

**Town of Montville**  
**Town Council**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**February 9, 2026, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers**

1. Call to Order

Chairperson May 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

3. Roll Call

Present were Councilors Brian Baker, Billy Caron, Joseph Jaskiewicz, Tim May, Rachael Novak, Nicholas Sabilia, and Kate Southard. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.

4. Special Recognitions/Presentations

- a. Presentation by Rand Whitney Containerboard General Manager Mario Infante regarding the \$40 Million facility upgrades

Mayor Bunnell introduced Rand-Whitney Containerboard General Manager Infante and thanked him for taking the time to provide the presentation. Rand-Whitney Containerboard General Manager Infante expressed his appreciation to the Town Council for allowing him the opportunity to provide an update on the facility. He presented a brief promotional video and provided a summary of the company, which is one of the oldest paper mills in North America. The Company, which is committed to sustainability, recycles and produces four grades of paper from old cardboard, operates with 100% recycled wastewater through the Water Pollution Control Authority, and generates power through a turbine. The Plant operates 24/7 and employs approximately 85 full-time individuals and 26 maintenance personnel. Committed to investing in its future, the Company will install new equipment to improve and increase its processing and production. Most of the equipment will arrive in September, and the company will store it on-site. They will perform the upgrades in October. The Company will cease operations while the upgrades are being conducted. During this period, they anticipate approximately 200 individuals to travel to the Town to help execute the project. He thanked the employees for their commitment to safety and their partnership with the community, without which the investment would not be possible. Included on this evening's Agenda is the acceptance of a site improvement plan to improve their infrastructure, supporting the growth of their business and containing their operations on the property. He thanked the Town for its ongoing support. The Company also supports the Town and several community organizations.

*Mayor Bunnell added that the upgrades are important and reflect the Company's commitment to the Town and its employees and extended the Town's willingness to assist them as necessary.*

*Councilor Caron felt pleased about the improvements and their continuing partnership.*

- b. An Introduction to the Tax Increment Financing by Land Use Director Dennis Goderre  
Mayor Bunnell introduced Land Use & Development Director Goderre, who provided a brief presentation on Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – a tool for economic development that ties into the Town's Revive and Renew Routes 163 & 82 Project – and the CMDA (Connecticut Municipal Development Authority). He provided a brief history of TIF Districts, which several towns have or are in the process of adopting, including the Town and City of Groton, New London, Old Saybrook, and East Haddam. He also outlined the process, which may take up to one year or more to launch. He explained that the method does not create a new tax or a tax increase. Rather, it is a commitment to the community, development, and investors of the Town's

willingness to invest its resources in the improvement of the designated TIF District(s). TIF Districts are generally used to create or enhance town centers, grow a retail hub, or build or expand established industrial zones. After a TIF District(s) is approved by the Town Council through a Public Hearing process, it is referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission to ensure its consistency with the Town's POCD (Plan of Conservation & Development). Once established, a percentage of its future increases in property tax revenue is deposited into a designated TIF account to be reinvested back into the District. While multiple TIF Districts can be established, the total TIF District value cannot exceed 10% of the Town's Grand List. Its establishment supports long-term planning and has a positive impact within the District and the Town as a whole, by creating a greater sense of community, enhancing its quality of life, and attracting and retaining residents across various demographics. It also allows for future growth, assists developers, and complements grants, bonding, and private investments. Indirectly related is the CMDA, a quasi-public organization that helps communities with community centers and offers technical services to member-towns with land use matters, including establishing a TIF District and zoning as well as economic development, complements seCTer (Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region), and provides access to additional funding resources. Depending on the Town Council's interest, he volunteered to reach out to the other communities that have established a TIF District(s) and learn about their structure, policies, challenges, if any, and successes for guidance.

