

**Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 13, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall**

**This meeting was held electronically via FreeConferenceCall
Dial In 605-313-5935 Access Code 401237#**

The Town of Montville utilized a virtual FreeConferenceCall service for the April Town Council Public Hearing on April 13, 2020.

On March 14, 2020 Governor Ned Lamont issued an Executive Order 7B suspending in-person open meeting requirements, and to hold such meetings or proceedings remotely by conference call, videoconference or other technology.

Link: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-7B.pdf>

Public comments on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town Charter were submitted in writing in advance or by live audio via FreeConferenceCall.

Written comments were emailed to the Town Clerk at townclerk@montville-ct.org at least **1 working day in advance and were read into the record.**

Live audio comments were made via [FreeConferenceCall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com) by calling **605-313-5935 (Access Code 401237#). Comments were only accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness and suitability were followed and enforced in the same manner as if the meeting were held in person.**

1. Call to Order
Chairman 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 Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, May, Pollard, Rix, and Rogulski. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.
4. Special Recognitions/Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion made by Councilor Rix, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz, to amend the following Resolution:
 - 16(e) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to Elect to Adopt the Municipal Low Interest Rate Program under Executive Order 7S *and 7W* in order to afford taxpayers and rate payers relief from interest on payments due on or after ~~March 10, 2020~~ *April 1, 2020* through July 1, 2020 and direct the Mayor to notify the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management of this election on or before April 25, 2020 (Mayor McDaniel)

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron, to add the following item to the Agenda:

 - 16(g) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to amend the location of the public hearings regarding the General Government proposed Budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 on April 22, 2020 and the Board of Education proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 on April 23, 2020 to Montville Town Hall, Town Council Chambers via a Virtual Meeting.

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

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2020
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
 - b. The Special Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2020 (Montville Police Officer Retirement)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
7. Executive Session – *none*
8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit – *none*
Live audio comments may be made via [FreeConferenceCall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com) by calling 605-313-5935 (Access Code 401237#).
9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the March 2020 budget report from Terry Hart, Finance Director
 - b. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of February 2020
 - c. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of February 2020
 - d. Copy of the approved FY2020/21 Sewer Budget

Councilor Caron proposed the possibility of setting up a manner in which the Town Council, in conjunction with the Mayor, could disseminate updated information and provide a venue for residents to ask questions and receive responses regarding COVID-19.

Councilor Jaskiewicz concurred and felt that the Councilors should investigate the possibility.

Councilor Rogulski reported that some of the feedback he has received from the public included the lack of communication due to the Mayor's lack of a Facebook account, with which he had no issue. He questioned the existence of any possible legal issues that might arise from the institution of a Town Council Facebook page. He also felt that other avenues could be utilized to communicate to the public, including the already-established Facebook pages of Town organizations, including the Police Department and Emergency Management Services.

Councilor Rix agreed with both Councilors Caron and Rogulski. She commended the Department Heads who have been doing a great job relaying information to the public. She has been directing residents to the State and Town websites, both of which provide ample information regarding COVID-19. She felt that, due to the unique situation they have found themselves in, residents are thriving for information. She was not averse to a Town Council Facebook page and volunteered to help set up and manage the page.

Chairman May concurred and stated that he has begun to investigate possible avenues of communication and emphasized the importance of maintaining an apolitical page. There are at least three to four departments in the Town that he is aware of that currently host a Facebook page, including Emergency Management Services, Social Services, Youth Services, and Parks & Recreation; he stated the possibility of either working with those departments to utilize their existing pages or establishing their own page and utilizing their pages as the backbone.

Councilor Bunnell felt that the Town website provides a tremendous amount of information, especially with regards to COVID-19 and, while a Facebook page might be more direct, he felt that residents should be directed to the Town website to obtain official information.

Councilor Caron added the need to disseminate information to the residents, especially to those in need, regarding the Town's available resources during this time by utilizing various methods of communication, including the Montville High School billboard. He suggested the possibility of the Mayor, Councilors May and Rix, and the IT Department working together to create various avenues of communication.

