Town of Montville Water & Sewer Commission
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 5, 2026-- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

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, Commissioner/Town Councilor Nick Sabilia 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 Lenny Bunnell.

d. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion to suspend the rules in that there is no new business in order to have an abbreviated meeting. Discussion: none. **Voice vote. Motion Approved.**

Per brief Commission discussion, response was heard concerning the Route 32 sewer line break. Repair required putting a shock absorber in the system; typically at the end near the pump station. When turned on it jolts—a issue still in the process of review. It was noted that casino expansion would serve Plant profits. Superintendent Albertson reported that an accountant applicant today was able to download all documents since June 2025; he had no other information that not already included in his monthly report. Mayor Bunnell remarked on the WPCA crew's rapid response to the sewer break on Route 32 with no interruption in service noting it was a job well done. A new accountant applicant was able today to download all documents since June 2025. The Superintendent noted that a start-up company will arrive next week to clean the waste water one last time; it sounds as if it is a new technology. Administrator McDaniel reported to the Mayor on the Commission January termination date for Commissioner Gladue; it will be addressed by Mayor Bunnell. Chairperson Longton concluded there was no new or old business to report, all meeting reports were submitted via Dropbox to the Commission and included the Plant Annual Report, a formal response to the DEEP June 16, 2025 Notice of Violation, the Palmertown portable booster, the service request for the sewer breach and request for comments to CT House BillHB8002.

e. Motion to approve Minutes of Regular Meeting on December 1, 2025 – **No Action**

f. Communications pertaining specifically to matters which concern the Commission – **No Action**

g. Remarks from the Public Regarding Items on the Agenda with a three-minute limit – **No Action**

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

1.0 Compliance/Process

1.1 Water Pollution Control Facility

The Montville Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) operates the federal and state permitted Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF)/Collection System and the Water Supply distribution system (WS).

WPCF treatment was good with state and federal permit effluent parameters generally met. Cold snow-melt led to some process control issues toward the end of the month. No local or formal complaints were received regarding the collection system or the Montville WPCF.

Average daily influent flow to the WPCF for the month was approximately 1.8 million gallons per day (mgd) with a total (influent) treatment volume of 57 mg for the month. No collection/ treatment concerns were identified during the monthly rain or extreme cold events (as well as the high wind advisory for December 19). Each day, approximately 50% of the treated effluent (non-potable) was recycled (sold) to Rand-Whitney Container Board (RWCB) for re-use in their production of paper.

The month's waste activated sludge (WAS) was thickened (TWAS) to approximately 6% total solids (TS) which is considered good due to volume reduction from dewatering.

1.2 Water Supply

The WS met required state and federal standards. Some pressure issues were encountered at the Maple Avenue PS during the week of December 8.

2.0 Safety

2.1 Health and Safety

No injuries were reported by the WPCA staff. In addition to formal training consistent with state and federal guidelines, the staff continue to use daily "tailgate meetings" to identify hazards and promote "situational awareness." Among other things, these meetings slow the working pace (eliminating shortcuts), create a plan, allow for Q and A, and focus the team on the job at hand.

During the winter season, staff are reminded of controls (i.e. handwashing, flu shot) to prevent the spread of seasonal diseases.

Interviews were conducted for the vacant *Accountant* position with one person offered a second interview.

2.2 Training/Certifications

Staff have continued to receive training (state or professional organization sponsored) to meet the CTDEEP/CTDPH requirements as well as support additional related wastewater/water certifications. In-house education includes discussions of the plant's process control methodologies, conveyance system components as well as identified and seasonal safety issues.

The Collections Team and Superintendent met with Sewer AI to discuss their mapping and assessment tools for the Montville sewer conveyance system, including *Risk & Rehab* which reportedly turns existing CCTV data into capital plans without GIS or modeling and *Digital Side Scan*, an inspections stream enabling analysis and annotations of all structural and maintenance defects from anywhere with an internet connection.

