

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Special Meeting – December 9, 2024 -- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Montville Town Hall

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 Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Chairperson Murphy, Vice-Chair Stephen Stewart, Commissioners Brian Baker, Tracy Callaghan, Mickey Gillette and Karen Perkins. Commissioner William Bauer was absent from the meeting. A quorum was present.

4. Special Recognitions and Presentations. None

5. Communications:

Copies of monthly statistics reports from Fire Departments, Fire Marshal, Police, Animal Control and Building Official.

Chairperson Murphy noted for the record of the Commission having received all statistical reports from the Public Safety departments for the month ending November 2024.

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve minutes:

- a.** The Regular Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2024.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Gillette to approve the Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2024. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried.**

7. Remarks from the Public. (Agenda items only—3-minute limit.)

Chairperson Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. Montville Firefighter Union President Tim Condon of 51 Galvin Lane, Waterford spoke in favor of hiring another career firefighter and referenced the balance of the cost of overtime with 14 people filling 16 positions. Additionally, he remarked that the charge for the Firefighter Data Programs Subcommittee needs to be reframed. He noted that they have a data program that is in use, but the data screens cannot be combined into one (1) screen used now. The policy instead is to track the data and

if EMS Charts cannot be used it needs to be determined which program will be comfortable for all.

8. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Police Chief Blanchette reported on a burglary at Renaldi's on Route 85 that occurred on December 6, 2024 when many valuable items were stolen. Officers responded and determined through surveillance cameras that a stolen car was used, and a check of the FLOCK camera showed the vehicle was spotted in Hartford earlier that evening and led the officers there in pursuit. The scene in Montville was processed. On December 7, 2024 during the midnight shift, Officer Lalumiere staked out the Renaldi store on his own and a little more than an hour later radioed having seen a male exit a vehicle who appeared to case the place on foot. Officer Osunniyi and Sergeant Shepherd responded although they were a distance away patrolling other commercial establishments in Town. No response was received from Officer Lalumiere after his initial call. Officer Osunniyi and Sergeant Shepherd arrived at the scene to find Officer Lalumiere wrestling inside the suspect vehicle with the male who was attempting to flee. The suspect with the assistance of the two (2) back-up officers was taken into custody. Officer Lalumiere attempted to deploy his taser which missed and wrestled with the suspect for more than five (5) minutes prior to help arriving. A K-9 track determined there were no other suspects at the scene. The vehicle at this robbery was different from the one the night prior; it was stolen from Norwich and the dealer plate on the vehicle was stolen from New London. The vehicle contained a large amount of cash, many packs of cigarettes and computers and numerous evidentiary items believed to be the stolen items from Renaldi's on December 6. These officers, specifically Officer Lalumiere, demonstrated competent performance under the most stressful of situations and their actions are in the highest tradition of the Montville Police Department and the Town of Montville.

Chief Blanchette also gave an invite to stop at the Police Department to view the memorial tree in the front lobby honoring police officers who died in the line of duty during the year. The tree is decorated with wooden ornaments that each bear the photograph, name, rank and department as well as the end of watch date for 120 officers killed in the line of duty this year. Following the holiday, these ornaments along with a letter from the Chief will be sent to the respective departments of the officers to honor their sacrifice further.

Lt. Radford read into the record the Animal Control statistical reports for the months ending October 31, 2024 and November 30, 2024. See Agenda Item 10b for these statistics. An update was given on the application for the FY2025 DUI Grant--approval received on November 7, 2024 in the amount of \$64,539.98. An invite was extended for the 2nd Annual Holiday Breakfast at the Public Safety Complex on Wednesday, December 18, 2024 from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Celebrity Chefs include Dispatcher Thompson, Firefighter Dole and WPCA Administrator McDaniel. An update was given on the Animal Control Facility. The Town received nine (9) bids that ranged from \$2.7 million to \$3.5 million. The bids have been vetted, and the contractor will be announced at the Town Council meeting on December 17, 2024. The