*Mayor Bunnell complimented Land Use & Development Director Goderre for introducing TIF Districts to the Town and its possibilities, helping the Town move forward. He noted that, throughout its history, stumbling blocks and hurdles have prevented the Town from enhancing and improving its services; establishing a TIF District would provide the Town with a tool to reinvest its future tax growth. He looks forward to extending an invitation to CMDA Executive Director David Kooris to provide a presentation in the near future.*

#### 4. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz, to add the following items to the Agenda, under Item 16, New Business:

- c. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard G. Bunnell, Sr., to execute the Storm Sewer Easement and Right to Drain from Rand-Whitney Realty, LLC, to the Town of Montville, as required per Planning & Zoning Commission site plan application #25SITE5, approved on July 22, 2025, in accordance with a plan entitled "Site Improvement Plan Proposed Trailer Storage Facility, 375 Maple Avenue/Route 163, Town of Montville, Connecticut, Prepared for Rand-Whitney Realty, LLC, 370 Route 163, P.O. Box 336, Montville, CT 06353, Prepared by CLA Engineers, Inc., Dated June 2, 2025, Revised July 21, 2025". (Councilor May)
- d. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to retain the law firm of Suisman & Shapiro, as legal counsel for the Town of Montville with a term of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 and further to authorize the Mayor to execute the Fee Agreement outlined in the proposal submitted by the law firm, dated February 4, 2026, 2026 (Councilor May)

Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

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

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026
- b. The Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026, 5:30 p.m. (Route 82)
- c. The Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026, 5:45 p.m. (Gay Hill Road)
- d. The Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026, 6:00 p.m. (Bridge Street)
- e. The Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026, 6:30 p.m. (ATV)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard, to approve the January 12, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes and January 12, 2026 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes of 5:30 p.m., 5:45 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidates for the Farmers Market Committee, Economic Development Commission, and Commission on Aging. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Baker. Discussion: The following candidates were interviewed: Nancy Rodriguez, Farmers Market Committee/Inland Wetlands Commission, Carmelo Rodriguez, Economic Development Commission/Planning & Zoning Commission, and; Deonn Bunnell, Commission on Aging. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:44 p.m. Chairman May resumed the meeting at 8:34 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 – *none*

9. Communications

- a. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman Shapiro for the month of November 2025

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred

The following matters were referred to and reviewed by the Town Attorney:

- 1) Revised ATV Ordinance – will be forwarded to the Public Safety Commission for review and approval
- 2) Revised Permanent Building Committee Ordinance – will be forwarded to the Town Administration/Rules & Procedures (TA/R&P) Standing Committee for review and approval.

11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred

Public Works Director John Carlson reported that, due to the winter snowstorms, the Department is currently over-budget for overtime, salt, and truck maintenance repairs. The Opening Bid for the Fair Oaks Bathrooms Project will open this week.

*In response to Councilor May, he stated that the proposed FY2026/27 Budget numbers that were submitted will be adjusted due to the recent storms.*

*Councilors Caron and Jaskiewicz commended the Public Works Crew on a good job managing the storms.*

Land Use & Development Director Goderre reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission will be reviewing and amending the Zoning Regulations to align with the newly passed Housing Bill before the July 1 deadline. They are also collaborating with the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) to draft the Town's Housing Plan, which is due in 2028. They are hoping to hear back from the Department of Housing

this month regarding the awarding of a \$125,000.00 grant to help fund the Housing Plan and Zoning amendments. Push notifications about upcoming meetings for the Revive & Renew Routes 163 & 32 Project, which is nearing completion, will be sent. The Boat Launch Project has been placed on hold due to inclement weather; the Contractor anticipates restarting the project on March 1. The Boat Launch and Fishing Pier are slated to open on July 1, barring any additional unforeseen circumstances.

