

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION  
FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING SUBCOMMITTEE  
Special Meeting Agenda – June 30, 2020-- 5:30 PM  
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**

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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>**

For all publicly broadcasted meetings, public comment on agenda items or topics in accordance with the Town charter may be submitted in writing in advance or by live audio via GoToMeeting.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerk's Office at [townclerk@montville-ct.org](mailto:townclerk@montville-ct.org) at least **1 working day in advance** (if the meeting is on a Monday the questions must be submitted by close of business the previous Friday).

Written comments may not be read in their entirety, but rather similar messages may be aggregated or paraphrased for submission to the Public Safety Commission.

Live audio comments may be made via GoToMeeting by calling from your telephone.

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Public Safety Commission Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced in the same manner as if the meeting were held in person.

## AGENDA

### 1. **Call to order**

Commissioner Leonard called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m., (delayed due to technical difficulties.)

### 2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood and pledged the flag.

### 3. **Roll Call**

Present were Commissioners Jon Leonard, Jim Moran, Karen Perkins, and Stephen Stewart. Also present were Mayor Ronald McDaniel and Town Councilor Lenny Bunnell. Present via remote access were Mohegan Fire Chief Corey Gaetano, Oakdale Fire Chief Micah Messer, Oakdale Deputy Fire Chief Mike Butterworth, Chesterfield Fire Chief Keith Truex, Fire Marshal/EMS Director Bill Bundy, Robert Forrester, Mark Battista Dominic Grillo.

### 4. **Remarks from the Public regarding items on the Agenda (three-minute time limit).**

Commissioner Leonard asked three (3) times for remarks. Mark Battista, a volunteer firefighter, spoke of a home purchase on Route 32 and questioned staff cuts, shift coverage, at Chesterfield and why it was less deserving of staff stating blood would be on hands. Dominic Grillo remarked on Chesterfield paid staff cuts versus the volume of calls and referenced things that can occur within six (6) minutes, a time limit that was not being met. Robert Forrester said he had an issue with the Almont Study that was said to be antiquated. William & Connie Herrmann of 32 Andersen Lane said they are opposed the cavalier cutting of staff at Chesterfield. Chief Truex referenced the outdated Almont Study, staff cuts at Chesterfield, and Saturday coverage at other fire stations deeming these acts as an unsatisfactory response by the Town that needed to stop.

### 5. **Consideration and action to approve minutes:**

#### **a. The Special Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2020.**

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2020. Discussion: none. Voice vote; 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

#### **b. The Special Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2020.**

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Moran to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of March 3, 2020. Discussion: none. Voice vote; 4-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

### 6. **Old Business**

#### **a. Continuation of discussion of the Career Firefighter staffing.**

The Subcommittee referenced caller comments stating approval of staffing was not their job and said firefighter contracts are enforced by the Mayor and the Fire Marshal. The Commission supported the hiring of six (6) additional firefighters, not cutting staff. Commissioner Leonard referred to call volumes for a 6-month period, January 2020 thru

June 2020 for ambulance transport and calls per district. Commissioner Stewart spoke to 24-7 shift coverage with two (2) ambulance crews with the hire of three (3) additional staff. He also said the Town did not accept the Almont Study which outlined call volumes and response times for EMS at 75% and grants and stipends, per Commissioner Perkins. Commissioner Leonard stated the Subcommittee was begun to address problems with Saturday coverage, tardy responses, and volunteers and said the goal would be the recommendation to establish a Town fire department. He noted the training that has occurred across district lines and spoke to a joint meeting with Firefighter Relief (FFR) regarding more volunteers. Mayor McDaniel said the FFR should meet four (4) times a year but the timing did not work.