3.0 Equipment

3.1 WPCF/Collection System

The WPCA continues to shift from reactive maintenance to a more proactive, data-driven asset management strategy that delivers measurable financial, operational, and community benefits without requiring disruptive or costly system overhauls. This includes a routine inspection/ assessment of all assets as well as a comprehensive annual and 5-year CIP. Besides marked cost savings, the overall benefit is lower operational stress and a more predictable system. Near constant feedback from the operators and mechanics has led to the most significant sanitary sewer improvement programs.

A requirement of the CMOM directive, the annual WPCA CIP supports long-term solutions and addresses short-term needs. This calendar year is the first time the water industry lists CIP

financing as their number one issue of concern. A FY 2026 WPCF sewer/water CIP project summary table is included in the submittal.

The sewer conveyance system continues to enlist the GIS platform. Beginning in 2019, the Superintendent worked with the subcontractor (CAI) to develop an innovative and integrated model to provide asset management to the sewer conveyance system. The constant inspection reports (attributes) along with the description data (permanent) attributes provide the best geospatial technology tool to support growth, risk mitigation, efficiency, sustainability, and CIP data-driven strategy.

At approximately 4:30 p.m. on December 21, a small breach of the Holly Hill Pump Station's force main caused a raw wastewater release (est. 300 g) along Route 32 (near 2549 Route 32). The on-call operator took action; the station was immediately stopped (bypassed by pumper truck) to stop the release. Adequate staff was onsite as a response team. Police assistance was employed for traffic control. The (existing, contracted) emergency contractor will make repairs. Appropriate regulatory filings were made and Kevin Merrill, CTDEEP Environmental Analyst was met onsite. This is the fourth break on this line in seven years; a consequence of poor pipe bedding (i.e. cobbles) abrading the cast iron pipe.

The Administrator provided a layer of third-party intrusion protection by managing privileges for the financial software (MUNIS). The WPCA still receives the visibility needed but removed unnecessary access and monitored administration status to close risky gaps and keep everything secure.

An approximate 15% lower chlorine (volume) cost was achieved following negotiations with Borden & Remmington (supplier). Chlorine is used daily in the secondary and tertiary processes for biological control or disinfection.

4.0 Projects

4.1 WPCF/Collection System/Water Supply

The Superintendent met with RWCB representatives to confirm recycle water quality/production as well as the 2026 shutdown schedule for the paperboard facility.

CCTV (Closed-Circuit Television) sewer inspections (of a portion 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 24 lift stations and 1,650 manholes. All work is recorded within the GIS system. Along with condition assessments, the goal is reducing infiltration and inflow contributions to the influent flow to the WPCF. It is evident that the three major separations made in the conveyance system has reduced influent flow. Two manholes located along Route 32 (at Fort Shantock Road) were found to need significant structural repair. Additionally, several manhole covers were found to need repair along Gallivan Road. Inspections were made of each manhole with flushing operations and CCTV work completed to ensure no problems existed in the related sewers.

Solids handling (thickening/dewatering and hauling/disposal) is the second largest cost for the WPCA. Waste solids consist of material removed from secondary (biological) process to support the proper food to microorganism ratio for ideal wastewater treatment control. The “wasting” reduces the volume of organisms to keep the F/M ratio appropriate for each season of the year. In an attempt to reduce costs related to truck hauls offsite for incineration, the Superintendent has invited vendors into the WPCF to conduct (dewatering polymer) bench/application trials as well as discussion of new/innovative mechanical equipment for dewatering. It must be noted that a control is the contract which limits that the thickened sludge to be hauled cannot be greater than 7% total solids (TS). The last months have shown a significant decrease in TWAS truck hauls offsite due to good thickening. As indicated, the aerobic digestion of excess solids has proven to be successful in reducing overall volume through endogenous respiration. Land disposal is not an option in Connecticut. This is unlikely to change due to the impending PFAS regulations; the USEPA sampling results show PFAS present in the WPCF sludge. Disposal options are limited to incineration which will continue to climb in part due to the requirement of higher temperature incineration to burn off PFAS. The cost reduction goal can only be reached by waste sludge volume reduction.

An evaluation is made each month by the Superintendent of the RWCB and MTUA sewer reporting as well as septage receiving to ensure there are no blind spots (unauthorized dumping), no lost revenues, no regulatory compliance risks, and minimal plant treatment equipment/process strain from wipes, grease and chemicals. Additionally, the energy billing is reviewed to determine the performance of the fuel cell (onsite generation of electrical power to lower number plant cost).

Our outside laboratory (Phoenix Environmental Laboratories, Manchester, CT) notified the WPCA of price increases. To combat this rise in cost, more "in-house" analysis will be conducted.

The Superintendent met with John Person (Biobot Analytics Senior Epidemiologist) on December 2 regarding future WPCF influent testing. The WPCF had conducted wastewater epidemiology (surveillance) with both UConn and Biobot to predict disease clusters/outbreaks of respiratory illnesses (i.e. COVID-19), influenza, and RSV in real-time as well as monitor high-risk drug use (i.e. cocaine, heroin, fentanyl).

The Superintendent met with BioMific representatives on December 8 to discuss a research project for wastewater treatment using fungi. Following the project, the WPCA would assist in a formal professional (conference) presentation such as March 2026 *International Biomass Conference & Expo*.

The Superintendent reviewed the WPCA web page to include recent staff changes, industrial GP changes, LCRR achievements and stormwater GP changes.

The annual report narrative was completed by the Superintendent and Administrator.

To combat water loss from the (potable) water supply, the WPCA evaluates potential leaks and water loss (through a monthly water audit). Calculations of revenue water, non-revenue (accounted for) water versus non-revenue (unaccounted for) water. As previously indicated, a replacement project was completed for Cook Water Tower.

4.2 Regulatory Oversight

The Montville WPCF is also known as a publicly owned treatment works (POTW). It is required to meet state and federal standards for (point) effluent discharged to the Thames River per a NPDES (federal) permit and the (state general permit) for the *Long Island Sound Nutrient Reduction Program.* Some controls may be necessary prior to the WPCF for industrial users including federal pre-treatment permits or state *General Pretreatment Permit for Significant Industrial User Discharges to Publicly Owned Treatment Works* (GP SIU). Additionally, the (state general permit) for the *General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater Associated with Industrial Activity* regulates industrial facilities with point source (stormwater) discharges. Biosolids (laboratory analytical) reporting is summarized for the USEPA on an annual basis. Additionally, state and federal mandates (CMOM- *Capacity, Management, Operation and Maintenance*) exist for care of the sewer conveyance system.

As required (monthly, quarterly or annual) discharge and (incidental) emergency reporting is signed (certified) by the state-licensed CTDEEP *Operator IV* (Superintendent, August 2014 Log Number 2312) in *Chief Operator 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*) and is certified by the NEWEA Grade IV Operator (Superintendent, June 2010 Certificate Number C-5170). The Superintendent has the highest certification required (Class/Grade IV) for both treatment and collections. The Superintendent also has passed the highest certification exams for potable water, including Distribution System Operator (Class III) and Water Treatment Operator (Class IV).

The existing 5-year federal wastewater discharge permit was effective on November 1, 2019. The current effluent permit has an expiration date of October 31, 2024; a renewal package was submitted to the CTDEEP prior April 30, as required (6 months prior to the expiration date). The Superintendent met with Ed Bice of the CTDEEP Municipal Wastewater Program on December 16 to discuss the permit renewal and the eMOR Subscriber list (authorized permit submittal signors) for Montville.

The CTDEEP announced the issuance of two updated General Pretreatment Permits designed to support POTWs and improve compliance management: *General Pretreatment Permit for Significant Industrial User, Dewatering, and Remediation Discharges* (SIU GP, previously the *General Permit for Discharges of Wastewaters from Significant Industrial Users*) and *General Pretreatment Permit for Non-Significant Industrial User Discharges to POTWs* (Non-SIU GP, previously the *General Permit for Discharges from Miscellaneous Industrial Users*. This ensures that harmful pollutants are treated at the source and don't disrupt treatment processes or pollute local waterways. Applications are due March 1, 2026. RWCB and MTUA are both permitted under other GPs issued by the CTDEEP.