Chairman May agreed and requested that the Councilors send Councilor Rix and/or himself any thoughts they might have. Any costs that it might incur would be presented, discussed, and approved by the Town Council.

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred – *none*
11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred
Mayor McDaniel stated that the information that is currently posted on the Town website is also disseminated on the Town’s Emergency Management Services and Social Services’ Facebook pages as well as the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) website. He did note that the information is not posted on the Montville Community Forum Facebook page.

Per the Governor’s Executive Order to establish either a Deferment and/or Low-Interest Rate Program for eligible taxpayers, it was decided that the adoption of a Low-Interest Rate Program would be the best option for the Town after conferring with the staff. The item is included on this evening’s agenda for adoption by the Town Council.

They are also currently working on setting up an account with GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar, a virtual meeting platform, for future meetings. The Board of Education, WPCA, and the Fire Chiefs have been utilizing FreeConferenceCall.com.

The fuel cell for the WPCA has been delivered and is in the process of being connected. It is hoped that the Plant will be generating electricity by the end of the month.

They have been documenting all of their COVID-19-related expenses and have completed their FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) registrations in anticipation of a 75% reimbursement. The BOE was also informed that their expenses might also qualify for COVID-19-related reimbursements; the Fire Departments will be completing their own registrations.

The budget booklets for FY2020/21 have been placed in the Town Councilors’ respective mail slots at Town Hall. While the Governor has extended the municipal budget adoption deadlines and allowed for alternative procedures, the Town will be able to maintain their normal scheduling and protocols with the exception of conducting their meetings virtually. They are working hard to provide the public with as much access to their meetings as possible.

The Mayor received the Town Councilors’ consensus to cancel this year’s Memorial Day Parade which is scheduled for May 17, given the Governor’s extended closures, distancing, and safety measures through May 20.

In response to Councilor Caron regarding shovel-ready projects, Mayor McDaniel stated that the Town is currently working with the City of Norwich to apply for a LOTCIP (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program) Grant to repair the bridge located at Five Corners (Route 32, Holly Hill Drive, Fitch Hill Road, Trading Cove Road, New London Turnpike) and two STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant projects. In speaking with the Senators, Councilor Caron reported that bills regarding shovel-ready projects are currently being considered by the Legislators and suggested that the Councilors inform the Mayor regarding any possible shovel-ready projects that might qualify for future State funding.

12. Reports from Standing Committees
 - a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – Councilor Jaskiewicz – *no report*
 - b. Finance – Councilor Jaskiewicz – *no report*
 - c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal – Councilor Caron
The tree cutting project has begun and the Public Works Department continues to be busy.
13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors
 - a. Councilor Bunnell: Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau
The Youth Service Bureau will be hosting a blood drive on Tuesday, April 14. All appointments have been filled and walk-ins are no longer welcome.

- b. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Social Services
Social Services has been extremely busy preparing and distributing food and providing necessary assistance to those in need. Councilor Caron commended Social and Senior Services Director Kathie Doherty-Peck and her staff, who have been preparing and distributing approximately 650 meals/week, for all of their hard work. He also thanked the many businesses and individuals who have donated money and food to help those in need during this time of crisis, including *Uncasville Diner*, *Nino's Restaurant*, *Charter Oak Credit Union*, and the *Mohegan Sun* – all of whom are hurting themselves.

Councilor May also commended Social Services on their incredible work supporting those in need.

- c. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education
Councilor Jaskiewicz reported that the schoolteachers have been working very hard learning how to teach and teaching children on a virtual platform. The BOE is providing free Grab and Go breakfasts and lunches to all Montville students. He commended the Superintendent, teachers, and all of the staff for their hard work during these difficult times.
- d. Councilor May: Water Pollution Control Authority, Conservation Commission
A virtual WPCA meeting was held during which the sewer budget, which is included in their packets, and the water budget, which is on this evening's agenda for review and approval, were passed. As reported by the Mayor, the fuel cell is in the process of being connected to electricity and gas. An article is scheduled to be published in *The New London Day* regarding the fuel cell.
A virtual Conservation Commission meeting is planned for the near future.
- e. Councilor Pollard: Non-Profit Organizations – *no report*
- e. Councilor Rix: Economic Development Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission – *no report*
- f. Councilor Rogulski: Library Committee, Fire Fighters Relief Fund – *no report*

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Bruce Duchesneau to the Planning & Zoning Commission with a term to expire on May 9, 2024.
Motion made by Councilor Rix, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to nominate and appoint ~~either~~ Ronald Stone ~~or Jon Chase~~ to the Parks & Recreation Commission with a term to expire on April 13, 2024.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: It was noted that Jon Chase withdrew his application to serve on the Parks & Recreation Commission. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2020-22. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$10,773.43 (Ten thousand seven hundred seventy-three dollars and forty-three cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2020-23. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to appoint the audit firm Blum Shapiro & Co, P.C. for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 fiscal years. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Bunnell, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: Finance Director Hart stated that the item went out to bid on March 9; only one bid was received. While the Town's current Audit firm was informed that an RFP (Request for Proposal) was issued, the firm did not bid, possibly due to the retainment of new clients and current workload. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2020-24. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to receive the Mayor's proposed budget for the 2020-21 Fiscal Year. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: Mayor McDaniel was pleased to present the FY2020/21 Proposed Budget and Capital Plan for consideration. The budget has presented special and extraordinary challenges due to the pandemic. He stated the importance of recognizing the needs of the Town as it is faced with the deadly virus and unprecedented economic hardship. He expressed his appreciation to the Department Heads and Finance staff for their hard work and efforts. The proposed budget represents an increase of 0.34 mil, raising the mil rate to 32.85. The major drivers include Education and Capital Improvement Projects. There is no new staff being proposed, with the exception of the three (3) new Firefighters that are slated to be hired to meet their contractual requirements and provide adequate scheduling and coverage. If all of the departments' proposed budget requests were approved, the town would be presented with a nearly 4 mil increase. He applauded the BOE, Superintendent Laurie Pallin, and the staff for their exemplary work in continuing to ensure that a quality education is provided for the children of Montville. The proposed budget takes into account the State's proposed and adopted municipal aid and the minor changes that were made to the budget by the Governor. He expects funding to be affected as income taxes are delayed; reduced and important funding sources, including the Mohegan-Pequot Fund, are diminished, and; a significant loss of revenue is expected. All pandemic-related expenses are being accounted for potential FEMA reimbursement. He looks forward to working with the Finance Committee and the Councilors to complete the budget process and will continue to work with the town's neighboring communities to find savings for the Town and the region, as a whole. Though difficult decisions will need to be made at this time, he expects that the town will rebound as the crisis passes. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2020-25. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to adopt the Fiscal Year 2020/21 Town of Montville Water Pollution Control Authority proposed water budget in the amount \$1,260,000.00 (one million two hundred sixty thousand dollars). (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Superintendent Derek Albertson stated that the budget reflects a 6% decrease due to the expected revenue loss as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to Councilor Caron regarding any policies that have been put in place to help those in need during this difficult time, Superintendent Albertson stated that per the Governor's Executive Order, the water supply to users cannot be cut off due to a delay of payment. He is also currently exploring the possibility of offering a low-interest rate program to provide aid to those residents in need. Councilor May added that, while there is a decrease in the budget, Groton Utilities will, most likely, be increasing their water amounts which will impact their future budgets; long-term changes are expected. Councilors May and Caron thanked Superintendent Albertson for attending this evening's meeting. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in

favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- e. **Resolution #2020-26. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to Elect to Adopt the Municipal Low Interest Rate Program under Executive Order 7S *and 7W* in order to afford taxpayers and rate payers relief from interest on payments due on or after *April 1, 2020* through July 1, 2020 and direct the Mayor to notify the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management of this election on or before April 25, 2020 (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion:

