

Town of Montville Town Council
Public Hearing Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 28, 2011 – 7:00 p.m. – Town Council Chambers

Chairperson Jacobson opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in honor and support of our troops.

Roll Call: Present were Councilors Beetham, Buebendorf, Caron, Hillman, McFee, and Jacobson. Absent was Councilor Murphy. Also present was Mayor Jaskiewicz.

Chairperson Jacobson stated the public hearing for the General Government budget for the Town of Montville for the fiscal year July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

Chairperson Jacobson asked members of the public to come forward to address the Council.

Daniel Dunn, 19 Marcia Drive, Chairman of the Youth Advisory Board for the Town of Montville spoke regarding the reduction of the hours for the secretary for Youth Services. After reviewing the budget he feels the departmental request is consistent with the Town's request for fiscal responsibility and conservatism. The department has come in at zero percent increase request for the past five budget sessions with the exception of contractual obligations. He understands the severity of the budget issue but feels the department has been more than reasonable in sacrificing any increases for the past five consecutive years even when the town was in better fiscal shape. The secretary position was reduced from forty hours per week to twenty five hours per week in 2005 in order to procure funding for the after school program. The majority of the Advisory Board has been involved with the Montville Youth Services for many years and the agency has increasingly become more and more visible in the community. As a resident and taxpayer the Advisory Board members receive positive feedback from both parents and students involved with the youth center and its variety of programs and services. The staff is dedicated and professional and friendly with a genuine commitment to the student and families. The Montville Youth Services remains consistent with its mission to maintain both quality and warranted programs and service to the youth and families of the community. In the years that he has lived in this time he has continued to support the youth programs in this town and the tax dollars should continue to fund the youth because they are the future.

Mr. Lee Hoelck, 33 Leffingwell Road inquired regarding funding for the repairs to the Montville Road Bridge and Mayor Jaskiewicz stated he will request the money in the Capital budget. Chairperson Jacobson explained after the public hearing the budget will then go in front of the Finance Committee which is a sub-committee of the Town Council and at that point it will be re-presented to the Town Council after their hearings and deliberations at which point the Council will address if the money is in there or not. Mr. Holke stated the Council finds money for bathroom facilities at Camp Oakdale and money to fight the sex offender facility but there has been no money for bridge repairs and it has been four years and he wants results.

Mr. Alan Marcus, 141 Forsyth Road, Chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission spoke regarding the land use budget. He stated the land use department is the combined Planning & Zoning Commission, Inland Wetlands, Economic Development, Zoning Board of Appeals and a whole bunch of smaller departments such as coastal area management, and in addition they are serving as the project manager for the new public safety building. The departments have gone for three or four years without asking for an increase other than contractual salary increases that were negotiated in employees contracts. The budget is forty to sixty percent less than most of the surrounding like size towns, and is running very lean. He discussed the proposed cuts to the secretarial position and the Assistant Town Planner position. He discussed the secretarial position and stated there is only one secretary for all of the departments under the Planning & Zoning Department and cutting the hours of this position would not leave enough hours

to support all of the departments. The Assistant Planners position is part planner and the bulk of his job is the Zoning Enforcement Officer. For every complaint reported regarding the Zoning Enforcement Officer he has seen a couple hundred and headed them off, he pointed out it is not very often the decisions are overturned in court, the town prevails most of the time because the job was done right. If the hours are cut his job will have to be done in twenty hours per week and this is not enough time to keep up with everything that is going on in the town. He discussed the Plan of Conservation and Development stating it was done all on existing labor in house, with a twenty thousand dollar grant that paid for some computer consulting and printing costs. This would have been an eighty to one hundred thousand dollar project if it was sent out but it was done in house with considerable savings to the town. The end result was as professional as any that would have been done outside and the plan produced is a real plan and not just a bunch of stuff that looks good thrown together with figures. The department revised and recompiled the Zoning Regulations in house, the regulations were brought up to modern standards and they fit Montville, and it was done by meeting weekly for two years with the Assistant Town Planner, the only outside help that was required was for the final attorney review to ensure the wording was adequate. The document fits Montville and it works. These are tasks that can not be done on a reduced budget; the savings are many times the cost that the town put out. The Town Planner is acting as the project manager for the new public safety building, a job that most towns would contract out for between seventy and ninety thousand dollars a year and this is being done in house in Montville. The town can not do this and keep up with every day tasks on part time help. He stated zoning is a customer service business, the public come to the office for help and guidance and the hours should not be cut in this department.

Mr. Peter Bushway, 6 Virginia Road, Parks & Recreation Director for the Town of Montville spoke in opposition to the proposed reduction of hours for the Administrative Assistant in the Parks & Recreation office. He explained the department has grown in the past year, adding to responsibilities by adding programs and seeing an increase in participation in existing programs. He discussed the programs that have been added in the past year, and stated facilities requests and rentals are up this year, and summer day camp has been reorganized at the request of parents to add additional weeks and additional hours. The administrative assistant has worked on reorganizing the staff manual. There is increased foot traffic and telephone calls from residents inquiring about programs and requesting information. He would like to continue adding programs for the citizens of Montville. The Administrative Assistant is the first person people have contact with when they call or come into the office and she is responsible for maintaining all of the schedules for the facilities such as the fields the pavilions, Fair Oaks and Camp Oakdale and it is a very important position and the department is growing and will continue to grow and the demand for services is increasing and in his opinion it is not a wise decision to cut the Administrative Assistant's hours in half.

Mr. Stan Gwudz, 11 Crag Place, Chairman of the Montville Parks & Recreation Commission thanked the Mayor, Finance Director and the Town Council for all their hard work in preparing this year's budget. As a taxpayer he asked the Mayor and the Town Council to make deeper cuts to the budget, stating any increases will hurt the people of the town, it is a blue collar town paying white collar taxes and deeper cuts will be greatly appreciated. As the Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman he explained the programs are increasing and there is more activity in the office than last year and asked that the Administrative Assistant's position remain a full time position. If the plan is to cut the position there needs to be a plan in place to determine how the void will be filled, how the department will restructure so that the Parks & Recreation Department can continue to do business, he does not want to have to cut programs and take that away from the residents of the town.

Mr. James Andriote, 23 TreMart Drive, stated he understands how hard it is to prepare a budget and stated he respects the Mayor for all he has done in the budget. He stated he is a past member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development Commission and he was the Assistant Zoning Officer in the town and he disagrees with the proposed cuts to the Planning & Zoning department employees. To cut the hours back is not fair as

they are valuable to the Town of Montville, they bring in revenue to the town because of the things they do. It is a vital group of people that is needed in the town and they do a great job for this town and the hours should not be cut back. If they need a solution to this problem they should cut the Human Resource professional as it is a new position and the money could be taken from there. The Planning Department employees have been doing their job for many years and their hours should not be cut back when there are other places to take the funding from.

Mr. Jon Leonard, 24 Chestnut Hill Road, discussed capital expenses stating the Town should save the personnel that work for the town before purchasing another fire truck, and the town can get by without one this year. He thinks the Human Resource professional is costing the town money, not saving it any.

Mr. Dave Rowley, 93 Driscoll Drive, stated studies show that there are many stimuli that bring people into a town to live and those same studies prove the top three stimuli are a strong school system, safe neighborhoods and affordable housing. As a Montville Police Officer he asked that the Council consider keeping the Resident State Trooper in the budget to keep the police department strong as they possibly can and keep the positive evolution going.

Chairperson Jacobson asked three times if there was anyone who would like to come forward to address the Council regarding the General Government budget.

Councilor Buebendorf thanked everyone who came out to speak, stating it is good to see a full audience at the General budget hearing and the Council appreciates the feedback.

Councilor McFee thanked everyone who came out to speak and he understands where everyone is coming from, stating it is a tough decision being on the Council and have to make decisions that will affect people either negatively or positively and it is a tough job but he wants what is best for the town.

Councilor Beetham stated public meetings are a good way to get good ideas and feedback. He is in favor of holding off on passing the budget for the Town of Montville until the State passes their budget because he does not trust the State and he does not want the town to estimate they will get a certain amount of money and then the Governor doesn't give what they say they will and the Town of Montville is caught short. He doesn't want to send out the tax bills and come up short and have to send out a second tax bill to make up for the shortfall. He does not want this town to pass a budget until the State passes their budget and the town knows exactly how much money they will receive. He thanked everyone for coming out to speak to the Council.

Councilor Hillman thanked everyone for coming out to speak, it is rewarding to see people show up for the General Government side of the budget and it is good to see there are people in the town who care about where their money goes and how it is spent and care enough to voice their opinions and she looks forward to working with the Finance Committee on the budget and making it fair and equitable to all departments. Last year was a tight budget, this year is a tight budget and it looks like next year will be a tight budget as well. This is not the end of pulling the strings a little tighter and trying to buckle down on budgets to make them a little leaner and she hopes to be able to work amicably together to pass a budget.

Councilor Caron thanked the Mayor and the Finance Director for the budget and all the department heads that worked hard on their budgets. He has requested to the Finance Chairman that he would like to see all the department heads in front of the Finance Committee with ideas for cuts in their own budgets because their input and ideas mean a lot.

Mayor Jaskiewicz thanked everyone for attending the meeting; he appreciates it and likes to hear the public express their opinion regarding the budget.

Councilor Beetham thanked the Mayor for a good job, stating it is a tough job and he did a good job.

Motion made by Councilor Hillman, seconded by Councilor Caron to adjourn the public hearing at 7:36 p.m. Discussion, none, voice vote, 7-0, all in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Audrey Ulmer, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville