was no hurry concerning review of the job descriptions stating it can wait until July. Subcommittee members include Commissioners Carver, Chase, Hillman, and Chairman Stone.

**11. New Business.**

Commissioner Carver raised a question concerning the Commission meeting dates for the summer; Chairperson Stone noted the meeting dates for the year were confirmed in January. Commissioner Carver noted that the June meeting date currently falls on Juneteenth, June 19<sup>th</sup>, a State holiday. The Commission confirmed that meeting date will be canceled and rescheduled to June 26<sup>th</sup>.

**12. Communications.**

a. Email from Manuela Vasquez.

Chairperson Stone remarked on the email from M. Vasquez who noted that the date for the Memorial Day Parade is incorrect—it states May 21, which is a Tuesday, instead of the scheduled date of Sunday, May 19. M. Vasquez also noted that there are not enough Parks & Recreation programs for persons who are within the middle age group; those who are not children or not old enough for senior programs. Vice-Chair Beaupre sent a response email to Chairperson Stone of Town activities available for the age group cited by M. Vasquez. Specifically, the activities

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include the Tag Sale, Carnival, Farmers Market, Summer Concert Series, and the Food Truck Festivals. Furthermore, Director Bushway reported on the dance/fitness class in early June, the adult tap class, the karate class where there are 23 older persons in the class, volleyball on Wednesday that ends in May and other activities such as pickleball, tennis, lacrosse, and basketball. The Director also reported on a Zumba class held at the Polish Club on Monday and Wednesday and Adult Education offerings contracted through New London. He noted M. Vasquez can be steered in the right direction as to where to look for activities. Chairperson Stone stated he would draft a response to M. Vasquez. Commissioner Matthewson also referenced the yoga class held at the Town Hall. The Chairperson also commented on a call from Beth Palmer who owns a pickleball league who notified him that there is nothing on the website that references the pickleball schedule or lessons for the sport. Director Bushway reported the league has held two (2) tournaments.

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

Chairperson Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. Mayor Bunnell remarked that interviews are being held to fill the position held by Carol Bunnell. He also remarked that once the high school tennis courts are completed he wants pickleball lines added to them.

**14. Remarks from Town Council Liaison Southard.**

Town Councilor Southard remarked that she would send Director Bushway the Food Truck Schedule as discussed this evening and will reach out to the Garden Committee. As to the bathrooms at the Community Center, she reported that Town Councilors Caron and Lathrop will meet next week regarding rehabilitation of the Community Center bathrooms that will not be pricey. Mayor Bunnell remarked that the \$130,000 removed from the CIP Community Center bathroom line item was necessary and the funds were needed elsewhere but also stated that with the existing funding a Plan B is being considered. Town Councilor Southard reported she spoke with Kathy Peck concerning summer hours but will also ask her about activities for middle aged persons. Commissioner Barlow inquired about the meeting time for the contractor scheduled for Monday; Mayor Bunnell remarked the meeting will be at 9:00 a.m.

**15. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway.**

Director Bushway remarked that he will contact the three (3) individuals who have rented use of the Large Pavilion to determine if they still want to use it as only the fenced off areas cannot be occupied. He will make those calls tomorrow. He also reported that the areas where the concrete is being jackhammered from the pavilions will be fenced; he will review those areas tomorrow, as well. The high school will be using the area on Friday night. As to adding pickleball lines to the court as suggested by Mayor Bunnell, the Director stated that should be no problem to get done. He noted that the pickleball net is lower than that of the tennis courts and is not allowed for ECC tournaments according to Commissioner Matthewson.

**16. Remarks from Commissioners.**

Commissioner Matthewson remarked that she expected to see everyone at the Carnival, Farmers Market and the Memorial Day Parade.

**17. Adjournment.**

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**Motion** by Commissioner Carver; seconded by Commissioner Hillman to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 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.**