

Town of Montville Water & Sewer Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 3, 2025-- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville WPCA rules of procedure, decorum, timeliness and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

For all publicly broadcasted meetings, public comment on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town charter may be submitted in writing in advance.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerk's Office at townclerk@montville-ct.org at least 1 working day in advance (if the meeting is on a Monday the questions must be submitted by close of business the previous Friday).

Written comments may not be read in their entirety, but rather similar messages may be aggregated or paraphrased for submission to the Commission.

A three-minute limit is applicable to public comments within the meeting.

1. Water and Sewer Commission

a. Call to Order

Chairperson Longton called the regular meeting of the Water and Sewer Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

c. Roll Call

Present was Chairperson Chuck Longton, Vice-Chair/Town Counselor Kevin Lathrop and Commissioner Deane Terry. Commissioner Richard Gladue and Frank Miceli were absent. A quorum was present.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Derek Albertson, Administrator Ronald McDaniel, and Mayor Leonard Bunnell (6:04 p.m.).

d. Alterations to the Agenda -- None

e. Motion to approve the Discussion Minutes of the January 6, 2025 Regular Meeting

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Motion by Commissioner Terry; seconded by Commissioner Lathrop to approve the Discussion Minutes of the January 6, 2025 Regular Meeting. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 3-0-0. Motion carried.**

f. Communications pertaining specifically to matters which concern the Commission
Administrator McDaniel reported having submitted a letter today to the CT General Assembly. testimony regarding its Raised Bill 1187, that inhibits the ability to effectively prevent the enforcement of municipalities from the collection of sewer fees and assessments in arrearage and foreclosure liens. He reported a letter was also sent to Supervisor Albertson's group of which 15-17 testified against the bill.

g. Remarks from the Public Regarding Items on the Agenda with a three-minute limit
Chairperson Longton asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

h. Report from Operations
Superintendent Albertson submitted an Operations Report for activities in January 2025, as follows:

1.0 Compliance/Process

1.1 Water Pollution Control Facility

No local or formal complaints were received regarding the collection system or the Montville Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF).

Average daily influent flow to the WPCF was approximately 2.2 million gallons per day (mgd) with a total treatment volume of 68 million gallons (mg) for the month. Each day, approximately 40% of the treated effluent was recycled (sold) Rand-Whitney Container Board (RWCB).

Generally, plant treatment was good with permit parameters met. Average Total Nitrogen (TN) loading was discharged in the treated effluent below the permit (loading) level.

Thickened waste activated sludge (WAS) was calculated to be approximately 5.5% total solid (TS) which is considered good due to volume reduction (lower truck hauls/disposal tonnage).

1.2 Water Supply

The Montville Water Supply (WS) met required state and federal standards.

2.0 Staff

Interviews were conducted for the vacant Operator I position.

At the NEWEA Annual Conference, the Superintendent was recognized for participating in the Young Professional (YP) Mentoring Program. The program, pairs a Young Professional (YP) new to NEWEA with seasoned mentors from the NEWEA network. The program gives participants the opportunity to form a working relationship with a mentor, which will expand their network and introduce them to various facets of the water environment industry.

2.1 Health and Safety

No injuries were reported by the WPCA staff. Appropriate procedures were taken to protect against the extreme cold in the second week of the month.

On January 14, 2025, the EPA released a draft risk assessment (RA) of the potential human health risks associated with the presence of toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals in sewage sludge. The initial concern is related to the land application and the potential exposure to crops, livestock and those working with them. CTDEEP sampling onsite in the past has identified PFAS in the WPCF influent and effluent as well as the biosolids. The RA is not a regulation and does not compel action at this time.

Last year was the hottest one on record for the fourth consecutive year, disrupting the global water cycle and driving an uptick in extreme weather events. In 2024, water-related disasters resulted in \$550 billion in economic losses. The rate of climate related loss is accelerating according to a recent NOAA study. The health risks associated with higher summer temperatures and more intense storm events are being examined to keep our team safe.

CT CDL (drug) testing occurred on January 8.

2.2 Training

Staff continued to receive training (state or professional organization sponsored) to meet CTDEEP and CTDPH requirements for (wastewater/water certification) training credits.

3.0 Equipment

3.1 WPCF/Collection System

A WPCF project summary table is included in the submittal.

On a daily basis, the WPCF and collection systems transmit data with the *Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition* (SCADA) software (*Factory Talk View* by Rockwell Automation) read via a computer- HMI, human machine interface). Alarm notification is a critical function of SCADA and has been fine-tuned by the mechanics/operators to limit false or insignificant alarms.