The Subcommittee discussed how to obtain, and compile data provided by the Fire Marshal concerning firefighter stipends and paid/volunteer staff, part of a charge given the Subcommittee by the Commission at its June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. It also discussed proposed staffing and schedules for additional coverage given current staffing. Commissioner Moran spoke of a standard schedule with current staffing of 13 paid firefighters working 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with two (2) days off that would have two (2) staff on seven (7) days per week and volunteers as needed. Commissioner Leonard provided a statistical matrix on the same. Mayor McDaniel reported part-time volunteers began outside of the Town's control and utilizing them to fill staffing voids on Saturdays and Sundays is the subject of pending court cases and the Department of Labor. Fire Marshal Bundy reported he had two (2) part-time staff working on Saturdays but one became fulltime and the other stopped working. Volunteers working across districts and advertising for volunteers was discussed. Fire Marshal Bundy said advertising had not been done for a while although the ad was never closed. He also said many who work part-time also work part-time in other towns and he responded to Commissioner Perkins that reaching out to surrounding towns for volunteers had not been done under his purview.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Consideration and action of strategic planning concerning firehouse agreements (contracts) and policies for next Public Safety Commission Fire Department Staffing Subcommittee Meeting.**

Commissioner Leonard spoke to the June 22, 2020, charge by the Commission to review policies and procedures and stated the Almont Study was added for reference to an independent fire department. He said the question is how to move forward with discussion about likes and dislikes concerning the firehouse agreements that are necessary but could be confusing. He also spoke to his discussion with Town Councilor Bunnell about review of the legalities of the agreements by the Town's attorney. Town Councilor Bunnell said the current agreement was written in 2017 and suggested it be reviewed again for questions concerning content and in accordance with the Town Charter and then report back to the Commission on findings. Mayor McDaniel suggested that courtesy be extended to the Fire Chiefs as well and stated the current attorney for the Town is the attorney for the fire stations. Commissioner Perkins suggested a collaborative meeting with the Fire Chiefs and Subcommittee and sending questions to the attorney thereafter. Mayor McDaniel spoke to the creation of the agreement, creating something from nothing, and efforts to protect the firehouses and the Town. He suggested tweaking and getting recommendations

from all parties. Commissioner Leonard questioned the Fire Chiefs about staffing issues and calls and Chief Messer asked if the Town had calls where there was no response to which Commissioner Leonard replied, “yes.” Chiefs Messer, Truex and Gaetano agreed there was not enough staff, staffing could be better, and there were not enough volunteers. Mayor McDaniel responded to Commissioner Moran that the current agreement expires on December 2022. This item will be revisited with samples at the next meeting.

**b. Consideration and action regarding Town Council Resolution 2019-54 and review of reference materials—Almont Study and Fire Department Agreements.**

Commissioner Leonard said this Agenda item synced with the Item 7.a. He said the resolution was obtained by Town Councilor Bunnell from the Town Clerk and refers to firefighter applicants but said it was originally a directive from the Town’s insurance company and evolved into a resolution from the Fire Marshal Bundy submitted to Commission last July. Jon read C.G.S Sec. 31-51 into the record that refers to MVA background checks and was vetted with the RST. Town Councilor Bunnell said just citing the state statute did not make sense and said it should have a deadline and refer to MVA history checks. He also suggested adding a logbook and policies to get everyone to work together. Chief Truex said the resolution was developed without a meeting with the fire chiefs now was the resolution reviewed by TARP. He also questioned driver information was to be given to the Fire Marshal. Commissioner Leonard read from the resolution that said information was to be given to the Fire Marshal. Further, Town Councilor Bunnell said the resolution had no disqualifying factors listed and Fire Marshal Bundy added that matter of intent such as driving without a license is information requested by CIRMA. Commissioner Leonard said the Almont Study information would be discussed at the next meeting.

**8. Remarks from the Public of Non-agenda item (three-minute limit).**

Rob Forrester of Chesterfield Fire remarked on hiring paid staff from outside the Town that would require training, gear, etc. and would be an investment and risk to the Town. He also said drivers licenses were not an issue in the past and were done outside of the contract. Chief Truex remarked about ambulances not having volunteers, one person not being able to do anything (CPR), and other comments made during the meeting. Mark Battista said it was untrue that one person cannot do anything—he said that person could start immediate care—and commented on the uproar should some die and to payment of fire tax.

**9. Adjournment**

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Stewart to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote; 4-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by  
Gloria J. Gathers/Town Recording Secretary

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