DECD has been informed of the Town's current position and has been provided with all updated documents. As to the Dispatch radio scheduled upgrades, the Lieutenant spoke with Comms Plus today and reported that they will ship the radios this week and they have all other equipment needed. Once they get the radios, they will need to get the IDs from the State, which can take some time, and will then begin the Dispatch upgrade. Comms Plus has already installed antennas on the tower behind the PD. Lieutenant Radford ended his report with positive officer correspondence sent to Chief Blanchette as follows: 1) a card from Gordon and Ruth Beals who described Animal Control Officer Rebelo as an asset to the Department who helped them with having their daughter's dog euthanized while she was in the hospital by making the necessary calls and following them to Colchester Vet, making a difficult day easier; 2) a letter from Waterford Police Chief Marc Balestracci spoke of valuing its relationship with Town PD for being given use of the Town facility in September 2024 for a planned renovation of their prisoner processing and holding areas that allowed them to expedite the renovation and the continuity of its operations; 3) a letter from Putnam Chief of Police Christopher D. Ferace for the mutual aid provided by Officer Rebelo on December 1, 2024 for its Putnam Holiday Dazzle Light Parade--with a crowd of 10,000 people Officer Rebelo was praised for his engagement with individuals and his professional attitude helping with crowd and traffic control; and 4) a letter from Patricia Lubold with thanks to Sgt. Pelletier and Officer Micheals who assisted her husband with the Stop & Shop gas pump that entangled their 32 ft. RV.

Fire Marshal Report

In the absence of Fire Marshal Barnes, Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel read into the record the Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending October 31 2024 and November 30, 2024, that was submitted as follows:

Fire Marshal's Office Activities	October 2024
Inspections of Businesses and Apartments	61
Fire Investigations	3
Incident Responses Q64 (Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel)—1 Fire Alarm/3 Brush Fires/3 Medicals/2 MVAs	5
Requested to the Scene Q54 (Fire Marshal Barnes)—3 Brush Fires/1 MVA	6
Burn Permits Issued	0
New Business Inspection	1
Construction Project Inspection	4
Emergency Management Obligations	16 hours

Fire Marshal's Office Activities	November 2024
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Inspections of Businesses and Apartments	30
Fire Investigations	2
Incident Responses Q64 (Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel)—1 Fire Alarm/3 Brush Fires/3 Medicals/2 MVAs	9
Requested to the Scene Q54 (Fire Marshal Barnes)—3 Brush Fires/1 MVA	4
Burn Permits Issued	0
Blasting Permits	1
Construction Project Inspection	3
Emergency Management Obligations	10 hours

Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel asked that the ESO program be expedited as the fire investigation portion of the programs is on hold and is needed by the Fire Marshal’s office what with the possible increase of fires because of the cold weather season. He noted that people want to heat their homes. The Deputy Fire Marshal also thanked the PD for its help with Fire Prevention Month especially SRO Karen and the Career firefighters.

9. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)

Commissioner Perkins forwarded to the Commission the October and November 2024 fire department statistical reports for Chesterfield and Oakdale Fire Companies and reported on the record the Montville stats as follows:

Montville Fire Company (October 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Fire Calls—(13 illegal burn/wet down—brush/grass fire)	34
Lift Assists	23
Calls to assist out-of-Town (1 was no response—medical)	15
Calls to assist from out-ot-town	2
Total Calls	293

Montville Fire Company (November 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Fire Calls—(16 illegal burn/wet down—brush/grass fire)	46
Lift Assists	19
Calls to Assist out-of-Town—(2 no response—medical and 2 cancelled in route)	10

Calls to Assist from out-of-Town	4
Total Calls:	280

Mohegan Fire Company (October 2024)

Incidents:	In District	Out of District/In Town	Mutual Aid
EMS Calls	68	65	
Fire Alarm Calls	4	8	
Structure Fire Calls	1	2	
Motor Vehicles Calls	3	2	
Search/Rescue Calls		1	
Smoke Investigation Calls		2	
Utility Emergency Calls	1		
CO Emergency Calls		1	
Vehicle Fire Calls		1	
Total Calls:	77	82	

Mohegan Fire Company (November 2024)

Incidents:	In District	Out of District/In Town	Mutual Aid
EMS Calls	59	54	
Lift Assist	2	10	
Fire Alarm Calls	6	5	
Structure Fire Calls	0	2	
Motor Vehicles Calls	6	6	
Brush/Wet Down	6	7	
Smoke Investigation Calls	1	1	
CO Emergency Calls	0	1	
Haz-Mat Incident	1	0	
Service Calls	1	0	
Vehicle Fire Calls	0	2	
Stand-by	0	0	1
Total:	82	86	1

No Volunteer Response	45
Transport all Volunteer	5
Transport by other department	3

Oakdale Fire Company (October 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	14
EMS Calls	58
Fire Calls	6
Motor Vehicles Calls	4
Other Calls	18
Total Calls:	106

Oakdale Fire Company (November 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	13
EMS Calls	42
Fire Calls	0
Motor Vehicles Calls	8
Other Calls	18
Total Calls:	81

Chesterfield Fire Company (September 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	19
EMS Calls	34
Fire Calls	2
Motor Vehicle	4
Other Calls	23
Total Calls:	82

Chesterfield Fire Company (October 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
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Cancelled Calls	25
EMS Calls	28
Fire Calls	8
Motor Vehicle	3
Other Calls	30
Total Calls:	94

Chesterfield Fire Company (November 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	21
EMS Calls	30
Fire Calls	3
Motor Vehicle	4
Other Calls	21
Total Calls:	79

Dispatch Calls (October 2024)

Fire Calls	
In Town–7 were lift assists	
Out-of-Town–3 assists from out-of-town/7 assists out-of-town	
Total:	34
EMS Calls	
Total:	223

Dispatch Calls (November 2024)

Fire Calls	
In Town–7 were lift assists	
Out-of-Town–3 assists from out-of-town/7 assists out-of-town	
Total:	34
EMS Calls	
Total:	223

b. Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)

The October and November 2024 Activity Reports for the Towns of Montville and Salem submitted by Police Officer/ACO Bruce Rebelo were read into the record under Agenda Item 9 by Lt. Radford as follows:

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (October 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	17	49
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	4	8
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	1
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	1
Total Complaints Investigated	65	250
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	3	10
Total Enforcement Action:	6	9
Total Other Calls for Service:	56	231

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (October 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	1	3
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	2	13
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	0	1
Total Enforcement Action:	0	0
Total Other Calls for Service	0	0

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (November 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	6	55
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	5	13
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	1
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	1
Total Complaints Investigated	62	312
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	6	16

Total Enforcement Action:	2	11
Total Other Calls for Service:	58	289

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (November 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	0	3
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	1	14
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	1	2
Total Enforcement Action:	0	0
Total Other Calls for Service	0	0

Commissioner Callaghan had no additional comments.

c. Report from Police Department Liaison. (Gillette)

Commissioner Gillette read into the record the Police Department statistics for the months ending October and November 2024 as follows:

October 2024 Police Activity	Total
Total Calls for Service	976
Citations:	
Infractions	27
Juvenile Summons	2
Misdemeanors	5
Written Warnings	120
Total Citations	154

November 2024 Police Activity	Total
Total Calls for Service	939
Citations:	
Infractions	35

Juvenile Summons	0
Misdemeanors	3
Written Warnings	142
Total Citations	180

d. Report from Building Department Liaison. (Stewart)

Vice-Chair Stewart reported on the monthly statistics for October and November 2024 as follows:

2024-2025 Building Department Report												
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Permits Issued	135	153	108	157	118							
Pending Permits	99	102	83	88	81							
Inspections	118	106	124	162	125							
Active Blight	248	252	256	259	260							
Blight Abated To Date	529	531	532	535	537							
Blighted Property Liens			3	2								

10. Remarks from Fire Chiefs.

Chesterfield Fire Chief Truex remarked that neither of the software programs, EMS Charts nor ESO, inhibit doing fire inspections. He reported that the Town uses and is in a 5-year contract with EMS Charts for data and for billing. Commissioner Perkins asked whether his data had to be on his report for the State if it was not being used. The Fire Chief also reported that the fire departments have paid for PStrax for over a year. It allows for daily and weekly checks as well as inventory, but it is not being used. He reported that last month was very busy as more time was spent in East Lyme due to brush fires. Mohegan Fire Chief Suarez handed out a report to the Commission regarding staff shortfall and qualified timely responding volunteers that was submitted to the Town Clerk. The report is attached to these minutes as Addendum Item “A.” He also read into the record the Mohegan statistics for October and November 2024. He reported having met with his former Chief a month ago regarding EMS Charts. Chief Suarez has never used the ESO program although most do not have a preference; but remarked that it has been used by the department. He would be open to discuss ESO with the other fire departments.

11. Unfinished Business.

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve a Policy to systemize and retain firefighter data to observe trends and effectiveness.

Chairperson Murphy remarked that this agenda item is a monthly issue that the Commission is still dealing with.

- b. Fire Companies Radio System Upgrades. *(Baker)*

Commissioner Baker remarked that Lt. Radford covered this item in his monthly report. Vice-Chair Stewart asked if the radios installed at Dispatch would encompass the fire companies as well. Commissioner Baker confirmed with Lt. Radford that additional funding would be needed to upgrade the radio system of the fire companies and are doing what they can with the current appropriated funds. Fire Chief Truex reported on Oakdale Fire Chief Messier having spoken with the State for review of the fire companies' design that must be approved. Chief Messier has been emailing the State for the results of their meeting with no response as of yet. Chief Truex added that there are some funds but not enough has been appropriated to get started on the radio upgrade for the fire companies.

- c. Discussion regarding the Town of Montville's preparation to respond to a catastrophic emergency like that in Oxford, CT. *(Stewart)*

Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel reported that the Town is best prepared as it can and noted that current policies are up-to-date for a catastrophic emergency. He asked that any issues be brought to the attention of the Fire Marshal office or the Commission and that he would speak to the public which he would be happy to do.

- d. Discussion regarding NexGen System. *(Baker)*

Motion by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to remove Item 11.D from the Agenda. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried.**

- e. Report from Firefighter Data Programs Subcommittee.

Chairperson Murphy remarked that there was nothing new to report on this item and noted that the chairperson of this subcommittee was not present to report to the Commission.

12. New Business.

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve Public Safety Commission 2025 Schedule of Meetings as follows: January 27, February 24, March 24, April 28 May 28 (changed due to Memorial Day), June 23, July 29, August 25, September 22, October 27, November 24, December 22 and January 6, 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to approve the 2025 Schedule of Meetings for the Commission: January 27, February 24, March 24, April 28 May 28 (changed due to Memorial Day), June 23, July 29, August 25, September 22, October 27, November 24, December 22 and January 6, 2026. Discussion: It was noted that the December 22nd date should be moved to December 8th. **Motion** by Commissioner Baker; seconded by

Vice-Chair Stewart to amend the December 22, 2025 meeting date to December 8, 2025. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried. Motion** by Commissioner Callaghan; seconded by Commissioner Baker to change the July 29, 2025 meeting date to July 28, 2025. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried. Original Motion: Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion approved, as amended.**

b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to support the hiring of another career firefighter. Commissioner Baker did research today and distributed to the Commission a handout he obtained from the Finance Director earlier today that outlines the cost for hiring a new firefighter. Per this information, he made a recommendation to bring to the Town Council to hire two (2) new firefighters now instead of waiting four (4) months to go through the hiring process again. The financial data included the cost for a single employee, an employee +1, and a family. He also noted that potential candidates will be interviewed on December 16. This recommendation would have staffing at 16 firefighters—a full staff with savings for overtime. For example, as based on the FY 2024-2025 budget, the cost for a single employee plus fringe benefits is \$97,312.38 with a cost per month of \$8,190.33 versus a cost of \$40,546.65 or \$48,655.98 at five (5) months and six (6) months, respectively if the firefighter is hired in January or February 2025. The salary structure for an employee+1 and family were also discussed. Mayor Bunnell spoke to the cost of hiring two (2) firefighters versus overtime in the first quarter of the fiscal year that amounted to \$300,000. He noted to fill the shifts of two (2) people that overtime versus a salary with benefits costs \$8,000 more per year. In addition, more overtime hours equates to more wear and tear, overtime being worked, lack of time off, and longer hours worked. This recommendation would be advantageous overall to have a full staff based on the mandate for two (2) firefighters at each fire company per shift. **Motion** by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to recommend to the Town Council to hire two (2) firefighters to bring the staffing up to 16, at full staff. Discussion: none. **Roll Call vote: In favor:** Commissioners Perkins, Stewart, Murphy, Baker, Callaghan, and Gillette. **Opposed:** None. **Vote: 6-0-0. Motion approved.**

c. To Consider and Act on a Motion to replace or refurbish the Chesterfield Rescue Truck M37.

Fire Chief Truex reported that he was tasked with obtaining the cost of a replacement Rescue M37 versus a refurbished truck and to look into specifics for a life rescue truck. He reviewed the handout given to the Commission explaining that the initial two (2) letters and an email are from apparatus manufacturers denouncing a light duty rescue as a purchase option—a medium to medium, heavy duty rescue configuration was suggested instead. The light duty rescue does not have enough volume to contain all materials currently had and would exceed the GVW if stuffed with items thus making it unsafe. Page 4 of the packet showed a cost breakdown of \$522,315.09 for a new M37, a \$12,315.09 increase to the original price quote. A new radio, upgraded rescue tools, and a replacement SCBA and SCBA cylinder would need to be added. The total cost for the new M37 would be \$599,660.32 less than the \$625,000 appropriated by the Town Council. The rough cost for a refurbished M37 would be \$390,108.23 that would

involve taking apart the 28-year old truck and correcting any additional problems. Page 5 refers to the pros and cons of replacement versus refurbishing the M37 that would be \$209,552.09 cheaper than buying new and not having to deal with a diesel exhaust fluid system but could be higher in cost if any issues are found. The refurbished truck will have a 2-year warranty on anything refurbished in addition to the cost for any new parts and leave us with a 28-year old truck that does not meet the NFPA recommendation of 24-year use. Chief Truex responded to a question from Commissioner Callaghan about possible changes to insurance which would not happen unless something occurs. Page 5 provides the cost estimate for a new M37, and warranties included from a manufacturer and on Pages 6-8, the breakdown of costs associated with a refurbished truck followed by several pages of apparatus specifications for a medium duty rescue truck, a quote for a new truck radio and other items. The Commission questioned whether the other three (3) fire chiefs wanted a rescue truck on the other side of town per the Commission recommendation and Town Council approval. It was hoped that all of the fire chiefs would agree given funds have already been appropriated for it and for adherence to NFPA guidelines. The truck was also included in the budget plan for last year otherwise the Town Council would use the funds elsewhere. Mentioned also was a change to bond property and another ISO rating this spring/summer. A question was raised as to the number of medium duty trucks on the west side of Town and how often they go out. Chairperson Murphy remarked that the truck price was too much for the other side of Town given there are two (2) heavy trucks there within 10-15 minutes of each other. He also remarked it was a duplication of equipment which is not valuable and that the inclusion of the cost for tools in the price tag was not a request made by the other fire companies. Instead, the Chairperson wished to see something different--\$700,000 spent for radio service. Also, questioned was the time frame for delivery. Chief Truex remarked that the ladder truck would also need to be replaced. The Chairperson asked if a pumper could be obtained from Salem, East Lyme, or Mohegan Tribe within 10-15 minutes or an ambulance. Discussion continued as questioned by Vice-Chair Stewart as to whether a rescue on the west side should be available followed by Commission comments regarding Route 83 being busy and having to wait for a rescue to arrive on the scene. Funds have been appropriated, and any messages should be all positive for that side of Town in addition to heeding NFPA guidelines for safety purposes, per Mayor Bunnell. It was also noted that the Town Council wanted the Commission to vote on the matter although the way the motion is worded on the agenda an abstention can be made if there is not agreement per Town Councilor Sabilia. Further discussion was had about the inability to proceed without full agreement of all four (4) fire chiefs; that the Town should pay for equipment as it owns the apparatus; the status of Chesterfield as being the redheaded stepchild; and that the role of the Commission is a recommending body. The Commission was given the packet of information presented this evening so an informed decision could be made. **Motion** by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Baker to replace the current Chesterfield M37 Rescue Truck with a new Medium Duty M37 Rescue Truck per information provided in the amount of \$599,660.32. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell remarked that HDTV had listed Montville as one of the top 50 towns for Christmas events with attraction

developments—Nature’s Art was displayed on the television that sent the right message for the Town. **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Stewart, Baker, and Callaghan. *Opposed:* Commissions Murphy and Gillette. Abstained: Commissioner Perkins. **Vote: 3-2-1. Motion approved.**

13. Remarks from the Public. (3-minute limit).

Chairperson Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. A point of order by Lt. Radford noted that the second Tuesday is scheduled for Town Council meetings. Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel commented that what Fire Chief Truex stated was not accurate. ESO cannot combine with the four (4) fire departments because they all have different NFIRS numbers; if there was one (1) town department with one (1) NIFIRS number then all four (4) of the departments’ data would be combined into one (1) report. The Deputy Fire Marshal (“DFM”) also remarked that the fire incident reports can be completed at any time. As far as the Fire Marshal’s office not doing the investigation portion of EMS charts, they are being done in a timely manner and thoroughly completed. The comment by Fire Chief Truex about the Department reporting to state and federal agencies is inaccurate because those websites will show that none of the fire departments report to the state or federally and there are zeroes across the page for the year. PStrax is not being used because there has been no training on the program and although there has been multiple attempts requested for training there has been no response. The DFM also stated that an unfinished business letter “a” was glazed over that is the subject of data collection and was not appropriated; and that no comment has been able to be made about that subject and thus should be brought back up for discussion. Fire Chief Truex remarked that his earlier comments toward the Fire Marshal’s office was his misunderstanding as the DFM remarked that data had to go to ESO to do fire investigations; but noted the issue would be the same with EMS Charts as the departments have individual reporting for grant purposes. He also remarked that PStrax training is imbedded online so a group setting for training is not needed as it can be done individually. Montville Professional Firefighter Tim Condon of 51 Galvin Lane, Waterford remarked on the confusion and emotion expressed this evening recognizing a need for a better format for communicating differences to root the community in data and not opinions once an agreement on a data repository is set. He also noted the passion expressed by Fire Chief Truex. Firefighter Condon recognized the Town as a separate entity that owns a data program that pooled into one would provide an option. He also reported that he has been told that he is part of the problem and remarked that the Fire Service needs a better way to get an outside study.

14. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell remarked on the healthy exchange of information and his concern with the PSC subcommittee that was tabled by the Commission. He noted that there were two (2) other individuals on that subcommittee that could have voiced their opinions and/or made a request to revisit its goal. The Mayor reported that he wanted the subcommittee to weigh facts, costs and conditions and the individual data programs, EMS Charts and ESO, e.g. are they the same if not what are their differences and for the mission statement of the subcommittee to be

readdressed. He proposed that between now and January that a draft mission statement for the subcommittee is prepared and offered his help on the same. Mayor Bunnell also reported on Montville, CT having been mentioned on HDTV given a lot of people watch it and its impact concerning an application being made for a grant funds for the Route 163 and 32 corridor development in addition to Route 85 with thanks to former Town Planner Vlaun for her efforts. As to the Animal Control Facility, the Mayor apologized to Lt. Radford for not having provided the information earlier regarding his contact with the Department of Economic and Community Development (“DECD”). The low bid funds in addition to soft costs for the project amounted to \$2,947,000, a difference of \$311,000 more than the \$2,636,000 approved. A request will be made to the Town Council for appropriations on the same noting adherence to State mandates. The Mayor also commented on the huge success of the Holiday Parade and the hard work of Montville Fire and Police Departments, Public Works, and Recreation Director Bushway. He also mentioned the huge crowd surrounding the holiday tree noting it was hard to pick a winner for the homes that were decorated for the occasion. He commended the Police Department for the letters of thanks received and also expressed thanks to Officer Lalumiere for his enthusiastic effort and initiative to solve the burglary issue by putting himself at risk and not giving up.

15. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia thanked everyone for the discussion this month and remarked that the Town Council would take the Commission recommendations into consideration concerning 16 fulltime firefighters that is an update from the former recommendation by the Commission. He also reported on having toured the former Faria Factory converted into 70 housing units on Oxoboxo Road, its 11 different buildings and the challenge for emergency services personnel. He noted that the Town plans to do emergency service training at the location and recognized the phenomenal job that they do.

16. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Baker thanked all public safety and town personnel for what they do and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year encouraging all to be safe. Commissioner Perkins reported on the volunteer fire companies teaming up with Santa this year as follows: Montville – December 21st at 4:00 p.m.; Mohegan – December 21st at 3:00 p.m.; Chesterfield – December 15th at 12:00 p.m.; and Oakdale – December 22nd at 8:00 a.m. Vice-Chair Stewart acknowledged having heard that the Oxoboxo Lofts would be a challenge; thanked the Police Department concerning their letters of thanks and mentioned their upcoming breakfast on December 18th. He also remarked that he hoped the Chesterfield Rescue Truck had been resolved and mentioned a look at its ladder truck in the future. The Vice-Chair asked Mayor Bunnell about the status of budgets for the upcoming year; the Mayor reported that he had asked the Finance Director to get the budget sheets out to each department this month and he also reported to the Commission that the building officer trainee is set to take the Assistant Building Residential Inspector Test the beginning of February but there is no set date for it yet. Vice-Chair Stewart wished everyone a good holiday and to be safe. Chairperson Murphy reported for the record that Commissioner Baker has not sold fire trucks nor worked for

Shipman in 4-5 years. But he does help the Town fire chiefs spec trucks on a volunteer basis and Chairperson Murphy acknowledge having spoken with Commissioner Baker on the same prior to his coming on the Commission. The Chairperson will go to the Town Council to notify them of the approval by the Commission for the Chesterfield Rescue M-37 and asked that Town Council Liaison Sabalia propose a change to be made to have permission from three (3) and not four (4) fire chiefs going forward. He noted that the rule creates hard feelings amongst the fire chiefs who know their needs, what is better for their district and that the Town knows that the fire departments are struggling. Chairperson Murphy also recognized not knowing how much more the citizens will take stating their goodness may run out and added that volunteers must all step up to get more volunteers. He also spoke about years ago when four (4) firefighters were hired in order to get ambulances out of the door, that is still a concern, but things are being done. The Chairperson then reported on having had his scanner on regarding the burglary at the store but noted his scanner does not channel cars; only dispatch; while others transmit the opposite. He remarked on being four (4) minutes away from the scene and said he would have gone, as he has done on other occasions, stating he felt badly for the police officer whose life was in peril for five (5) minutes. Lastly, Chairperson Murphy wished everyone a great holiday.

17. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Perkins 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
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN
OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE**

ATTACHMENT “A”

MOHEGAN FIRE COMPANY INCORPORATED
2029 Norwich - New London Turnpike
Uncasville, CT 06382
860-848-3004

October 31, 2024

Town of Montville c/o Town Clerk as agent for Town Council, Public Safety Commission, and Office of the Mayor
310 Norwich-New London Turnpike
Uncasville, CT 06382

Subject: Mohegan Fire Company Incorporated (MFCo) Shortfall - Qualified Timely Responding Volunteers

Dear Town Council, Public Safety Commission, and Mayor Bunnell:

Thank for your continuing service to the Town of Montville.

It is with some regret that I inform you of a continuing shortfall of qualified timely responding MFCo volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service (EMS) technicians (EMT). Our shortfall is continuing, increasing, and of immediate concern it is not a temporary or brief off-normal situation that can be expected to resolve. MFCo has attempted to address the problem for years, however, adequate resolution continues to be elusive.

As you are likely aware, volunteer shortfall is not limited to fire/EMS service, MFCo, the Town of Montville, or the State of CT. It is experienced in similar locales in various organizations around the nation. The volunteer shortfall affects us all. Our volunteer shortfall affects not only our fire/EMT ranks, but also our corporate operations such as financial and administrative. Our ambulance revenue stream, call volume, and overall administrative responsibility/burden is increasing while the availability of qualified/competent volunteers available/willing to manage/operate MFCo's business side shrinks.

On the fire/EMS side, using mutual aid to cover routine calls, rather than exclusively exceptional situations, is now the norm for MFCo. That is an improper use of mutual aid and hides an organization's true ability to respond as obligated. It invisibly transfers MFCo workload and oversight to a third party — all while we might continue to get credit for work MFCo didn't actually perform. A common statement sometimes heard is "the call was covered, so why worry," Well, MFCo worries if we're routinely and regularly not able to adequately fulfill our legal and ethical organizational obligations over a period of time, That suggests a problem that needs to be reported and hopefully fixed. Hiding it does not help anyone. We can only mutually fix what we are aware of and talk about. It has become abundantly clear that, today, MFCo volunteers supplement the town career firefighter/EMTs rather than claiming that the town employees supplement the volunteers, MFCo currently operates under a 2017 Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Agreement with the Town of Montville this document should be updated and revised to reflect our role reversals.



Montville, like most towns/cities, faces revenue challenges. It appears ill-advised to primarily use town employees to operate privately owned ambulances while allowing these independent organizations to bill for services and acquire revenue predominantly produced by town employees all without question of possible proportional program revenue/expense sharing with the town, oversight by the town, and/or auditing by the town. From a local resident perspective, how this situation is allowed to continue unabated is difficult to comprehend. The town provides much of the ambulance labor, why isn't the town seeking to discuss, after program expenses, proportional reimbursement of town labor costs and some level of oversight of a service predominantly staffed by town personnel?

Regarding proactive organizational changes to legacy fire/EMS, one need to look no further than nearby towns such as Waterford, East Lyme, Colchester, Preston, etc., They have all taken proactive internal actions to establish and strengthen their municipal government emergency services leadership and underlying organizational structure while continuing to encourage/support their volunteer fire departments. They have already done this. We should seek to learn from their , October 31, 2024 Mohegan Fire Company Incorporated (MFCo) Qualified Volunteer Timely Response Shortfall

(continued) Page 2 of 2

efforts and not try to "reinvent the wheel." The Town of Montville has added certain career firefighter/EMS staff (which is appreciated), but Montville has yet to address proper/sufficient supervision, leadership, and Town of Montville organizational support for their career personnel and volunteers - centralized responsibility and oversight under qualified municipal fire service / EMS leadership would greatly benefit the Town of Montville.

We respectfully request that the Montville Town Council, Public Safety Commission, and the Office of the Mayor seek timely review, discussion and priority action-to-resolve regarding the previously mentioned issues. As a first step, please refer to the 2012 Almont Public Safety Plan commissioned by the Town of Montville its recommendations regarding the Police Department were heeded and the town is better for it. Equal consideration for Montville fire/EMS service is also important and should not be forgotten or minimized, The Public Safety Plan offers insight that continues to be useful and applicable.

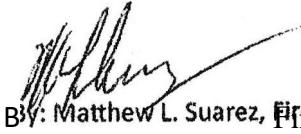
We all want the best for Montville and encourage the town to continually engage and seek input from not only the volunteer fire companies, but also the Town of Montville career firefighter/EMTs upon whom we rely so heavily. The Town of Montville would benefit from their extensive and varied fire/EMS service experience/counsel. It's an opportunity that should not be overlooked. Our town's career staff have earned, and deserve, a "seat at the table" as we mutually work through solutions to these important issues.

Please be assured that, despite the challenges MFCo faces, we will continue to support, to the best of our ability, the Town of Montville, its residents, and our mutual aid partners.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and support.

Sincerely yours in public service,

MOHEGAN FIRE COMPANY INCORPORATED



By: Matthew L. Suarez, Fire Chief

cc: Ronald Turner, Chief Montville Fire Company
Keith Truex, Chief Chesterfield Fire Company
Micah Messer, Chief Oakdale Fire Company
Wilfred Blanchette, III, Chief of Police
Paul Barnes, Fire Marshal