As indicated in the recent NOAA report, 2024 was the warmest on record with its share of catastrophic weather events. Aside from hotter summers, climate change is increasingly transforming how, when and where rain falls. This challenges much of the world's sewer systems. Acting locally, the utility continues to improve process stances to deal with the higher flows in the more concentrated precipitation events and surveys to identify potential flooding areas in the collection system. Additionally, the Maintainer (Greg Bindloss) removes all potential fire fuel from around the collection system pump stations.

As indicated, our Utility relies on automated systems and digital tools to manage infrastructure and maintain operations, but with increased connectivity comes a higher risk of cyberattacks. Cybersecurity challenges include awareness and costs. The *Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency* (CISA) and the FBI aim to assist utilities to identify problems and offer support

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to secure systems. No legislation controls exist in the U.S. at this time. Most problems are related to insider threats (human error, stolen credentials, and malicious actors) with devices connected to the internet. Several years ago, the Superintendent worked with a contractor to assess current exposure conditions and enact appropriate responses such as supporting a no network facility, fire walls, securing PLCs and managing/monitoring insider privileges.

4.0 Projects

4.1 WPCF/Collection System/Water Supply

Aging infrastructure and delayed maintenance can be problematic so routine inspections with a robust CIP programs are directed at the WPCF and collections system. Initial assessment studies of the treatment/collections systems were completed in 2010 and 2011 and lead to budget/CIP focus on several areas for improvement.

CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) sewer inspections (of the 62 miles of gravity sewers) were made in the priority areas to define Inflow and Infiltration (storm water and groundwater intrusion). Routine maintenance inspections are made of all the lift stations. While jetting of sewer lines is made when necessary, “flushing” is considered the best option. This less intrusive cleaning pushes solids out of lines (toward the WPCF).

As previously indicated, a replacement project is proposed for Cook Water Tower. The glass fused to steel construction is state of the art and represents a low maintenance option to conventional steel tanks.

Our (no) lead service line layer is now available in the staff site on GIS mapping platform. Water utilities globally manage large value assets, requiring powerful tools to maintain their networks effectively. GIS enables utilities to model, visualize, and analyze systems with precision, capturing the complexities and improving overall performance.

4.2 Regulatory Oversight

The Montville WPCF and associated collection system is required to meet state and federal standards for effluent discharged to the Thames River (Horton Cove). The WPCF adheres to the federal standards in the *National Pollution Discharge Elimination System* (NPDES) and state (general) permit standards related to nitrogen discharges in the effluent and storm water discharges to surface water bodies. Additionally, state and federal mandates (CMOM- Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance) exist for care of the sewer collection system. Required (monthly, quarterly or annually) discharge reporting is signed (certified) by the state-licensed CTDEEP *Operator IV* (Superintendent) in responsible charge of the designated *Class IV WPCF Facility*. The certification required for the collection system is from a professional organization (NEWEA, *New England Water Environment Association*). The Superintendent has the highest certification required (Class IV) for both treatment and collections.

No regulatory oversight or action is ongoing for the WPCA. No existing *Consent Decrees* or *Consent Orders* currently exist. Formal notifications in federal or state registers would document any regulatory action.

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Federal and state (USEPA/CTDEEP) permit requirements (for WPCFs with a design influent flow rate > 1 mgd) include the filing of the *Biosolids Annual Report* by mid-February of each year. The reporting shows the total tonnage of sludge generated at the facility for disposal along with the extensive characteristic analytical testing required. The USEPA issued a Rule categorizing the WPCF biosolids as Class B Biosolids removed for offsite disposal via incineration (MDC Facility, Hartford, CT). No accounting is yet required for grit.

The *Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act* — EPCRA — was passed in 1986 in response to chemical-related safety and environmental concerns in communities throughout the U.S. Specifically, the concerns stemmed from hazardous chemicals stored and handled in facilities located in these local communities. Each state manages Tier II reporting differently. Tier II reporting is required per EPCRA Section 312 for all facilities that must prepare or have available safety data sheets (SDSs) under OSHA's *Hazard Communication Standard*. Facilities must submit a Tier II inventory form to the appropriate state implementing agency, although some states have developed their own forms. A Tier II review was conducted with appropriate filings with the Town.

The Federal *Lead and Copper Rule Revisions* (LCRR) requires all community and non-transient non-community public water systems (PWS) to conduct materials inventory of the distribution system including water lines to all service connections supplied water by the PWS. This materials inventory must be completed and submitted to the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CTDPH) by October 16, 2024.

5.0 Development

Several inquiries for potential residential development projects have been presented to the WPCA for review with the proposed work and connections to sewer/water.

