

Town of Montville Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes for June 14, 2016
7:00 p.m. – Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

1. Call to Order

Chairman Jaskiewicz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in honor of our military.

3. Roll Call

Present were Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.

4. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit

Karen Duhamel, 1 Fox Hollow Drive, Oakdale, spoke in opposition to reducing the Board of Education budget by \$1 million, stating that the cut would further devastate the schools' current programs that have already been negatively impacted by previous budget cuts. Currently, neither French nor Sports are being offered at the Middle School level and the proposed cut will impact the employment of the schools' core employees, i.e., teachers and paraprofessionals, and further increase the already unacceptable class sizes. The cut would also negatively impact the population of the Town as more residents are moving out of Town and new residents will not consider moving into Town due to the degradation of the school system.

Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, Oakdale, while not disputing Ms. Duhamel's comments, stated that the BOE made conscious decisions regarding the many issues she has addressed and clarified that the Town Council is not responsible for where the cuts are made. He also noted that the members of the Town Council also have either children or grandchildren in the school system. Realizing that the issue is a passionate one, he stated the importance of and encouraged the public to be informed of the facts and make thoughtful inquiries so that they can make sound, intellectual decisions. He felt that the Town Council does a good job, given the Town's tight budget, but stated the importance of addressing the Town's infrastructure, which could result in bigger and more expensive problems in the future.

Howard R. Beetham, Jr., 60 Riverview Road, Uncasville, quoted that "you gotta' do what you gotta' do if you gotta' do it". He understands that it is a tough job and that both the Federal and State budgets must be reviewed in order to understand the Town's predicament. He stated the importance of being fiscally responsible so that the Town does not end up in the same situation. There are many low-income homeowners, including seniors, who make up approximately 40% of the Town's tax base and, while he hopes that the Town Council will be able to reduce the tax increase to zero, he understands the difficulty in doing so. Residents are leaving not only the Town, but also the State, and a tax increase would result in more empty homes.

Michael Hillsburg, 39 Lisa Lane, Uncasville, agreed with Mr. Beetham and his remarks regarding the State's budgetary uncertainties. He commended the Town Council for their recent approval of the lease-purchase agreement and hopes that they will consider entering into such agreements on a regular basis, given the current interest rates. He does not understand the reasoning behind the need for a \$1.2 million budget increase for the BOE when the student population continues to decrease. He also questioned whether the Town receives funds from the students of Sunny Hill on the Mohegan Reservation and stated the importance of reviewing the tax base and the demographics behind it with respect to the Town's aging population. In addition, there are very few new developments being established in Montville, while large corporations, e.g. AES Thames and Stone Container, have moved out of Town. He further stated the importance of reviewing the big picture, including the Fire and Police Departments, and, again, commended the Town Council.

5. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2017-45. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to adopt the Town’s five-year capital improvement plan in the total amount of \$15,385,757. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Tanner, seconded by Councilor Longton. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to amend the capital improvement plan line item by line item. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Pollard, to remove two hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$220,000) for the Montville High School Water Filtration System. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to remove two hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$260,000) for Fitch Hill Road. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to approve all amendments to the main motion and to adopt the Town’s five-year capital improvement plan in the total amount of \$14,905,757. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

B. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to adopt the fiscal year 2017-2018 Budget.

Whereas, the Mayor has presented the budget to the Town Council; and

Whereas, the Board of Education has presented a budget to the Town Council; and

Whereas, the Town Council has caused to be published in a newspaper having circulation in the Town, a Notice of Public Hearings and a summary of the proposed budget estimates; and

Whereas, the Town Council held Public Hearings of the Board of Education proposed budget on April 26, 2017, and the General Government proposed budget on April 25, 2017, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Charter of the Town of Montville.

Now Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the following budget on the estimated cost of current expenses for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, and ending on June 30, 2018, to be adopted as follows:

General Government	\$20,290,168
Board of Education	\$38,390,619
Capital Improvement	<u>\$ 1,100,082</u>
	\$59,780,869

Motion made by Councilor Tanner, seconded by Councilor Longton, to amend the budget line item by line item. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to reduce the Town Clerk Computer Supplies (10560-53001) in the Mayor's proposed budget by five hundred (\$500) dollars. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to reduce the Town Clerk Consultant Fees (10560-53002) in the Mayor's proposed budget by one hundred (\$100) dollars. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to increase the Town Clerk Overtime (10560-53110) in the Mayor's proposed budget by six hundred (\$600) dollars. Discussion: Councilor Tanner clarified that the two previous items that were reduced in the Town Clerk's budget are re-allocated to this line item. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to appropriate ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to the 2017 Lease Purchase (10450-52111) in the Mayor's proposed budget. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: Councilors Pollard and Rogulski. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to reduce the Board of Education (10950-53051) in the Mayor's proposed budget by one million two hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$1,230,000). Discussion: Councilor Longton proposed amending the motion to reduce the Board of Education (10950-53051) in the Mayor's proposed budget to *five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000)*.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to amend the motion. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, motion to reduce the Board of Education (10950-53051) in the Mayor's proposed budget to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000). Discussion: The adjustment reflects the \$230,000.00 reduction, which the BOE reported for salary cuts, and a reduction of \$500,000.00 from the BOE budget, as opposed to the original amount of \$1 million, which the Finance Committee unanimously recommended be cut from the BOE budget. In response to Councilor Rogulski, the amount would provide them with an approximately zero increase. Montville Public Schools Superintendent Brian Levesque stated that an approximately zero increase in the BOE budget would result in a \$850,000.00 cut from their proposed budget, which included the elimination of five positions. The budget that was presented to the Town is a needs-based budget and any additional cuts will result in the reduction of additional teachers/staff, resulting in larger class sizes, and programs. The cut would be devastating. Roll Call vote, 5-2. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: Councilors Pollard and Rogulski. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to reduce the amount for the MHS Water Filtration System (10960-54082) in the Mayor's proposed budget by one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000). Discussion: Chairman Jaskiewicz reminded everyone that the funds were recently transferred from the Town's Unassigned Fund Balance to meet the requirements of the Grant. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in

Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz.
Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to reduce the amount for Fitch Hill Road (10960-54300) in the Mayor's proposed budget by two hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$260,000). Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz.
Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to decrease the Municipal Revenue Sharing Grant line (10100-47005) in the Mayor's proposed budget by five hundred seventy eight thousand dollars (\$578,000). Discussion: Mayor McDaniel stated that his proposed budget was based upon the Governor's proposed budget and, based on new information, the Grant is expected to be eliminated by the State. He added that, the State recently passed a bill allowing municipalities to adjust their respective budgets, based on the State's final budget, if necessary. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

A brief recess was taken at 7:25 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 7:27 p.m.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner, to approve all amendments to the main motion and to adopt the 2017/2018 budget as follows:

General Government	\$ 20,300,168
Board of Education	\$ 37,660,619
Capital Improvement	<u>\$ 690,082</u>
	\$58,650.869

Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-2. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Pollard and Rogulski. Motion carried.

C. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to set the mill rate for the 2017/2018 fiscal year at 31.7 mills using at collection rate of 98.7%.

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Rogulski, to amend the resolution as follows:

THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to set the mill rate for the 2017/2018 fiscal year at 31.7 mills using at collection rate of 98.5%.

Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Pollard, Rogulski, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

Resolution #2017-47. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to set the mill rate for the 2017/2018 fiscal year at 31.7 mills using at collection rate of 98.5%.
(Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Longton, seconded by Councilor Tanner. Discussion: None. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Longton, May, Tanner, and Jaskiewicz. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Pollard and Rogulski. Resolution passed.

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

Howard R. Beetham, Jr., 60 Riverview Road, Uncasville, recommended that the Town reopen the budget and utilize part of its Unassigned Fund Balance of \$8 million to help reduce the mill rate increase by 0.5 mils.

Dana McFee, 27 Crestview Drive, Uncasville, requested clarification on the mil rate increase. In response, Councilor Longton stated that the increase is 1.09, adding that an assessed value of \$100,000.00 would result in a \$76.00/year or \$6.37/month increase.

Chairman Jaskiewicz thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

8. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Rogulski stated that he believes that the Mayor and Councilors put their best foot forward in determining the budget. His issue lies with the State, which is not only currently proposing to cut the Town's funding by \$2.6 million, but is also considering cutting the Casino Funding to the Town, which he finds outrageous and uncalled for, given that Montville is a host town. In contrast, they are proposing to increase funding to the city of Hartford, who recently announced the return of the Independence Day Fireworks Show, which was not provided last year for budgetary reasons. In addition, the region may be entering additional difficulties due to the proposed establishment of a third Casino in the State. The Town has also experienced the reduction of its tax base, due to the additional \$220,000.00 that was removed from the tax rolls for land that has been moved into trust by the Mohegan Tribe. While Montville is lucky in comparison with other municipalities, the cuts have resulted in a loss for both the children and seniors of the Town. He commended his fellow Councilors on a good job and expressed his appreciation to the Mayor for his transparency and providing the Town with direction.

Councilor Pollard agreed with Councilor Rogulski. Having served the Town for a number of years, she stated the importance for everyone to speak with the Casino to request additional funding. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilor Longton reiterated Councilor Rogulski's statement regarding the State's cuts. Along with the mil rate increase, the Town also reduced its expenditures by \$910,000.00 (\$500,000.00 from the BOE and \$410,000.00 from the General Government Budgets). He agreed that both the children and seniors lost tonight, but this was the best they could do.

Councilor Caron agreed with his colleagues. He has contacted and voiced his concerns to all of the State Legislators and the Mohegan Tribe regarding the need for additional funding as he, too, sympathizes with the schools and the seniors. He thanked those who took the time and effort to delve into and work on the budget.

Councilor May thanked all of the Councilors who worked hard on the budget. While the Finance Committee unanimously voted to approve a \$1 million cut to the BOE budget, he, who has children in the school system, stated that they also revisited and revised their recommendation to approve a cut of \$500,000.00. In addition, the Town has also cut its budget, which will adversely affect the services they provide to the Town. He felt that the public should appreciate the amount of work and evaluation that is invested to keep the Town safe for everyone. He thanked them for their hard work, is happy to have been a part of the process, and, though it may not be what they wanted, he felt they did a good job.

Councilor Tanner stated that this is her fourth and hardest year on the Finance Committee. While she is sad to cut the BOE budget by \$500,000.00, she felt that it is better than the originally proposed \$1 million cut. She commended the Mayor and Department heads for their fiscal responsibility and efforts to keep their budgets down. She apologized to those who are disappointed with the cut to the BOE's proposed budget and thanked everyone for their hard work, including Finance Director Terry Hart for all of her hard work and support.

Chairman Jaskiewicz is amazed that the towns are able to handle their budget, while the State is unable to do so. He thanked the Council, Finance Committee, Finance Director, and Mayor for all of their hard work and commended everyone, conscious of the difficulty in determining the budget for the coming fiscal year, for working as a group and in a bi-partisan manner. He reiterated that, at the very least, the State is allowing Towns with the ability to make any necessary adjustments to their budget based on the State's final budget, if necessary.

Mayor McDaniel thanked everyone and echoed all of the Councilor's comments. He noted his experience working with the legislature, serving on various budget committees since the age of 20. This, by far, is the most difficult year he has had to deal with and, though the State is facing their own challenges, he felt that they have also placed themselves in this position. He expressed his dismay with the State, which provides seven to nine times the funding to the cities of Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford than to the Mohegan-Pequot Fund, which funds the entire Southeastern Council of Governments Region. With only 11 Legislators, there is no recognition of the impact the communities have had and will have to experience due to its changes. Other towns are faced with larger fiscal challenges, including school closures. He thanked everyone for their hard work and commented on the recently passed lease-purchase agreement, which, he stated, is primarily for emergency equipment, stating that he will not compromise on the public safety of the Town. He reiterated the possibility of revisiting the budget should the State provide the Town with reasonable funding accommodations.

Chairman Jaskiewicz thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

9. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski, seconded by Councilor Longton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes 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 – FORM REPOSITORY – MEETING RECORDINGS**