

Town of Montville
Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
Deputy Chairperson Caron 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 and K-9 Officer Gunner
3. Roll Call
Present were Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Absent were Councilors Lathrop and May. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
4. Special Recognitions/Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz, to remove the following item from the Agenda:
16(b) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., to permit the On-Call Building Official to take home a town vehicle on assigned days, as discussed and approved by the Teamsters Union. (Mayor Bunnell)
Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of April 14, 2025
 - b. The Special Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2025
 - c. The Public Hearing Minutes of April 30, 2025 (BOE Budget)
 - d. The Public Hearing Minutes of May 1, 2025 (General Government Budget)
 - e. The Public Hearing Minutes of May 6, 2025 (WPCA Water Service Rate Schedule)
 - f. The Public Hearing Minutes of May 6, 2025 (Conveyance of Real Property)Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard, to approve the April 14, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes; April 17, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes, and; April 30, 2025, May 1, 2025, and May 6, 2025 Public Hearing Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
7. Executive Session
 - a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing a candidate for the Zoning Board of Appeals. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: The following candidate was interviewed: Meracus Hernandez, Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate). Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:03 p.m. Vice Chairperson Caron resumed the meeting at 7:11 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session.
8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Maureen Benway, 41 Dock Road, Uncasville, expressed her opposition to item 16(c), regarding the water rate increase. She requested that the increase be spread out rather than one large increase. She has also submitted a letter regarding the same in hopes that the Councilors would consider re-evaluating the proposed increase.

Linda Tomasek, P.O. Box 407, Montville, expressed her objection with Atty. Michael Satti's legal bills associated with the Firefighters, stating that the Attorney's costs include an appeal for the dismissal of a case as a result of his failure to file the appropriate paperwork in a timely manner. She further added that such appeals are not permitted. She also questioned Atty. Satti's submission of an invoice, independent of his firm, Halloran & Sage, which the Town also retains. She felt the issue should be investigated and the firemen should be made whole.

Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, Oakdale, speaking on behalf of the Board of Education (BOE), stated their support for the appointment of Norman Silvia to serve on the BOE. Mr. Silvia, a manager of a local business and the parent of two school-age children, was interviewed after expressing his interest in serving on the Board. While expressing their regrets with the loss of Board Member Lisa Terry, he felt that Mr. Silvia was an excellent candidate and would be an asset to the Board.

9. Communications

- a. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman Shapiro for the months of November and December 2024 and January and February 2025
- b. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the months of January, February, and March 2025
- c. Copy of the legal bills from Atty. Michael Satti for the month of April 2025

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 Department Chief Wilfred Blanchette, III, reported that Officer Lindsey Michaels is en route from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., as part of the Police Unity Tour held in honor of fallen Police Officers and their families. He expressed his appreciation to those who expressed their support and condolences for K-9 Officer Gunner who was euthanized as a result of an acute medical issue last Monday morning. He thanked the Windham County Kennel Club for their \$10,000.00 donation and Stanton Foundation for their \$13,000.00 Grant to help fund the purchase of a new K-9 Officer. Officer Dan Witts and Bayron Mora picked up a new K-9 who is successfully bonding with Officer Mora. A nice ceremony was held to honor K-9 Officer Gunner, who now lies at rest.

Deputy Chairperson Caron, who attended the ceremony, was touched by the support of the Officers who stood shoulder-to-shoulder in honor of K-9 Officer Gunner. On behalf of the Town Council, he offered their condolences and support. Councilor Jaskiewicz concurred and commended them on securing the funds for a new K-9 Officer.

The Citizens Police Academy, an 11-week program designed to educate residents about the operations of the local police department, concluded in early April. He attended, along with Lt. David Radford, II, most of the sessions, which involved hands-on exercises of real-life scenarios. The program received very positive feedback from the participants; they look forward to hosting a second session during the winter.

Councilor Sabilia commented on the program's positive impact, reporting that one of his students who attended the program is completing the paperwork for an internship with the Police Department.

Finance Director Julie Chapman reported that they have been meeting with the department heads to review their budgets for possible adjustments. The FY2024 Audit is underway; preliminary figures indicate a revenue surplus, including a budgeted \$2.9 million that was not expended and lower-than-budgeted expenditures, which will contribute to an increase

in the town's Fund Balance, a.k.a., Rainy Day Fund. The hiring process for the Accounts Payable position is underway.

Public Works Director John Carlson reported that the Department has been working on Maple Avenue, including conducting a camera inspection of the drainage pipes. Fiberglass lining will be installed to repair some of the sections. In addition, some of the catch basin tops will be raised or replaced. The Contractor for the Fishing Pier has been selected and the contract is expected to be signed. The Police Department HVAC System repair/replacement will begin next Monday; the Public Works Crew has begun removing the door and a portion of the wall to install the unit. A rock was thrown at one of the newly-installed basketball courts at Camp Oakdale, shattering the backboard; a replacement backboard is scheduled to be installed this week. The Camp Oakdale courts were painted and the LED lighting upgrades are in process. The painting of the courts at Desjardins Park is expected to be completed this week. The bucket truck rental was returned and the Department has turned its attention to repairing catch basins. They are in the process of investigating their repair options for a recent pipe failure on Connecticut Boulevard. They have also begun sweeping. Due to the loss of PTA Lane and accompanying storage space, they are in search of an adequate location to store their equipment and materials. The items are stored at the Public Works Garage in the interim. The drainage system in the Public Works building is complete and the removal of a catch basin is in process. Various areas along Fitch Hill Road, Old Fitch Hill Road, and New London Turnpike, including the intersection, were cleaned up, improving the sightlines. The Department has also been removing and chipping fallen trees, including one on Massapeag Side Road. The Senior Center boilers were installed. The generator transfer switch needs repair/replacement and the tubes within the Town Hall boiler system also need replacement (reroping).

Deputy Chairperson Caron commended the Contractor for the boilers and the Department for their work on the Camp Oakdale courts. He proposed posting signage regarding the use of cameras at the courts and stated the need to upgrade the existing cameras. He also reported that the Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal Standing Committee is reviewing the possibility of increasing the Punch Card Fees. He expressed his appreciation for the repairs on Massapeag Road, stating that he has received positive feedback from the public.

In response to Councilor Southard regarding the flags, Public Works Director Carlson reported that the existing flags that were in good condition were installed and new flags were ordered and will be installed this week.

Mayor Bunnell reported that the negotiations with the Firefighters Union for the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) continue. A meeting has been scheduled with Dave Waddington of Connecticut Scrap and DW Transport, the Montville Police Department, the Fire Marshal, and the Fire Departments to discuss fire suppression efforts after the recent scrap metal yard fire. After the withdrawal of an applicant for the Town Planner position, there are no active candidates. An interview for the Planning Department Administrative Assistant was conducted. He congratulated and commended Tax Assessor Lucy Beit who recently retired from her position after 27 years of service. Kristy Kupec, an experienced Assessor from another municipality, will serve as the Town's new Tax Assessor. He clarified that the milling of white lines along Route 32 is not for bike lanes; permanent epoxy will be placed, replacing the temporary latex material.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – *no meeting; no report*

b. Finance

The Finance Committee is continuing to work with the Finance Director to craft the proposed FY2025/26 Budget.

- 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

The Senior Center is working on offering more services and new programs for seniors. A van, which is not in use, will be donated to the Animal Control Facility. The Center continues to offer its food program, which serves approximately 50 to 60 seniors. Discussions included the seniors’ budgetary concerns, a proposed bill, unfunded state mandates, and Medicare benefits.

Due to funding cuts, Social Services is receiving half of its usual food shipments from the USDA. He commended the staff and volunteers for their hard work and efforts.

- b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education, Planning & Zoning Commission
Councilor Southard attended the BOE meeting in lieu of Councilor Jaskiewicz, who was recovering from his surgery. She reported that the BOE set the date to recognize the retiring teachers, reviewed the yearly compliance business required for recertification by the Department of Education for funding purposes, and set the tuition rates.

The Planning & Zoning Commission approved a proposed 11-unit multi-family development on Route 32 and Powerhouse Road and the public hearing date was set for May 27 for the proposed four (4) lot subdivision on Silver Falls Road.

- c. Councilor Lathrop: Economic Development Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority – *not present; no report*

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

The Conservation Commission is hosting a CT Trails Day event on Saturday, June 7, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Conservation Center. They also wished to remind the public that the Town’s Road Clean-up Program, funded by the Nips Fund, is available for Non-Profit Organizations; interested parties may contact the Public Works Department.

The Youth Service Bureau continues to offer the Uncas Health District’s Mobile Health Van, which rotates weekly between the Town Hall, Mohegan Fire Company, and Fair Oaks. Youth Services Director Barbara Lockhart and Program Developer Kimberly Grant were interviewed by Melissa Cole on Channel 3’s Great Day CT, regarding the importance of the 988 Mental Health Hotline and their You Good Bro? Campaign. In partnership with Bluesky Wellness, the Bureau is offering no-cost counseling services to residents with addiction and substance misuse. Summer Center Registration opened today; 35 spots are available to Montville youth. Approximately 80 pounds of prescription medication were collected at their April 26 Drug Take Back Day event.

The Public Safety Commission included a report by Fire Marshal Paul Barnes, who reported that there have been seven (7) scrap fires since 2020. While the exact cause of the fires is unknown, it is hypothesized that they are caused by the incorrect disposal of lithium-ion batteries. The piles are now being kept lower to help tame any fires. Mayor Bunnell added that the scrapyards are processing approximately 400 to 450 tons of material per day, much of which contains materials and elements that did not exist ten years ago. Conscious efforts are being made to keep the fires from occurring.

- e. Councilor Southard: Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission
Farmers Market Opening Day is June 24; Community Night, which is open to all Montville businesses and non-profit organizations, will be held on July 1. Kids, age 6 to 17, are also welcome to host a booth (no bath or food items). The Committee is pleased with their new Market Manager, who has introduced several new ideas.

The Library Committee will be meeting on Thursday, May 15.

The Parks & Recreation Department's Camp Registration begins tomorrow. The free Breakfast/Lunch Program Grant will be re-established if 50% of the participants meet the required guidelines. Eight (8) Summer Concerts, beginning on July 8, will be offered. The Carnival will be held from June 20-22. The Community Center Building Committee is soliciting individuals to serve on the Committee.

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to accept the resignation of Lisa Terry from the Board of Education, effective immediately.
 Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Councilors Caron and Southard expressed their regrets. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to appoint Mickey Gillette to fill a vacancy as a Full Member of the Planning & Zoning Commission with a term to expire on May 12, 2029.
 Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- c. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint John Guetens to the Conservation Commission, with a term to expire on June 10, 2027.
 Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- d. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Alternate Member Elaine Hess to the Conservation Commission with a term to expire on June 12, 2027.
 Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- e. To Consider and Act on a Motion to appoint Norman E Sylvia III to the Board of Education with a term to expire on November 10, 2025.
 Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2025-42. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$1,986.04 (one thousand nine hundred eighty-six dollars and four cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- b. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., to permit the On-Call Building Official to take home a town vehicle on assigned days, as discussed and approved by the Teamsters Union. (Mayor Bunnell)

Item was removed from the Agenda.

- c. **Resolution #2025-43. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to adopt the rate schedule as presented at a Public Hearing held on May 6, 2025 for all water service located within the Town of Montville service area billed on and after July 1, 2025. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell acknowledged the sizeable increase in the water rates. He stated that it was unavoidable, as the rates are dictated by the supplier, and the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) is operating in the red. He reminded the public that the rates are lower than those of SCWA (Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority). He urged the Town Council to approve the Resolution. Councilor Jaskiewicz concurred and understood that a gradual increase would have been more palatable, adding that he has been paying \$80.00/month to SCWA. Councilor Sabilia also agreed that smaller increases would have been more agreeable, citing that the WPCA is currently operating at a significant loss, tying their hands. Councilor Caron stated that he has engaged in in-depth discussions with the WPCA Administrator and, while agreeing that the rates should have been incrementally increased over the years, he noted that the rates have not increased since 2014. Councilor Southard stated that, while it was unfortunate, the numbers indicate that the WPCA cannot operate at a loss; she hopes that a similar situation will not occur in the future. Roll Call vote, 5-1. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Yuchniuk. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2025-44. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve and adopt the Ordinance titled “An Ordinance Regarding the Conveyance of Real Property Located at 14 and 22 Bridge Street” as heard at a Public Hearing held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers at Montville Town Hall. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and Caron. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

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

Councilor Southard recited a copy of a letter submitted by Chairperson May, dated May 22, informing the Town Council that, because the bids for the Oakdale and Murphy Elementary Schools’ HVAC systems came in significantly higher than expected, the scope of work was reduced and mini-splits will not be installed in the classrooms.

BOE Chairperson Wills Pike added that the new HVAC systems will include dehumidifiers. While the entire school will have air conditioning systems, they will not be installed in every area. They were assured by the vendor that the air would be conditioned evenly throughout the building. The system will be upgradable and in compliance with the state’s requirements. They are working with the Finance Director and Town Council Chairperson to ensure that the revised plan is in accordance with the Bond language.

- 18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Jaskiewicz thanked the public for attending this evening’s meeting.

Mayor Bunnell reminded everyone that the Memorial Day Parade will be held this Sunday, May 18 and Memorial Day is Monday, May 26. He hopes everyone will enjoy both days and remember the sacrifices of our Armed Forces and our privilege to enjoy our freedoms due to their sacrifices.

Deputy Chairperson Caron concurred. He also reminded everyone that May is Older Americans Month and invited everyone to visit the Senior Center. He stated that a letter was sent to the Legislators regarding their strong opposition to Senate Bill 1188, An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Property Located on Certain Indian Lands. He also stated their opposition to Senate Bill 1165, An Act Requiring the Renegotiation of Certain Agreements with the Mohegan Tribe. He thanked the public for attending this evening's meeting and looks forward to seeing everyone at the Parade.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, 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