Councilor Jaskiewicz agreed that the option to offer a Low-Interest Rate Program, which lowers the interest rate from an 18% to 3% per annum or 1.5% to 0.25% per month for 90 days, was the better option for the Town. The other option is to defer the payments with no interest due for 90 days and, to do so, residents must submit affidavits and proof of financial need. Landlords must offer their tenants forbearance on their rents, which must be certified to the municipality(ies). Councilor May added that the deferral of payments is not only burdensome for their residents, but would also require a large investment of time by the Town's personnel to review the documents and ensure that they are qualified. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- f. **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve and adopt the ordinance entitled "Noise Control Ordinance" as heard at the Public Hearing held on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Council Chambers at Montville Town Hall. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron, to postpone the approval and adoption of the Ordinance entitled "Noise Control Ordinance" as heard at the Public Hearing held on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Council Chambers at Montville Town Hall. Discussion: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Caron, Bunnell, Rix felt that, in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was important to ensure that the public is aware of the public hearing and are able to present their comments to the Town Council for consideration. Councilor Bunnell added that he is strongly in favor of the Ordinance which includes several checks and balances and discretions. He clarified that the Ordinance would not restrict residents from enjoying their recreational vehicles. Rather, it would control any excessive noise. Councilor Rogulski, while leaning towards the institution of less legislation, agreed that more public comments were necessary. Councilors Pollard and May agreed with postponing the item and the need for further discussion and increased public awareness. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.

- g. **Resolution #2020-27. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to amend the location of the public hearings regarding the General Government proposed Budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 on April 22, 2020 and the Board of Education proposed budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 on April 23, 2020 from the Montville High School Auditorium to Montville Town Hall, Town Council Chambers via a Virtual Meeting.

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

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

Live audio comments may be made via [FreeConferenceCall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com) by calling 605-313-5935 (Access Code 401237#).

Donna Geary, 11 Depot Road, Uncasville, commented on the Councilors' discussion regarding the dissemination of information via the Town website/social media. She commended the Mayor for his efforts in ensuring that coronavirus-related news was disseminated to the public. She stated that it was no reflection on his or any other individual's efforts that the criticism arose. There are

many different news sources available to the public and she has, personally, not had any issues following its progress. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that the main purpose of the page would be informational. She felt that the public is seeking validation and comfort from the leaders of their Town and looks forward to receiving news from the Councilors.

Chuck Longton, 31 Laurelwood Drive, Oakdale, reported that he has informed those who have voiced comments regarding the lack of presence by the Mayor or Town Councilors on Facebook that the Mayor, himself, is not on Facebook, and directed them to the Town website where ample information is provided. While he is not against social media, he stated that he encourages people to seek information from an official source.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Pollard wished everyone to stay healthy and well and emphasized the importance of social distancing. She also thanked Mr. Troxell for his comments and wished everyone a good night.

Councilor Rogulski wished everyone to stay healthy.

Councilor Rix thanked all of the departments for their hard work and thanked Social and Senior Services and the Fire and Police Departments. She also encouraged everyone to stay home, safe, and healthy.

Councilor Bunnell reiterated Mr. Longton's comment, adding that the Mayor has been doing a great job disseminating information; it takes a special person to be on the front lines, put their best foot forward, and do the best job he/she can for the people of the Town during trying times. He encouraged everyone to be safe, keep their distance, and was confident that they would get through the pandemic.

Councilor Jaskiewicz encouraged everyone to stay healthy and hopes that they will all be able to see each other at their next regular meeting.

Councilor Caron concurred with all of the Councilors and thanked the First Responders. He reiterated the need for donations to the Town's Social Services Department and thanked the Mayor and Finance Director Hart for their hard work on the budget. He urged everyone to keep all of those who are suffering in their thoughts and prayers.

Mayor McDaniel thanked everyone for bearing with him during these trying times and urged everyone to stay safe. He will continue to disseminate information and will work with Councilors May and Rix to investigate other avenues.

Councilor May expressed his appreciation to the nurses, Emergency Medical Services, as well as all essential employees, who place themselves in dangerous situations daily – they are the real unsung heroes. He implored everyone to look out for and aid those who are struggling. He wished everyone a safe and good night.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron, to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 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

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LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – FORM REPOSITORY – MEETING RECORDINGS**