*Mayor Bunnell announced that Land Use & Development Director Goderre has agreed to be the lead contact for the Boat Launch and Fishing Pier Project.*

Tax Collector David Greaves reported that the Town's collection rate, as of this morning, is 96.58% for real estate, 99.51% for personal property, and 90.3% for motor vehicles. He also provided a brief report on the status of the collection of delinquent real estate taxes, which has improved due to the recently approved Tax Policy. Additionally, due to the reduced timeframe to submit payments for delinquent Personal Property and Motor Vehicle Tax Bills, the office is mailing notices and demand letters and sending referrals to the Collection Agency earlier, which is also improving their overall success rate. The Town Council-approved administrative fees were initiated on January 1, resulting in the reimbursement of various costs, including certified mailings. The office mailed delinquent notices today, will mail demand notices on March 5, per state statutes, and will issue UCC (Uniform Commercial Code) and real estate liens in April. The collection rates remain strong; he is confident that the Town will achieve its goal of a 99.9% collection rate by the end of the fiscal year.

*Mayor Bunnell commended and thanked Tax Collector Greaves and Assistant Tax Collector Dawn Attardo for helping the Town achieve its goals.*

Montville Police Department Lt. David Radford Montville Police Department Lt. David Radford provided a brief update on the Animal Control Facility, stating that they are in the process of completing a punch list of minor items and will be contacting the state for a re-inspection after the gates are installed. The landscaping work will begin in the spring.

*Mayor Bunnell commended and thanked Lt. Radford and Clerk of the Works Dean Terry for overseeing the project.*

Mayor Bunnell apologized to the Department Heads and the members of the public for the late hour. Recent hirings include Deputy Fire Marshal Travis Roberts, Public Works Maintainer Trent Alpine, and WPCA Accountant Cynthia Thompson. After interviewing several candidates, an offer was extended to one of the prospects to serve as the Town's Building Official. Interviews are scheduled for three (3) candidates, who were interviewed by the Public Safety Commission and forwarded to the Mayor's office, for the vacant Firefighter position. He thanked Gateway Terminal for cooperating with him, the Police Department, and neighbors to make the best of a bad situation during the recent triaxle traffic on Depot and Dock Roads before and after the last storm. He also thanked Information Systems Director Bill O'Neill for arranging the purchase and installation of the new monitor in the Town Council Chambers; the monitor was grant-funded and is part of the Town's Capital Improvements. He commended the Public Works Department for their hard work during the winter storms and the Police and Fire Departments and Dispatchers for keeping the community safe.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

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

Chairperson May stated that, though the Public Works and Emergency Services Departments are over-budget due to overtime costs resulting from the recent storms, the budget remains on track, with 58% expended. The Committee is reviewing a new time-card system and electronic purchase orders. He is looking forward to the start of the budget season in March.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

Councilor Baker reported that eight (8) to ten (10) prospective bidders attended the Pre-Bid Meeting for the Fair Oaks Bathroom project. He attended a CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection)-hosted Zoom meeting with Mayor Bunnell, Finance Director Julie Chapman, Public Works Director Carlson, Transfer Station Employee Flo Turner, and other municipalities regarding the SSMR2 (Sustainable Materials Management Round 2) Grant Program. He also reviewed the available funds for the road improvements with the Finance Director, Public Works Director, and Town Engineer to develop the list of spring projects. WasteZero, Inc, provided the Committee with a presentation as part of the Committee's evaluation and revision of the Transfer Station Fees and Policies; a presentation will be planned for the Town Council and public in the near future. The proposals for the Town Council Chambers' fire escape are under evaluation. The Committee also discussed the overages in overtime and materials due to the recent storms.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Baker: Public Safety Commission

The Commission's January meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. Councilor Baker reported that, for the month of December 2025, the Fire Departments received 269 Calls for Service (average of 8.6 calls per day) and the Police Department received 997 Calls of Service (average of 32.1 calls per day). The Commission will review the ATV Ordinance this month. If approved, the Commission will forward it to the TA/R&P Standing Committee for review and approval before sending it to the Town Council.

b. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services

Though currently fully stocked, the Social Services Food Bank will soon need non-perishable food items. Numerous seniors and residents-in-need are taking advantage of the heating assistance program to help them get through the cold winter season. The Social Services Outreach hours were extended to assist the Town's seniors-in-need. He thanked the Charter Oak Federal Credit Union for its generous donation of \$5,000.00 to the Social Services Food Bank.