Developing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is essential for the WPCF to manage stormwater discharges and prevent pollution. The CTDEEP Stormwater General Permit regulates stormwater discharges. The CTDEEP is in the process of in the reissuance of the General Permit (permit's expiration on September 30 with the renewal permit issued on October 1, 2025). The CTDEEP will finalize the new permit on November 1, 2025 but no new requirements will be necessary until April 1, 2026.

The CTDEEP will be reviewing all WPCA incident (i.e. bypass, spill) reports inputted for 2025 as filed by the Superintendent.

Additionally, the CTDEEP has begun discussions about the new 454 General Permit. This alteration of the existing GP (*Permits to Act as a Contractor to Contain or Remove or Otherwise Mitigate the Effects of a Release*) is consistent with the State equating wastewater spills with chemical/petroleum spills.

The Superintendent's June and November and December technical memorandums (TMs) outlined corrective actions to be taken to address Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD_5) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) exceedances (as outlined in the June 2025 CTDEEP *Notice of Violation* NOV #WRMU 25-004). The formal responses were submitted prior to deadlines defined in the October 22 CTDEEP letter requiring a NOV response schedule/update and confirmation documentation. Following the timely TM submittals, the Superintendent and WPCA Engineer met with the CTDEEP to confirm findings, outline a comprehensive (hydraulic/nutrient) treatment model, highlight the aggressive infiltration and inflow (I and I) program for the collection system and define treatment capacity improvement projects.

The House of Representatives has passed the PERMIT Act in December. The legislation aims to streamline permitting for infrastructure, but includes significant changes to the *Clean Water Act*, including a limit to state power to block energy projects due to water quality issues.

Long Island Sound reached a major milestone in water quality this year with regards to hypoxia (low oxygen in bottom waters) detected at the lowest since 1987. That means fewer areas of the Sound were uninhabitable for fish, shellfish, and other aquatic animals.

Connecticut House Bill (HB8002, *An Act Concerning Housing Growth*) was signed into law by the Governor. The bill aims to address the state's severe housing shortage, which is driving up costs for working families and deterring business investment. It includes provisions for first-time homebuyer's savings accounts, rental assistance programs, and new housing creation incentive programs. The bill also mandates municipalities to develop housing growth plans and provides grants for public infrastructure improvements related to housing developments. The Superintendent met with other WPCAs due to the concern of unfunded mandates about extending sewerage. If not addressed properly, the bill could have unforeseen costs in the WPCA collection system. The Administrator attended a related webinar.

With regards to manufacturing, the USEPA has proposed amendments to simplify its *Toxic Substances Control Act* (TSCA, 1976) Section 8(a)(7) PFAS Reporting and Recordkeeping Rule, first released in 2023. Compliance deadlines have been postponed several times. The move suggests a more lenient approach to PFAS in other industries such as wastewater treatment.

LCRR requirements have been concluded with the recent inspections of several supply lines to determine no lead conditions. The Montville WPCA completed field investigations to positively identify the lead status of unknown lines reported in the initial CTDPH LCRR Material Inventory. All of the Montville WS distribution lines were determined to be non-lead. A federal judge has recently authorized the distribution of funds from the $626 million Michigan water crisis settlement, paving the way for more than 26,000 claimants to receive payments. The Flint municipal water supply crisis drove the federal and state LCRR response.

The 2025 CTDEEP *Consumptive Diversion Water Use Reporting Form* was completed and submitted for the Montville WS. Annual reporting is required for all permits and registrations in an attempt to determine water usage state-wide.

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. Appropriate end-of-year accounting will identify areas whereas budgeting should be adjusted in future cycles.

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 2026 WPCA Sewer and Water Budget began on July 1, 2025. A cursory review FY 2025 budget/CIP expenditures did indicate immediate concerns. Future budget must develop appropriate AR to match proposed AP without tapping into the Fund Balance (as a source of revenue).

The FY 2026 budgets/CIPs were approved by the WPCA and the Town Council. The budgets began on July 1, 2025 and call for economic efficiency with the minimum resource consumption and maximum performance of the equipment required to supply potable water and treat the municipal sewerage. The budgets must establish appropriate funding for reliability of the utility.

A Montville sewer rate increase would increase revenues. Informal reviews of other town's rates show the Montville WPCA sewer rate to be approximately 40% lower than the current utility market.

A Montville WS rate was approved by the Town Council on May 12. 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.

6.3 Grants/Funding

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, reported 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. 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). The repayment is scheduled for a 20-year amortization with a 2% rate beginning on October 31.

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 WPCA expenditure. On average, the WPCF consumes 360,000 kWh per month. As such, the Superintendent examines each point of use to ensure best efficiency.

Blowers can consume up to 60% of the wastewater treatment plant's total energy—and over 90% of the energy used in aeration. Between May 2024 and May 2025, the national average electricity rate jumped 6.5%—from 16.4¢/kWh to 17.5¢/kWh. Thus, the Administrator and the Superintendent are constantly looking at ways to optimize energy usage within your water treatment plant/collections system and water supply.

Electrical Energy is mostly 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.

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 allocated solar energy from a Connecticut solar project in Naugatuck to the WPCA's electrical accounts. 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. Hunter's Mountain #1 is undergoing an ecological study.

The WPCA personnel met with Garrett Cudgma of Resource LE 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 CTDEEP requested "hardening" response to climate change.

The America's Wastewater Access Gap (CAWAG) Initiative launched in 2022 as a pilot with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. CAWAG partners with local leaders and technical assistance providers to help small and rural communities access federal wastewater infrastructure funding. This program may have some opportunities for the WPCA.

i. Report from Administration

Administrator McDaniel submitted a report of activities for the month of December 2025 as follows:

- (W) Cook Tower deed restrictions are filed on the land records. Pole was installed on December 10. Three-phase power will be connected soon.
- (S) We are continuing to review our sewer rates structure for comparable communities.
- (W&S) We continue to enter data into the GIS system for all aspects of our system. This is an invaluable tool for our staff and clients. We also have access to new mapping tool that the Town has purchased called NEARMap.
- (S) We continue to look into energy saving initiatives. The fuel cell was offline for two (2) days which caused our monthly demand charge from approximately $9k to $19k. The demand charge resets each billing month.
- (W&S) Our accountant has retired but accounts receivable and payable are being processed in a timely manner. We held interviews and made an offer to a promising candidate, but she declined and withdrew from consideration. Job has been reposted.
- (S) We experienced a force main sewer break on December 21 in the area of the previous failures. This was in the area on Route 32 by Sandy Desert Road. These breaks are due to long term vibrations from the pumps kicking in and causing the pipe to chafe against the poor fill material that was used in the bedding. Our crew established the bypass quickly and B &W performed the necessary repairs in under eight (8) hours.
- (W&S) We have submitted the ESA modification request to the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) through the Council of Governments and are still awaiting word back from DPH.

(S) = Sewer (W) = Water (W&S) = Water and Sewer

j. Report from Mayor – **No Report**

k. Report from Engineers – **No Report**

l. Old Business -- **None**

m. New Business -- **None**

n. Report/Referrals from Planning & Zoning – **No Report**

II. Water Commission

a. Report from Operations – **No Report**

b. Report from Administration – **No Report**

c. Report from Engineers – **No Report**

d. Old Business -- **None**

e. New Business **-- None**

f. Reports from SCWA – **No Report**

III. Remarks

a. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute time limit – **No Action**

b. Remarks from Commission Members – **No Action**

c. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Terry; seconded by Commissioner Sabilia to adjourn the meeting at 6:06 p.m. Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 3-0-0. Meeting Adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Gloria J. Gathers
Town of Montville Recording Secretary

AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN OF UNDER "RESOURCES" ON THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE.