

Town of Montville
Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

Chairperson 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 Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Absent was Councilor Jaskiewicz. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.

4. Special Recognitions/Presentations

- a. Montville Youth Services Bureau's Montville Youth Action Council: Montville High School Students Josie English, Adam Sheridan, Nicole Hudson, Nathan Dhillon, Alex Joseph, and Jason Sheridan, and College Students Dan Barberi and Amanda Corrice
- Youth Services Bureau Liaison Councilor Sabilia recognized and commended the Youth Services Bureau's Youth Action Council – a very active group heavily involved with the schools, including publishing the *Stall Street Journal* and "You Good, Bro?" campaigns, addressing opioid prevention, gambling awareness, and other mental health issues.

Mayor Bunnell stated that, over the years, the Youth Action Council (YAC) has dedicated their time and energy to various programs in the community. He recited and presented the students with a proclamation, recognizing them for their outstanding contributions. Established in 2001, YAC has organized countless fundraisers and education and awareness campaigns to help enrich and improve the lives of the members of their community. Their contributions include participating in the annual Drug Take Back Days, distributing free prescription lock boxes, hosting a presentation by former NBA basketball player Chris Herron, participating in Mohegan Sun's Mental Health Day event, creating the "You Good, Bro?" campaign, implementing a Youth Gambling Awareness Project, re-painting the "welcome all rainbow crosswalk" and planting flower boxes at the Fair Oaks Community Center to promote kindness and encourage the importance of community service, and creating and distributing the monthly "Stall Street Journal". YAC was also awarded State Opioid Response and CREC (Capital Region Education Council) Grants to help support their efforts. He also commended the Youth Services Coordinator Barbara Lockhart for her hard work and dedication.

Youth Services Coordinator Lockhart expressed her pride in the students over the years, especially recognizing the current team whose energy and dedication were unsurpassed. She noted that many of the students continue to contribute to their community into their college years and beyond. She thanked the Councilors for officially recognizing the students for their efforts.

The Councilors congratulated each of the members.

5. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Sabilia, to remove the following item from the Agenda:

- 15(a) To Consider and Act on a Motion to discuss the progress of the Animal Control Facility. (Councilor Yuchniuk)

Discussion: The item is discussed under Montville Police Lt. David Radford's report (Item 11). Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Caron, to remove the following item from the Agenda:

- 16(c) THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to allocate an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars) from the Special Revenue Account (Line Item 79999- 53038) for the purpose of performing maintenance to the Soccer Field shed at Camp Oakdale. (Councilor Southard)

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

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Sabilia, to add the following items to the Agenda:

- 16(g) THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the Silent Panic Alarm Procedure, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

- 16(h) THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the Fire Drills for Town Hall Policy, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

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 December 17, 2024

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

7. Executive Session – *none*

8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Ann Gaulin, 64 Damato Drive, Oakdale, reported that a non-profit organization, Montville Animal Welfare Initiative, Inc., has been formed. The organization recently received its non-profit status and Certificate of Incorporation from the state and its FEIN (Federal Employer Identification Number) from the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). The members have also drafted their Mission Statement and By-Laws. They have also submitted Form 1023 to the IRS for Federal tax exemption. The organization will be seeking volunteers to help them assist in the town's Animal Shelter's Groundbreaking Ceremony and upcoming Pup Rally in May. She thanked everyone for their support.

9. Communications

- a. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of November 2024
b. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of December 2024

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred – *none*

11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred

Montville Police Lt. Radford provided a brief update on the status of the Animal Shelter. He reported that the contract was signed in December and Volunteer Bill Barlow was appointed as the Clerk of the Works to oversee the project with Silver Petrucelli + Associates. A meeting will be held this week to discuss the plans and the permitting process and set a tentative date for the Groundbreaking Ceremony.

Mayor Bunnell offered his appreciation to the Montville Animal Shelter Clerk of the Works Barlow, who was also involved with the construction of the New London Animal Shelter, for his volunteerism. He was pleased to receive positive feedback regarding Orlando Annulli & Sons, Inc., the selected contractor for the project.

Public Works Director John Carlson reported that the Department has been busy trimming the trees, picking up litter, the Camp Oakdale lighting project, and the Public Works

Building drainage issues. The Boat Launch/Fishing Pier Project is currently out to bid. He has been working on the FY2025/26 Budget Request.

Councilor Caron commended the Department on keeping the roads safe.

Youth Services Coordinator Barbara Lockhart thanked the Town Council for supporting the increase for the part-time staff, who are “phenomenal”. She reported that the Afterschool Program is nearly full with 59 of the 60 available spots reserved. The contract with Blue Sky Wellness, LLC, which will provide addiction and substance abuse-focused counseling services to the residents, is expected to be signed this week. Similar to the Project Courage program, the program will be funded through the Opioid Settlement Funds. The Uncas Health District’s Mobile Health Van will be available at various key locations throughout the town, including the Community Center. The “You Good, Bro?” campaign will be promoted on the SEAT Bus and billboards.

Mayor Bunnell reported that the resignation of the Finance Director was recently accepted. Recently hired Tax Collector David Greaves has begun working in the office. Position interviews for the Finance Director, Tax Assessor Clerk, and Firefighter positions are ongoing. Montville Police Chief Willard Blanchette is assisting with investigations while the Fire Marshal is recuperating from a recent fall. The opening of the Fishing Pier/Boat Launch and Town Engineer Bids are scheduled for February 12. He continues to attend as many board/commission meetings as possible. Last week, he met with Senator Cathy Osten and Representatives Martha Marx and Nick Menapace to discuss the town’s funding needs.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – *item(s) are on the agenda*

b. Finance

The Finance Committee has begun the budget process.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal – *see Public Works Director Carlson’s report (item 11)*

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services, Volunteer Firefighters’ Relief Fund

Social Services – Appreciation was extended to the volunteers and seniors who organized and packed over 350 Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets and over 500 toy bags for the children. With the help of the Mayor and Chairperson, over 100 homebound meals were delivered. The food, hydrating, clothing, and pet food banks continue to be busy. The heating assistance program is also in process. The Director is seeking grants to help offset the costs for those with hoarding issues.

Senior Services/Commission on Aging – The Senior Center is offering several new programs, including same-day crafts and presentations regarding dental costs and fraud scams, computer classes, and sound healing classes. A new Chef, Tom, has been hired. He commended the previous Chef who passed away soon after her resignation.

Mayor Bunnell added that Chef Tom, a retired volunteer Firefighter, has over 45 years of experience in the food service industry.

b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education, Planning & Zoning Commission – *no report*

c. Councilor Lathrop: Economic Development Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority – *no report*

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

The Conservation Commission constructed a new path from the Conservation Center to the Fair Oaks Playground during the past weekend. The Avalonia Land Conservancy

attended the Commission's December meeting to discuss their acquisition of the Bond Property and their plans to offer future tours of the property.

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

Parks & Recreation Commission – Girl Scout Troop 63416 provided a presentation to the Commission regarding the possible installation of an inclusive swing at the Fair Oaks playground. The allocation of \$5,000.00 to power wash, scrape, prime, and paint, and repair the Camp Oakdale Soccer Field Shed was approved. The lines for the Camp Oakdale Basketball Courts project, which was recently completed, will be painted in the spring. Work has begun for the Desjardins Basketball Courts. The Carnival Committee is finalizing the details for the 2025 Carnival, which is tentatively scheduled for June 20-22.

Farmers Market Committee – The 2025 Farmers Market Opening Day is tentatively scheduled for June 24.

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Florence Turner to the Farmers Market Committee with a term to expire on February 14, 2028.

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

- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Brianna Tobey to the Farmers Market Committee with a term to expire on February 14, 2028.

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

15. Unfinished Business

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to discuss the progress of the Animal Control Facility. (Councilor Yuchniuk)

Item was removed from the Agenda.

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2025-01. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of 3,773.32 (three thousand seven hundred seventy-three dollars and thirty-two cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

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

- b. **Resolution #2025-02. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., to execute and submit an application to the State of Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority for a \$172,712.00 (one hundred seventy-two thousand seven hundred and twelve dollar) Public Educational and Governmental Programming and Education Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) Grant Program for audio-visual streaming equipment in Town Council Chambers. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell stated that the grant is not a matching grant. The Project is estimated to cost approximately \$170,000.00 and will allow all of the meetings held in Town Council Chambers to be streamed. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors

Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- c. **Resolution #2025-03. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to allocate an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars) from the Special Revenue Account (Line Item 79999- 53038) for the purpose of performing maintenance to the Soccer Field shed at Camp Oakdale. (Councilor Southard)

Item was removed from the Agenda.

- d. To Consider and Act on a motion to discuss and authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., and Town Council Chairperson Timothy May to send a formal letter of request to Governor Ned Lamont requesting the expansion of the Mohegan-Pequot Bridge. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: The proposed repairs to the Bridge are expected to cost approximately \$33 million. Three studies, conducted in 2005, 2017, and 2023, have recommended that the expansion of the bridge to accommodate its current and future capacities. The letter will be sent to the Governor, Legislators, and CT DOT (Connecticut Department of Transportation) Commissioners. Senator Osten was recognized for bringing the matter to their attention. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- e. **Resolution #2025-04. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to add the police taser purchase to the Capital Improvement Plan. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Montville Police Chief Willard Blanchette, Jr., stated that servicing for the current Tasers, which became available in 2003 and ceased production in 2014, is no longer available. As a result, the Police Department is requesting funding to purchase 32 (thirty-two) new Tasers through a five-year lease/purchase agreement. The new, rechargeable Tasers will provide ten (10) individual probes and a distance of nearly 45 feet (increasing from 25 feet). Chairperson May recalled reading about a recent incident during which the Officer's Taser malfunctioned resulting in a five-minute physical altercation with the suspect until assistance arrived. Councilor Lathrop spoke in support of the purchase and the importance of keeping the Officers and the public safe. Councilor Yuchniuk also recalled a personal experience during which he was injured as a result of the ineffectiveness of his and his partner's Tasers. Mayor Bunnell spoke in support of the purchase, stating the importance of minimizing any form of lethal use of force. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- f. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the Fee Schedule for Extra Police Duty. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Discussion ensued regarding the proposed amendment(s).

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Lathrop, to amend the motion as follows:

Resolution #2025-04. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES

to approve the *increased* Fee Schedule for Extra Police Duty as follows:

increasing the administrative fee to 30%

increasing the vehicle fee to \$50.00 per hour

(Mayor Bunnell)

Discussion: The proposed amendment is based on the policies of other police departments. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron,

Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- g. **Resolution #2025-05. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the Silent Panic Alarm Procedure, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Councilor Sabilia stated that this and the following Policies were drafted to ensure the safety of the Town Hall employees. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- h. **Resolution #2025-06. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to review and approve the Fire Drills for Town Hall Policy, as recommended by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: The Policy was approved by the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures Standing Committee with the following correction:

Fourth Paragraph, First Sentence:

Evacuating to the side parking lot ensures all personnel are safe from ~~and~~ any Firefighting actions....

Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

17. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit – *none*

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Southard was pleased with the passage of the funding for the Tasers for the safety of the Officers. She wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilor Caron congratulated Ms. Gaulin and her team for establishing the non-profit organization and the Police Department on the passage of the purchasing of the Tasers. He also congratulated and thanked Youth Services Coordinator Lockhart, her staff, and the students for their hard work and dedication.

Councilor Lathrop commended and expressed his appreciation to the Police department and their swift handling of a recent minor incident and for keeping the public safe.

Councilor Sabilia thanked everyone for attending their meeting and expressing their care for the town.

Councilor May also commended and expressed his gratitude to the Police Department for keeping their town safe.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Lathrop. to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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