6.0 Financial

The WPCA operates with an *Enterprise Fund* which is operated like a (private sector) business account except it contains a goal target of zero-balance (year) ending. The financial burden on the utility has never been greater. Development in town, the aging infrastructure and the potential for climate change affects costs with revenue drops exist due to poor collection rates and / or a drop in usages. In an uncertain rate environment, the right strategy will protect our business-like account from unpredictability and uncertainty. As indicated, rate increases are necessary. The WPCA will rely on appropriate engineering rate studies to evaluate your needs and make necessary adjustments to gain better control over liquidity and minimize risk.

6.1 Accounts Review

Asset management is the process for maintaining a desired level of customer service at the appropriate cost and lowering asset risk.

The FY 2025 WPCA Sewer and Water Budget began on July 1, 2024. A cursory review of the first two quarters budget/CIP expenditures did not indicate concerns.

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The ability to receive septic wastewater and to divert effluent greatly increases the utility's water (cash) portfolio; however, it is anticipated that a rate increase will occur in 2026 for sewer.

As part of the end of year regulatory filings, a calculation of total solids (dry tons of TWAS disposed of offsite) is calculated. All said, we had 3% less total tonnage disposed of (60 tons or 120,000 lbs) for the year as compared to 2024. This represents the efforts made by the operators to achieve a significant savings to our facility; approximately \$40,000.

A Montville WS rate increase is necessary. Initially, the WPCA will evaluate a rate study for the Water Supply (WS) then the sewer. The WPCA authorized WS rate study considered the current reserve funds, and the typical revenue received as compared to the costs increases associated with several GU rate increases, inflation, and new water tower (as well as the unaccounted-for water). The WPCA Engineer has been consulted to establish a model to include many aspects of utility status and future needs. Notification will be made on the WPCA website for public hearing. A formal notification for approval will be made to the Town Council. The last time the WS rates were increased was via *Resolution 2014-50* (July 1, 2014).

6.2 Assets

The WPCA will continue to enhance its understanding of the WPCF and Water Supply assets with the permanent/inspection attributes positioned on the water and sewer GIS platforms. ArcGIS is the system of record for geospatial information and specific information of the utility assets. The ArcGIS platform is in a unique position: It is both a system of record (permanent and inspection attributes) and a system of engagement for the operator/mechanics.

As previously noted, the cost of depreciation is provided in utility spread sheets, but it is not an “out-of-pocket” expense. This data is an important portion of the four-part approach to asset management: planning, financial foresight, capital visibility, and data collection/review. A review was conducted of both water and sewer asset details to remove those no longer containing value. Old assets can be sold on third party websites (i.e. Municibid) leading to revenues.

6.3 Grants/Funding

Per existing contract, the WPCA is responsible for the upkeep of the RWCB discharge and recycle water lines. As indicated in previous meetings, the (approximately \$3 million) replacement/repair pipe project was completed in August 2024. The Montville WPCA financed the project via the Reserve Fund but will be repaid at a rate of \$200,000 per year.

Some current wastewater projects were funded by State funds including one grant (CTDEEP \$5 million *Grant-in-Aid for Sewage Treatment Facility Infrastructure Improvements and Upgrades at the Montville WPTF*- State Grant Agreement 2017-170491, approved via March 2014 Town of Montville Resolution No. 2014-25). The grant monies were used for infrastructure improvements within the plant including the new chlorine system, new recycling pumps, restoration of the influent flow distribution boxes and grit removal system. Additionally, the aeration systems for SBR-1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were replaced. Vincenzo Gagliardi, Accountant for the CTDEEP Bureau of Central Services, funds for the grant have now been exhausted. Wright-Pierce was met to discuss future grant funding from the CTDEEP for collection system studies/projects.

One bond was paid in July 2018, and another was paid in February 2019; thus reducing debt service by at least \$150,000-\$200,000 per year. The remaining two bonds will be paid in August 2032 (headworks upgrade) and July 2034 (new emergency power generator), respectively.

Based on a review of the WPCA's Eligibility Application the CTDPH DWS had determined that the Cook Water Tower replacement project was ready to proceed and that DWSRF funding will be available. The Finance Director was notified of the intent to pursue federal funding for the tower project. The scheduled completion date of the storage tank is October 31, 2024. A Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF No. 2024-7125) loan agreement package for \$1,360,332.50 was signed by the Mayor on August 30 for the *Cook Hill Tank Replacement Project* (CTDPH Agreement #2024-7125). Reimbursements for WPCA expenditures have been received on a timely basis. The repayment is scheduled for a 20-year amortization with a 2% rate.

A MTUA loan balance remains on the (not amortized) loan defined in the December 10, 2007 *Reimbursement Agreement by and between The Mohegan Tribal Utility Authority and Town of Montville*. The original principal of the note for extending the water utility into the Town was \$2,642,792. The current balance is around \$500,000 which is paid down when connection fees are collected.

6.4 Energy

The (electrical) energy is the single largest monthly expenditure. With energy utility rates on the rise over 2024, the drive to create smarter, more efficient buildings has never been more critical. Generally, a decrease in plant energy demand has been observed associated with the (more controlled) lower dissolved oxygen (DO) settings (as compared to last year at this time) in the process tanks due to the new fine-bubble diffusers as well as the new (more efficient) turbo blowers. Additional efforts to control energy expenditures include the proposed improvement of the plant water system with VFDs and onsite battery storage.

Electrical Energy is supplied to the plant by the 460 kW Doosan Fuel Cell America, Inc. fuel cell (onsite generation by Unit #10587), Eversource (transmission) and First Point Power (generation). The power generation was formerly supplied by Constellation Energy. The WPCA is using less public grid kWhs due to this onsite generation. Typically, the Pure Cell (400 kW) unit is the best performing unit of its kind in Connecticut and provides over 90% of the energy required by the WPCF; thus, 90% of the electrical energy that does not have the higher transmission charge. The recent contract with the energy broker (Balanced Rock Energy) defines the new electrical costs with an approximate 35% increase (rising from \$0.06114 to \$0.09136 per kWh). An increase to the Public Benefits portion (cost) of Eversource bill (for state-mandated and approved energy programs, policies and initiatives) took effect. Additional cost increases will be seen in December 2024.

In March 2023, the Montville WPCA and Town signed a 20-year solar service agreement with N. Silver Brook, LLC- a Montville based renewable energy company. The agreement will save the Town of Montville more than \$850,000 and is structured for the town to receive the full savings amount within one year of the solar facility's completion. N. Silver Brook and its partners

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allocated solar energy from a Connecticut solar project in Naugatuck to the WPCA's electrical accounts. On June 9th, that project was selected as a winning bid in Connecticut's *Non-Residential Renewable Energy Solutions* (NRES) program. All of the WPCA's electrical usage was assigned to the winning bid and will result in lower energy costs. The Hunters Mountain #1 project's Petition and Siting Council documents are in preparation, and almost complete. MLG is still waiting to hear back from Eversource on the *Interconnection Application* (which is undergoing a transmission study). The developer (TRITEC) estimates *Permission to Operate* (PTO) will be achieved in Q4 2025.

WPCA personnel met with Garrett Cudgma of Resource LE in January to discuss battery (electrical energy) storage. *Battery Energy Storage Systems* (BESS) are technologies for the storage of electrical energy. It ensures consistent power availability amidst unpredictable energy supply due to factors such as weather changes and power outages and peak demand periods (BESS converts and stores electricity during off-peak times when electricity is more economical). It releases stored energy during peak demand, using components like rechargeable batteries, inverters for energy conversion, and sophisticated control software. This technology reduces reliance on costly peak-power plants, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, and enhances grid stability. It also represents a "hardening" response to climate change.

Superintendent Albertson reported that the Plant ended the year 2024 on a high note and was able to comply with the general permit regarding total nitrogen loading in effluent. Overall processing was very good and there were struggles in the year with rain, January thru March 2024, but the team was able to recover and ended the year on a good note. January 2025 was a good month starting the new year off well. The Superintendent also reported on a main sewer backup on Brewster and Lathrop. Response to the backup that was related to a grease plug was adequate with no property damage. Sixteen hundred linear feet of sewer lines were jetted and flushed, and the flow of 12 manholes were inspected. As to the reason for the backup, the Superintendent remarked that there are a few restaurants west of the area and that the Village had grease issues at the property that required pumping.

i. Report from Administration

Administrator McDaniel submitted his report of activities in December 2024 as follows:

- The Stony Brook bridge project is complete and we are finalizing retainage payment.
- The Distribution Box Project is completed. We had a couple of change orders that resulted in a total of \$814,109. One change was to increase the volume metrics of the bypass to account for maximum potential flow. The other 2 were for excess grit removal from the boxes and additional grit removal from the distribution channels. The DEEP grant that we secured in 2017 had \$613,221.27 remaining and was designated for this project. We are completing the closeout paperwork of the grant for the State.
- The Septage Receiving Station unit has been delivered and the crew is readying it for installation. New septage rates take effect this month.
- We are obtaining a quote for the replacement of the pump system at the Chesterfield Pump Station. We are evaluating our options.
- We assisted the Town with drainage inspections as they cleaned the storm water system.

- We changed vendors for our credit card processing and now the fees will be borne by the customer and no longer subsidized by the Authority.
- We have received a couple of good applicants for the open Wastewater Operator position and will evaluate over the coming weeks.
- We continue to hold regular monthly Cook Drive Water Tower meetings. The tank is constructed and is being readied for testing, disinfecting and commissioning. We have made contact with the three (3) property owners from which Eversource is requiring easements. They are drafted and have been sent to them and I am awaiting their approval and execution.
- We continue data gathering for the water rate study. We expect that we will need to raise rates to cover escalating supply costs, water tower loan repayment and ongoing system maintenance.
- A new meter was installed on Peter Avenue to more accurately register the water coming from Groton to aid in consumption analysis.

Administrator McDaniel reported that the final \$159,000 in funding was released today from the \$5 million grant that was used to repair the d-box relining project and close out of it will begin in addition to close out of the Stony Brook Bridge project. The Administrator is also in contact with two (2) companies one regarding resource energy adjustments for the Plant including battery storage, a new pump for storage to supply water to the Plant that will be skid mounted and will be paid for from electricity savings. As to the question concerning the kind of battery storage, a site evaluation will be conducted and paid for by the vendor over a 10-year period. The aim is to decrease the electricity demand charge although not a lot is being bought from Eversource.

j. Report from Mayor – None

k. Report from Engineers

Superintendent Albertson echoed the comments made by Administrator McDaniel concerning energy savings and efficiency. He noted that the Administrator was responsible for introducing the fuel cell that has resulted in savings of 90% for electricity. The Administrator also commented on the Silver Brook service agreement; a deal obtained for use of a large part of property for solar energy that will save the Town funds as the grid receiver. Superintendent Albertson also reported that Norwich and Groton just got \$56,000 worth of grants to encourage energy conservation. As to solids management, 2024 was a good, productive year and staff reduced overall solids by 3%, \$40,000 in savings. The Superintendent gave credit to the Administrator for the rollover extension of the \$5 million grant that funded many plant projects—the grit removal chamber, d-boxes, diffuser replacements, tank piping etc.—that have a 20-year lifetime. Projects for 2026 will be reviewed and the CIP budget will be brought before the Commission by April 2025 per Administrator McDaniel.

l. Old Business -- None

m. New Business -- None

n. Report/Referrals from Planning & Zoning

Chairperson Longton attended the last Planning & Zoning meeting—no business effected the Commission.

II. Water Commission

a. Report from Operations

Superintendent Albertson reported that the lead copper data is online which few plants do. The Plant met the October 2024 deadline for this data. The Town water system is younger with no lead found, and the data was easily obtained. Water sold is billable and accounted for but there is concern for unaccounted water at 8.4% with the average being .16%. Per a question by Commissioner Terry, Administrator McDaniel explained the water meter would be read at the end of the month and on the 23rd per Groton Utilities reading. Chairperson Longton commented on lead piping at Freedom Village and its effect on the Town; the Administrator confirmed that Town water lines are not at that location stating the lines go no farther than Town Public Works on Route 163. The Administrator explained that the process for evaluating unaccountable water beginning at the source point and determining if it runs past the meter. If positive, more evaluation can be done.

b. Report from Administration

Administrator McDaniel reported that the Cook Water Tower easements that Eversource wants are still problematic and still in negotiations with the parties involved--one (1) has been secured and two (2) are still pending. Two (2) properties are not affected by the Authority; instead, more so for Eversource to clean up their mess.

c. Report from Engineers

Superintendent Albertson reported on internal engineering and close attention paid to ratepayer water needs as there is an inventory for water—any unusual reads or a higher than usual bill. Administrator McDaniel explained two (2) instances that occurred--the system took an old read at an apartment building that went from \$300-\$400 month to \$2,000; the other was a quarterly read for billing usage (although read internally monthly) that was the result of a leaky toilet and 41,000 gallons of water.

d. Old Business -- None

e. New Business -- None

f. Reports from SCWA

Chairperson Longton reported that nothing occurred at the last SCWA meeting that was held on Zoom. He also reported that finalizing the purchase of Oakdale Heights by SCWA is still in limbo; Administrator McDaniel remarked that PURA has to approve it. Mayor Bunnell apologized for not reporting earlier on having met with Senator Osten and the SCWA Manager toward finding

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funding from the State for the Manor and the Heights. Senator Osten will look into this request and whether SCWA has water authority in the Heights.

III. **Remarks**

a. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute time limit -- None

b. Remarks from Commission Members

Chairperson Longton thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

c. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Terry; seconded by Commissioner Lathrop to adjourn the meeting at 6:26 p.m. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 3-0-0. 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.**