
Town of Montville
Montville Housing Authority
Regular Minutes | June 17, 2025
Independence Village Center
Uncasville, CT 06382

1. Call to Order

Call to Order at 5:04 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Doherty-Peck, Sherbanee, Suarez, Szarzynski, Perkins

Absent: None.

3. Remarks from Tenants

a. Comment 1: Malicious gossip, disrespect, bullying, intolerance of neighbors, and overall negativity have increased in five years, destroying the once peaceful, tolerant community at Independence Village (IV). Rude comments are made to tenants who are taking a walk around the compound merely to admire the gardens. Raised-bed planters for edible vegetation should be allowed.

b. Comment 2: Tenant relocated tomato plants from MHA to the community garden at the senior center; and subsequently they were stolen.

c. Comment 3: Edible plants should be permitted in raised-bed planters; negativity is high at IV; tenants are making insulting comments when others are trying to enjoy a peaceful walk around the compound.

d. Comment 4: Tenant inquired as to when the Pet Policy will be reviewed.

4. Public Comments

Mayor Bunnell commented that it is the Town's responsibility to appoint a Board that can work together and is responsible to tenant concerns; and that he has confidence in the current membership. He acknowledged long-term challenges that have persisted at MHA and urged tenants to be patient as the Board will be responsive and take care of the many issues from the past.

5. Announcements

Commissioner Suarez: FOIA Training Conference will be held 5:00 p.m., July 22 at Freedom Village Center. The presentation will be given by CT State officials and will include a Q&A at the end. This will mark the first in tenant awareness and empowerment presentations during 2025 and will be open to all who are interested in attending.

6. Approval of Minutes

Motion to Approve April 2025 regular and special minutes by Commissioner Sherbanee,

seconded by Commissioner Suarez. **Vote:** Doherty-Peck_Yea; Sherbanee_Yea; Suarez_Yea; Szarzynsky_Yea; Perkins_Yea. **Action:** 5-0, All in Favor_Motion Approved

7. Approval of Payment for April and May 2025 Bills

Motion to approve by Commissioner Sherbanee, seconded by Commissioner Szarzynski;

Vote: Doherty-Peck_Yea; Sherbanee_Yea; Suarez_Abstain; Szarzynsky_Yea;

Perkins_Yea. **Action:** 4:0 Approve; 1 Abstain_Motion Carried

8. Correspondence

a. Correspondence for Information – None.

b. Correspondence for Action

Management request for additional compensation

Management submitted written request for additional compensation to provide MHA documents to the auditor for commencement of forensic audit held in abeyance since 2024. Discussion: Providing MHA documents to the auditor is within the scope of operations (administrative duties) and, therefore, does not merit additional compensation.

c. Request for return of MHA property

There has been no response from Commissioner Morton to a written request for return of MHA property/key fob. Discussion/Response: Management will deactivate the key fob.

9. Management/Administrative Reports

a. Financial Status

1) Citizens Bank Operating Account Balance May 2025

2) Citizens Bank SSHIP Fund Account Balance May 2025

b. Physical/Property Status

1) Maintenance Report

- 35 non-emergency reports
- Follow-up on work request for malfunction of the community center doors at IV
- Follow-up on work request for malfunction of the community center door at FV

2) Projects Report (Subcommittee Report)

- Renovations are expected in three-to-four months.
- Request for unit-by-unit test results from the second radon test in March 2025 has been submitted by the subcommittee to the contractor.

3) Security Status

- Vandalism incident at IV revealed a malfunction in the recording capability of the surveillance cameras. Cameras are fully functional at this time.
- There are no surveillance recordings of dogs barking or roaming about MHA property during the night.

c. Regulatory Status

1) Safe Drinking Water Status

There have been more than three weekends without bottled water available to

tenants at FV due to the water company's failed delivery service on multiple occasions. Compounding the issue, Management lacks petty cash or access to an alternative resource for funds from which to directly purchase water in cases of non delivery by the water company. FV tenants are advised to use the water filtration systems attached to their faucets or the water filtration pitchers provided for those with hose faucets.

2) Waiting List Status

There are more than 80 applicants on the waiting list. The method underlying the applicant selection process requires reconsideration by the Commission to determine the most effective approach: Preference vs. Prioritization (Point System, Lottery, or First-come-first-serve).

3) Emergency Fire Alarm Systems

Parts have been ordered to repair the faulty fire alarm system. Tenant in U40 is advised that until the system is repaired, dial 9-1-1 in case of emergency.

4) Occupancy Status

Full occupancy with Units 33 and 28 remaining vacant for housing tenants who are temporarily displaced when renovations begin.

d. Additional/Oral Reports Regarding Items 8(a)(b)(c)

10. Standard order of Business

a. Unfinished Business

1) Approval of April bills (see Item 7).

2) Cost-effectiveness and serviceability of the MHA answering service stats from Management for improvement during June 2025 is ongoing.

3) Management report on three bids for a new water agent is ongoing. Chair Doherty-Peck will get three quotes.

Management report on three bids for a new groundskeeper/lawncare agent in progress; observing performance at this time.

b. New Business

Approval for Replenishment Request for Reserve Operating Fund is complete.

