

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting – August 20, 2025 -- 6:30 p.m.
Town Council Chambers

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 Stone called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

Present were Chairperson Rocky Stone, Vice-Chair William Barlow and Commissioners Mary Hillman, Morgan Matthewson, John Plikus and Deborah Schober. Commissioners Matt Beaupre, Noah Carver and Jon Chase were absent. A quorum was present.

Also present were Mayor Lenny Bunnell (7:45 p.m.) and Town Council Liaison Kate Southard. Recreation Director Peter Bushway was absent.

4. Alternations to the Agenda – None

5. Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (3-minute limit). None

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:

a. The Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025.

Motion by Vice-Chair Barlow; seconded by Commissioner Plikus to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried.**

b. May 21, 2005 and June 18, 2025 meetings were informational only.

Motion by Chairperson Stone; seconded by Vice-Chair Barlow to approve the May 21, 2025 and June 18, 2025 Informational Meeting Minutes. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Motion carried.**

c. July 16, 2025 meeting was cancelled.

7. Recreation Director's Report August 2025.

Chairperson Stone and the Commission reviewed/discussed the Recreation Director's August 2025 report as follows:

- Summer Camp has ended with compliments from many and challenges with behavioral issues with some campers--a behaviorist on staff handled extreme incidents. Vice-Chair Barlow commented on having picked up his granddaughter for the first time from camp and the chaos

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associated with it—the doors were open with a counselor present and 2-3 adults at a table with kids running around; he was not asked for ID and waited almost 15 minutes; kids were not being signed out and three (3) other parents were not asked for ID. This incident was reported to Town Councilor Southard who spoke with Recreation Director Bushway and Mayor Bunnell. It was said that the campers do have IDs. Commissioner Hillman, whose two (2) daughters work as camp counselors, implored that there should be a complete overhaul of training stating the incidents reported have been ongoing for the last 4-5 years. It was emphasized that safety should be a key component for the summer camp program; the safety protocol in place in the schools was relayed by Commissioner Hillman who works at a school. That protocol includes a security officer and the photocopying of IDS for recordkeeping, and she noted that training that occurred 10 years ago will not work now as it has changed. The Vice-Chair also noted that the table should be located in the gym as the lobby doors are open and then relayed incidents he witnessed in which two (2) kids were reprimanded in front of those present and as well as a camp counselor who was called over and also reprimanded—these were disappointing incidents that should not have been for public display. The Town Councilor added that a breakdown is occurring, a systematic issue that will be reviewed during the offseason, per emails with the Mayor. Commissioner Schober suggested that information can be obtained from other towns and tailored for the Town in addition to a consult with people who review behavior escalation issues with kids said Town Councilor Southard. Chairperson Stone remarked that this topic will be added to the agenda for the next Commission meeting.

- The Summer Concert series that ended August 28th had high attendance and the Movie Night last Saturday was attended by approximately 40 people—neither was sufficiently advertised according to the Chairperson. Town Councilor Southard remarked that posts for events can be made on the Town Facebook page daily and that she would add this item to her list for follow-up.
- Free pickleball lessons were held on Saturday with seven (7) persons present. The Chairperson sent a note to the Recreation Director concerning the signup link for the lessons which did not work. He also noted that the picture posted for the lessons was of a generic court and not the Town pickleball court and that new pictures for pickleball and tennis lessons are needed. Vice-Chair Barlow also noted that calls were received about cracks and peeling at the pickleball court; Chairperson Stone reported that the contractor was contacted a couple of months ago and the repairs will be done next spring and that there is no signage posted as to unacceptable activities at the court. The Chairperson also noted the corrections done last year to update camp addresses and a notice he received from Google Maps about the 100,000 hits received for the pickleball court.
- Commissioner Hillman addressed the Food Truck Festival on Saturday that she attended with one (1) of her daughters noting that the only sign for the event was at Camp Oakdale and very few people were present. She suggested hiring a college student to livestream to promote the festival as times have changed.
- Chairperson Stone reported on Recreation Director Bushway working with a grant writer from the Mohegan Tribe to secure funding for the remaining items on the CIP as listed in the Recreation Director's report and working with Public Works. Town Councilor Southard will attend that 1:00 p.m. meeting on August 21st. The tennis court can be removed from the CIP along with the pickleball court and paving at Camp Oakdale as they were financed by a State bond of \$175,000 and \$200,000, respectively.

- A ribbon cutting ceremony for the inclusive swing at the Fair Oaks playground per a fund-raising project by Girl Scout Troop 63416 was held on August 8th. Chairperson Stone heard about the ceremony from a neighboring girl scout parent. The ceremony was attended by Recreation Director Bushway; Mayor Bunnell, Town Councilor Southard and the Commission were not invited. The Town Councilor reported that a presentation will be held at the September 8th Town Council meeting during the special presentation item at the beginning of the agenda and will begin at 7:00 p.m. That same night, the Scouts will also hold their first meeting upstairs at the Town Hall. A reminder notification will be sent about the same.
- The next Community Booklet will be available in early September and includes programs and events for the fall and early winter.
- Painting of the bathrooms and soccer shed has been completed and the picnic table for Desjardins Park will be held until a concrete pad is installed to secure the table.
- The storage shed for the Public Works crew is complete.
- Field #4 at Camp Oakdale will be unusable for 1-2 years to dig up and repair its drainage pipes that are plugged and sink holes that are broken or no longer working. Chairperson Stone noted that this issue was never conveyed to the Commission as it was understood that only Field #7 had these problems. Commissioner Matthewson noted that Field #4 has always been a mud pit and when she came on the Commission she asked about repair of it but was told the drainage cost was too much but was not told the cost. The Chairperson confirmed upon review of the list of projects that Field #4 was recognized as being in need of repair. Town Councilor Southard and Chairperson Stone will attend the next Public Works meeting.

8. Report from Finance.

Chairperson Stone reported that the Finance Report shows no issue with Commission expenditures for the fiscal year ending June 2025. The balance for Line Item #079 is currently estimated at \$16,863.98 as it was used for completion of several additional projects. He also noted that revenue from Pavilion weekend rentals also increased.

9. August Newsletter.

Chairperson Stone reported on the newsletter noting the lessons for pickleball and the information pending for Montville Race Day including course signs for it that were requested last year. Town Councilor Southard will follow-up on those signs. Commissioner Matthewson questioned why the Pumpkin Decorating event on October 18 is limited to the first 50 registrants; the Chairperson suggested that she reach out to Recreation Director Bushway or Eva. The Chairperson also reported that new classes are loaded and that Webtrac has been revamped as you can no longer see who has signed up for classes that could be seen in the old version. He concluded that some work still needs to be done on the newsletter.

10. Unfinished Business.

- a. Projects and funding status:
 - 1) Camp Oakdale Trail Map

Chairperson Stone reported that Public Works was given large, specialized field maps but were not told where to place them. Town Councilor Southard will mention it at the Public Works meeting next week. Also, the new trail map with the barcode is now posted.

- 2) Large Pavilion/Dog Park Plan

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Chairperson Stone reported that the plans for the Large Pavilion/Dog Park were sought nearly a year ago and Recreation Director Bushway says they are in process. The delay has a piece of a project on hold to go out to bid with funds already in place for it. The Chairperson also mentioned that Scofield Park has been on the Public Works list for cleanup. That Department has requested confirmation that all outstanding work has been completed so it can be taken off their list. Town Councilor Southard will confirm the same.

b. Carnival Committee update

Commissioner Matthewson reported that the Carnival went well and noted that she has been contacted by vendors who were not paid. The rides and food made people happy, and she will follow-up with the Farmers Market trucks to see if they want to return next year. Chairperson Stone reported there was a record crowd on Friday, a pretty good one on Saturday even with the bracelet price issue from noon to 3:00 p.m. Discussion was had about having the vendor opening at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and having only one (1) bracelet. Sunday was slow as the temperature was over 100 degrees. The Department netted \$18,220 from the event. A follow-up Carnival meeting has not been held yet, but discussion will be had about improving the food, the rides although there were 2-3 new ones that were popular; the radio station that was good idea and the Department tent that was not staffed.

c. Facility Walk-a-Rounds

Commissioner Schober began the discussion about the parking issue at Camp Oakdale. Chairperson Stone reported the draining issues as cited by Public Works and the need for a shady area by the dog park where people can take breaks. This item should be included in the CIP grant per Town Councilor Southard. Water for the dog park and lights are included in the CIP. Commissioner Plikus reported on his review of the large and small pavilions with a proposal to add a path between the two. The small pavilion requires repair supports, removal and/or replacement of the water fountain and sidewalk repair. The large pavilion picket fence that faces the small pavilion needs to be painted and the panels were questioned as Commissioner Plikus could not figure out what they are for—all are workable, but the Recreation Director does not have a key according to the Chairperson. Additionally, the boulders look like warts—they will be replaced with something else according to the Chairperson. Raising the elevation and expanding the upper surface to one surface and the lack of center green was also mentioned and can be discussed when plans are obtained according to Chairperson Stone.

d. Disk Golf Proposal

Chairperson Stone the proposal presented several months ago for a disk golf course throughout the Mostowy Property and intermingled with the playing fields. The fields would not be used as kids can get hurt and the plan is being revised for the Property only.

11. New Business

a. Program fee discussion

Chairperson Stone reported that Recreation Director Bushway proposed an increase of program fees by adding \$10 more to resident fees and \$5 more for nonresidents that accounts for a small markup. This fee increase is currently in place. Discussion was had by the Commission about the number of nonresidents who participate in programs, the increased fee this year by the dance instructor and equipment costs for each program. Commissioner Matthewson noted that dance requires a lot of equipment, but gymnastics has a higher risk factor. Additionally, if you sign up for a program you are paying for that higher risk thus it would make sense to raise the fee

percentage. Other considerations should be costs of fuel, electricity, maintenance and square footage of the building, according to Commissioner Plikus. It was suggested by Commissioners Matthewson and Schober that the Commission reviews 2-3 contracts and program provisions and fees from other towns. Consideration should also be given to profit versus break even and wear and tear to facilities such as the dance floor, per Vice-Chair Barlow. Additional discussion included whether program operation fees are being covered, replacement of equipment, pricing out participants, program fees go into the General Fund, nonresidents do not pay taxes and charging fees covers instructor costs and other costs. It was also noted that summer camp is not available to nonresidents. Discussion was also had about facility rental fees on Friday – Sunday that included removal of garbage, a deposit fee for cleanliness [leave it like you found it] and fees associated with damages. It was noted that Public Works is paid for a minimum contractual period of three (3) hours and how to determine when the damage occurred by the facility renter(s) during the 3-day time period. Commissioner Schober proposed having renters provide before and after pictures of the facility and Town Councilor Southard added that the fees cover the cost and upkeep of the renovated facilities. Commissioner Matthewson reported on a property she rented for short-term use and concurred with Commissioner Schober of having renters provide pictures or video footage as part of the terms of a rental agreement. She noted it was a means of confirmation for both parties of the agreement. It was suggested by Commissioner Plikus to include maintenance in the cost for rental over the 3-day period that would be determined. It was noted that use of Public Works staff requires compliance with their union agreement. A dumpster was suggested so that renters could discard their refuse, but it would also be used/filled by passersby as they cannot be locked for ease of trash removal, per Mayor Bunnell. The Mayor suggested preparing a resolution to the Town Council and the Commission proposed that all suggestions discussed should be incorporated into the rental agreement as it needs to be updated including the return of the key. Mayor Bunnell will propose preparation of the agreement to the Town Attorney.

b. Independent Contractor Agreement Discussion.

Chairperson Stone reported that the agreement was sent out to fill holes, expectations of contractors and what will be expected from the Department. The Commission was asked to review the agreement. The Chairperson commented the agreement should specify and express insurance requirements in addition to information for purposes of protocol. Recreation Director Bushway included it as an addendum to the agreement in addition to requirements such as which door to use.

c. Request from Farmers Market to put sign on fencing at the Large Pavilion

Chairperson Stone reported that the Farmers Market hung two (2) signs instead of one (1) and they do look nice. Town Councilor Southard reported that she designed them. Vice-Chair Barlow proposed having a digital board at the parks to list activities—prices for the same are attached to the CIF proposal.

d. Girl Scout Troop 673416 inclusive Swing Project recognition.

Chairperson Stone noted that this item had already been discussed.

12. Communications. – None

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

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Chairperson Stone asked three (3) times for remarks. Mayor Bunnell remarked that this year will be the start for the new fishing pier and boat launch which ran into a problem causing an additional expense of \$32,000.

14. Remarks from Town Council Liaison Southard.

Town Councilor Southard remarked that she has her to-do list and having spoken with two (2) vendors regarding classes for teenagers and new adult programs. One (1) vendor makes wire rings; a way to offer something different.

15. Remarks from Parks & Recreation Director Bushway. -- None

16. Remarks from Commissioners.

Vice-Chair Barlow remarked that the meeting was productive and noted a few questions for the Recreation Director for the next meeting. Commissioner Matthewson remarked that the conversations were great. Chairperson Stone remarked on the discussion of program fees.

17. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice-Chair Barlow; seconded by Commissioner Plikus to adjourn the meeting at 8:33p.m. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Gloria J. Gathers
Town of Montville -- Recording Secretary/Minutes Clerk

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