The Senior Center hosted a successful Winter BBQ event with the Mayor and Montville Police Department Chief in attendance. The renovations are complete with the installation of the carpet and painting. He thanked the Mohegan Tribe for funding the purchase of the new furniture for the breezeway and library/card center.

The Social & Senior Services Director is currently working on applying for and submitting grant applications.

b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Planning & Zoning Commission

The Commission held a Public Hearing regarding a Zoning Regulations Amendment for Adaptive Reuse, which was unanimously approved, and scheduled a Public Hearing for a Zone Change Application for a property located on Cook Drive from R-20 to Government. The Commission also discussed other matters, including additional amendments to the Zoning Regulation and the POCD, the Housing Grant, and TIF Districts. A workshop was scheduled to discuss the proposed amendments to the

Zoning Regulations and POCD. The Department issued 18 (eighteen) zoning permits and issued 21 (twenty-one) Zoning Compliance Certificates.

c. Councilor Novak: Economic Development Commission, Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund

During their January meeting, seCTer Executive Director Paul Whitescarver provided a very informative presentation to the Economic Development Commission entitled, "What is Economic Development", discussed how they could support the Town, and the possibility of hosting a business outreach event, inviting local businesses to learn about seCTer and its offerings to help business grow and thrive. She commended Land Use & Development Director Goderre.

The Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund held a virtual Zoom meeting and approved the tax abatement and stipends for the fourth quarter (October to December) for the four Fire Companies and scheduled their 2026 meeting dates.

d. Councilor Sabilia: Conservation Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board

The Conservation Commission is in the process of marking large, dead trees to be taken down and is researching options for permanent trail markers to replace the current markers, which are fading. The Commission is also investigating the possibility of separating the Conservation Center from the Fair Oaks Community Center properties, which are on the same tract of land, to improve its funding opportunities.

The Youth Services Bureau was a guest on the live morning segment of Channel 3's Great Day program to promote the state's Youth Service Bureaus, the importance of mental health, and their "You Good, Bro?" campaign. The Bureau also kicked off its grant-funded Play-Well Teknologies LEGOs STEM education program for fourth and fifth-grade students. The New London Elks Club pleasantly surprised the Bureau with an \$800.00 Gratitude Grant; the funds will be used to promote random acts of kindness. A licensed Clinical Social Worker for children, ages 14 to 18, who are struggling with behavioral health and/or substance misuse, was secured through their professional networking connections.

e. Councilor Southard: Board of Education, Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission

During the Board of Education's January meeting, the Director of Technology provided a presentation regarding their five-year plan and budget projections, the Superintendent discussed the budget process and the impact of Special Education costs, the Director of Finance and Operations delivered the 2025/26 Financial Report, and the Director of Maintenance provided an update on the ongoing HVAC projects. The High School was named to the Advanced Placement Honor Roll for the 2024/25 School Year. The BOE was awarded \$25,500.00 in grants from the Montville Education Foundation.

The Farmers Market Committee held its first meeting last month. Based on vendor feedback, this year's events will run from July through August, and a "Spring is in the Air" pop-up event will be held at Tyl Middle School in March.

The Parks & Recreation Commission discussed its ongoing projects. They are also in the process of finalizing the revised Pavilion Rental Rules, which will be sent to the TA/R&P Standing Committee for review. The Carnival Committee has begun planning for this year's event, which is scheduled for June 19 to 21.

14. Appointments and Resignations – *none*

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2027-08. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$4,663.68 (four thousand six hundred sixty-three dollars and sixty-eight cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Baker. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2027-09. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to accept, a storm sewer easement and rights to drain to the Town of Montville as shown on a plan entitled “Site Improvement Plan Proposed Trailer Storage Facility, 375 Maple Avenue/Route 163, Town of Montville, Connecticut, Prepared for Rand-Whitney Realty, LLC, 370 Route 163, P.O. Box 336, Montville, CT 06353, Prepared by CLA Engineers, Inc., Dated June 2, 2025, Revised July 21, 2025”.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: Briefly discussed by Rand-Whitney Containerboard General Manager Infante, Mayor Bunnell added that the resolution will correct some of the drainage issues. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2026-10. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard G. Bunnell, Sr., to execute the Storm Sewer Easement and Right to Drain from Rand-Whitney Realty, LLC, to the Town of Montville, as required per Planning & Zoning Commission site plan application #25SITE5, approved on July 22, 2025, in accordance with a plan entitled “Site Improvement Plan Proposed Trailer Storage Facility, 375 Maple Avenue/Route 163, Town of Montville, Connecticut, Prepared for Rand-Whitney Realty, LLC, 370 Route 163, P.O. Box 336, Montville, CT 06353, Prepared by CLA Engineers, Inc., Dated June 2, 2025, Revised July 21, 2025”.

(Councilor May)  
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Baker. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2026-11. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to retain the law firm of Suisman & Shapiro, as legal counsel for the Town of Montville with a term of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 and further to authorize the Mayor to execute the Fee agreement outlined in the proposal submitted by the new firm dated February 4, 2026, 2026 (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: The fee schedule, as provided by the law firm, remains unchanged. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Baker, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Novak, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

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

Matt Suarez, 18 Cranberry Drive, corrected the number of stipends for the Mohegan Fire Company, as earlier reported. He also wished to make the Town Council aware of the recent radio failure and the need to allocate the necessary funds for a new system.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Southard thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting and commended the Public Works Director and his Crew for clearing the roads, which were in better shape than the state and Norwich roads.

Councilor Jaskiewicz also thanked everyone for staying to the end of the meeting and wished them a good night.

Councilor Caron also extended his appreciation to the Public Works Crew and First Responders. After attending a virtual Zoom meeting with the Southeastern Connecticut Delegation, he expressed his dismay with the Legislators, with the exception of Senator Martha Marx and Representative Larry Pemberton, Jr. He urged everyone to be more outspoken. He also offered his support to Montville Police Officer Lindsey Michaels, who is participating in this year's Police Unity Tour, a four-day fundraising bicycle ride from New Jersey to Washington, D.C., to raise awareness of Officers fallen in the Line of Duty. He also expressed his support for the Montville Police Chief and his family.

Chairperson May echoed Councilor Caron's comments, adding that last year, the unfunded state mandates, which cost the Town \$800,000.00 to \$900,000.00, were irresponsible to individual property owners and placed a financial burden on small towns. He also felt that the Town was not receiving its fair share of funding as a host town. He urged everyone to speak with their legislators. He informed Mohegan Fire Company Chief Suarez that the radios are one of the Finance Committee's top priorities for funding.

Councilor Sabilia thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting and echoed Councilors Caron and May's comments, adding that such initiatives as early voting also cause a strain on the Town's budget and reiterated the importance of reminding their legislators of the negative impact such unfunded state mandates have on the town and its residents.

Councilor Baker echoed the Councilors' statements. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and wished everyone to be safe and stay warm.

Councilor Novak also thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting.

Mayor Bunnell echoed Councilor Caron's support for the Police Chief and his family. He recognized and reiterated his appreciation to the Public Works, Police and Fire Departments, Paid Staff, and Dispatchers who work hard to keep the Town safe. He added that the radios experienced failures on two different occasions and commended and thanked Communications Plus, Police Chief Willard Blanchette, III, Police Lt. Radford, and Fire Marshal John Meigel for working together to secure temporary radios from the state to get back online. While funds for a new system were allocated, additional funding is needed. He commended the fire companies, who were able to secure more reasonable pricing, increasing their affordability. He wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Baker. to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, 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**