11. Tenant Comments | Three-minute limit

a. Comment 5: Tenant commented that the neighbor's edible vegetation is starting to bloom and management needs to do something about it because a bear was in the tenant's backyard and knocked over her barbecue grills; a bear has been sighted running up and down Old Colchester Road.

b Comment 6: Tenant questioned as to when the results of the second radon testing will be available to tenants. (Commissioner Szarzynski commented that

c. Comment 7: Tenant commented on the need for four vacant units at commencement of renovations; and questioned as to when renovations will commence at IV. Commissioner Szarzynski responded that renovations are scheduled to begin in three-to-four months.

d. Comment 8: U31 tenant commented concern that a persistent white powder on her

floor is asbestos related; vacuuming and sweeping is ineffective.

e. Comment 9: U11 tenant commented concern that a persistent white powder from the ceiling to the counters may be asbestos related; bleaching counters every 2-3 days is ineffective.

f. Comment 10: Heavy-duty linoleum is an alternative solution to the asbestos flooring hazard (Commissioner Szarzynski responded that ‘that’s why have experts, we’re not experts’); senior housing in Kensington, CT for years has had bears in the woods behind their property and there has been no incidents of bears coming from the woods without any incident of a threat to the edible vegetation or tenants. Don’t leave grease in the barbecue grills to attract vermin and other wild animals. The answering service responds to calls during business hours.

g. Comment 11: Tenant inquired as to the difference between the times of service regarding the answering machine versus the answering service because messages are full during working hours.

h. Comment 12: Tenant questioned rationale underlying asbestos abatement following 48 years of nonproblematic existence of asbestos in the flooring: “Why bother something that is fine?”

i. Comment 13: Tenant commented that she did not really need to know all of the Commission’s business; and inquired as to why she could not say what she had to say in the beginning of the meeting and then just leave. She commented that there is no opportunity at the end of the Agenda for her to talk about what she wants to talk about rather than talk about the items on the Agenda.

12. Public Comments | Three-minute limit

Mayor L. Bunnell: The asbestos problem needs to default to the experts and now is the opportune time to take care of it. As far as the dust is concerned, management should contact Mystic Air Quality Consultants for air quality tests to identify what it is you (tenants) are experiencing. Regarding money to purchase emergency drinking water, he advised the Commission to provide management with a credit card. He commented that problems with the waiting list have existed far too long. It is imperative to identify who is on the list and who is not; and how long applicants have been waiting because three years is ridiculous.

13. Commissioner Comments | Three-minute limit

a. Commissioner Sherbanee commented that unfortunately waiting lists throughout the State are experiencing a surge in applicants seeking affordable housing; and the method for applicant selection needs to be reviewed by the Commission to ensure fairness and expeditiousness. She commented on the dual opportunity of asbestos remediation at this time as being an opportunity to eliminate a health risk to tenants and having the availability of financial support to accomplish the task. She advised tenants that there is a heatwave weather forecast; to check on the welfare of each other; and to stay hydrated.

b. Commissioner Perkins introduced herself to tenants. She commented that she believes

in transparency and communication; that the current Commission lacks both; and that she is on the Commission to work on that. She commented that there is too much talking going on and there is too much back-and-forth talking going on between tenants and the Commission; the Chair should speak and then allow others to speak. She commented that when tenants speak, she should be able to respond because that is her purpose in being at the Board meeting and that it is up to the Chair to approve or disapprove.

d. Commissioner Suarez commented that Item 3 of the Agenda permits tenants to voice matters or ideas they wish to share, including matters pertaining to day-to-day operations. The Commission, however, is a governing body designed to provide oversight and strategic direction, rather than engaging in the daily execution of tasks. (The floor was redirected at this time).

e. Mayor Bunnell announced and explained a new notification system for the Town of Montville called the Push Notification, including an opportunity to distribute a card to each tenant and Board member.

f. Commissioner Suarez continued that it is inappropriate for the Commission to respond to tenant concerns regarding day-to-day operations, as to do so is antithetical to the Grievance Policy which offers tenants a structured way to voice concerns and for Management to address them, fostering communication, transparency, and trust at MHA. Item 11 of the Agenda facilitates an opportunity for civic-minded tenants to have a voice in decisions undertaken by the Commission at the meeting. Suarez commended tenants for their increased turnout and participation at Board meetings and announced that outside speakers are being scheduled for meetings/conferences aimed at tenant empowerment and enlightenment. Suarez stated that she is a strong proponent of parliamentary procedure and feels that the Commission has made great strides in dedication to following Roberts Rules of Order. The Pet Policy and Inspection policies are under review by the MHA attorney. Suarez wished everyone a commemorable Freedom Day June 19.

g. Chair Doherty-Peck commented that there will be a class at the senior center to demonstrate how to use the pushcard that the mayor distributed. Doherty-Peck commented that although the Pet Policy is being reviewed, the existing policy contained in the lease agreement remains in effect.

14. Executive Session

To consider and act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and contractor matters, pending policy updates, security matters, financial matters, and pending claims.

Convenes: 6:39 p.m.

Adjourns: 7:36 p.m.

15. Open Session Reconvenes

a. Time: 7:36 p.m.

16. Adjournment

Motion: Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Perkins, seconded by Commissioner Sherbanee. **Vote:** Doherty-Peck_Yea; Sherbanee_Yea; Suarez_Yea; Szarzynski_Yea; Perkins_Yea. **Action:** 5:0, All in Favor_Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Suarez, MHA Board of Commissioners
Cc: Commission File