

Town of Montville
Finance Committee Special Meeting
May 11, 2026
5:00 P.M. Room 203

1. Call to Order

Chairperson May called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Roll Call

Chairperson May and Councilor Baker, Councilor Southard (joined later). Others in attendance Mayor Leonard G. Bunnell Sr., Finance Director Julie Chapman, Councilor Jaskiewicz, Councilor Caron, Councilor Novak, Chief Blanchette, Director of Finance and Operations Deb Martin (BOE), Public Works Director John Carlson and Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Cindy Breton

4. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit – *none*

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes – *postponed*

6. Unfinished Business - *none*

7. Finance Director Discussion on Budget

The Finance Director opened the discussion by reviewing the current status of the budget following the adjustments made during the department head meetings. The budget currently reflects an increase of \$3.01 million. Guidance received from the state included supplemental revenue for education and additional Pequot Mohegan Fund revenue totaling \$2,602,527.00. Further discussions are needed regarding how to implement and allocate the supplemental revenue. Based on her understanding, this funding is considered one-time revenue. She does not recommend reducing the budget entirely by that amount in order to avoid repeating the challenges associated with compensating for the prior use of ARPA funds. All other revenues reflected on the sheet have been incorporated into the Mayor's proposed budget.

The Finance Director encouraged the committee to consider several additional items. First, there remains \$875,000 associated with the boat launch project that was appropriated but not actually drawn down for use on the project. Additional considerations include the purchase of the Board of Education school bus, the public works plow truck, and the possibility of reducing the proposed Board of Education budget cut by an amount other than the initially proposed \$300,000.

Another item for consideration is the Police Private Duty Fund, which currently has nearly \$150,000 available. In theory, the police vehicle could be removed from the capital budget and purchased using funds from the Police Private Duty Fund instead.

Councilor Caron noted that private duty rates were previously increased because the existing rates were negatively impacting the town. He stated that further discussion may be needed regarding another increase due to rising costs associated with vehicles and fuel. Chairman May added that the committee could discuss the possibility of increasing the administrative fees with the Finance Director.

Councilor Jaskiewicz stated that the \$300,000 should be allocated to the Board of Education, while the remaining \$200,000 should be used for the town. Councilor Caron suggested subtracting \$50,000 and allocating the remainder to the Board of Education.

The Finance Director clarified that the \$500,000 represents reduced tax revenue from the town that would otherwise support the Board of Education. She explained that while the town could designate the full \$500,000 to the BOE, doing so would simply mean that less tax revenue would be directed toward funding their budget.

Chairperson May noted that each time the Board of Education budget is increased, the increase becomes part of the ongoing baseline budget. He stated that his goal is to keep the budget at a reasonable level for taxpayers, as taxes are based on the overall budget amount. He further emphasized that, when examined as a whole, it is ultimately one town budget rather than separate budgets for the town and the Board of Education.

The Finance Director explained that the Mayor's proposed budget included a \$300,000 reduction to the Board of Education (BOE) budget. However, since the town is expected to receive additional grant funding, the proposal would restore the BOE budget to the amount originally requested.

Councilor Baker questioned why the cost of the school bus could not also be covered through those funds. The Finance Director responded that she had included an estimate in the capital budget for two leased buses, although the quotes received did not confirm the final cost. The current estimate is approximately \$130,000 to lease two buses, but she noted that the BOE could likely provide a more accurate estimate.

Councilor Baker commented that the town should consider purchasing one bus outright rather than entering into a lease-purchase agreement, as doing so would increase the debt service budget instead of creating an ongoing recurring expense. He also inquired about the type of fuel used by the buses.

Chairman May stated that the Town Council would ultimately need to vote on the matter, but the current proposal under discussion would restore the BOE budget to its originally requested amount. The Finance Director suggested reaching a compromise by reducing the BOE budget by only \$100,000 instead. She noted that approximately half of that amount relates to insurance costs. Mayor Bunnell suggested potentially restoring half of the originally proposed reduction and encouraged the BOE to work collaboratively with the town, as all departments are facing budget reductions.

Councilor Baker reminded the Director of Finance and Operations that the BOE budget had originally started the current fiscal year with approximately three-quarters of a million dollars and that those funds had since been spent down.

Further discussions continued among councilors regarding their perspectives on the proposed budget and where they believed adjustments should be made.

Mayor Bunnell stated that he is working toward implementing measures to address overtime costs.

The Finance Director explained that the capital budget remains flat-funded at \$500,000 and that an additional \$150,000 is being restored to the BOE budget. She stated that the remaining question is how much additional revenue the council wishes to apply. If an additional \$512,000 is added, the mill rate would be 2.58. If the proposed additional \$1 million is added, the mill rate would be 2.29. She emphasized that the capital budget must remain at a minimum of \$500,000 and noted that the \$300,000 adjustment comes from revenues already included in the budget.

Councilor Baker emphasized the importance of maintaining a substantial contingency fund, suggesting an amount of approximately \$1 million to cover potential shortfalls. He stated that he had never previously seen fund balance money used to balance the budget.

Mayor Bunnell stated that he had reduced department budget requests by nearly \$1 million.

The Finance Director indicated that the budget process should be completed by the second week of June to avoid potential issues. Two additional meetings were scheduled: May 21st at 5:00 p.m. and May 26th at 5:00 p.m.

8. Remarks from the Public with a three-minute limit – *none*
9. Remarks from Councilors - *none*
10. Adjournment - *6:38pm*

Detailed Special Meeting Minutes can be found in the *Meeting Recordings dated 05/11/2026*

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Breton, Executive Assistant to Mayor Leonard G. Bunnell, Sr.