

Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall – via GoToWebinar

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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 GoToWebinar.

Written comments must be emailed to the Town Clerk at 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 Mayor and Council.

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Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comment by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness and suitability shall be 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 Leonard Bunnell, Sr., Billy Caron, Joseph Jaskiewicz, Tim May, Kathleen Pollard, Colleen Rix, and Joseph Rogulski. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.
4. Special Recognitions/Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda – *none*
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of October 14, 2020
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session – *none*
8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit – *none*
9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the October 2020 Financial Report from Terry Hart, Finance Director
 - b. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of October 2020
 - c. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of August 2020
 - d. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of September 2020

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred

Mayor McDaniel reported that the Town Attorney is currently reviewing a request for an easement by the potential owner of a property located on Cranberry Drive. The easement will not require a §8-24 Review by the Planning & Zoning Commission, but will require the approval of the Town Council.

11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred
The Mayor reported that their main focus has been on modifying their actions to accommodate the Governor’s Executive Orders for those towns that have been designated as a ‘red’ zone. The town is currently in Phase 2.1.

He is working with the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes as the Co-Chair of a Committee discussing the Solid Waste Management Program. A Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy report is slated to be released in January/February 2021. The town is currently in a favorable position due to its ten-year contract with SCRRA (Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority). Because there are only two (2) viable trash energy plants in the state (located in the towns of Preston and Lisbon) and the trash energy plant located in Hartford is expected to become defunct in the foreseeable future, the Committee is investigating available their options.

He recently had the honor of meeting with Congressman Joe Courtney, a strong supporter of the public transportation system, at SEAT (Southeast Area Transit District) regarding transportation issues and funding from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act, which allowed them to offer free transportation during the pandemic.

Interviews for the vacant position(s) at the Police Department are continuing.

He is investigating the possibility of expanding the WPCA’s (Water Pollution Control Authority) fuel cell program, which is currently producing approximately 83% of their power, to Town Hall. The expansion would support the Town Hall, Senior Center, old Town Hall, and old Social Services buildings. Any excess power could be virtually metered to the Public Safety and Public Works buildings and, possibly, sold back into the grid. In addition, the waste heat that the system exhausts could be utilized to heat Town Hall. He is hoping to receive a Letter of Engagement, locking in the current rate and reimbursement. Should the project proceed, the gas line, which runs to Maple Avenue and Route 32, would need to be extended to Town Hall.

He expressed his pride and appreciation to the Registrars, Town Clerks, and their staff for their phenomenal job organizing Election Day.

He invited everyone to attend the American Legion’s Veterans Day ceremony this Wednesday, November 11, 11:00 a.m.

The town received a \$73,000.00 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) for the air conditioning and flooring of the Community Center

In response to Councilor Bunnell who question how many of the positive coronavirus cases were attributed to those housed in the Correctional Institute, Mayor McDaniel stated that positive cases in the Correctional Institute and nursing home were not included in the count that designated the town as a ‘red’ zone.

Councilor May commented on the positive news in the Finance Director's report regarding the overall revenues, which states that their current 2020/21 Tax Collection rate is 64.4%, 2.6% higher than the previous year.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – Councilor Jaskiewicz

The Committee is in the process of reviewing and discussing the following items:

- Part-time Blight Officer – The funding for the position has been secured and the Committee is working on drafting the job description and chart.
- Noise Ordinance – A copy of the Noise Ordinance from another municipality has been received as the Committee continues to review and discuss the Ordinance.
- Social Media Policy – Amendments have been made to the Policy and will be sent to the Town Attorney for review.

b. Finance – Councilor Jaskiewicz

The Finance Committee discussed the funding for the proposed part-time Blight Officer position, salaries for part-time employees, the 457 Voya Retirement Plan for the Volunteer Firefighters, and approved the 2021 Meeting Schedule. The 457 Retirement Plan is included on this evening's agenda to send to the Town Attorney and may return to the Town Council for approval. Finance Director Hart stated that the retirement plan is similar to a 401K plan to which employees contribute funds (pre-tax). The Plan has been established for the town's employees but, due to the wording on the document, they are unclear as to whether volunteers would also be eligible to receive the benefit. The Committee also discussed the possibility of offering COVID-19 testing to the volunteer firefighters.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal – Councilor Caron

The millings that are currently stored at Camp Oakdale, across from the Pavilion, will be removed by the end of the year. Similarly, the removal of the brush, which was delayed due to equipment failure, is planned for the near future. The power to the outbuilding located by the Pavilion has been disconnected and the outbuilding is slated for removal this month.

The power has been connected to the old Raymond Hill Road Church and dehumidifiers have been running to help control the moisture in the building. Discussions continue regarding the future of the building. Chairman May suggested reaching out to the Parks & Recreation Commission/Department and/or the Library regarding any interest and/or ideas they might have for the future of the Church.

Both Raymond Hill and Black Ash Roads will be paved next year after the roads have settled from the installation of the gas lines by Eversource and drainage.

He commended the Public Works Department and the Transfer Station on continuing to do a great job, citing some recent positive feedback he received regarding the Transfer Station from an individual who resides out-of-town.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Bunnell: Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau

In the month of October, the Police Department received a total of 1,406 calls for service, 75 of which were Type I calls, and 15 of which resulted in an arrest. 158 of those calls derived from Troop E, 218 derived from the Police Department, and 94 were from walk-ins – a testament to the benefit of the location of the Public Safety Building. There were 776 incidents reported by the Officers, themselves.

There was no report for the Fire Companies and the Animal Control Officer.

The promotional testing for the sergeant's position is ongoing and 15 interviews were conducted for the two (2) entry-level positions; there are currently 24 officers on staff.

The Town Attorney is in the process of reviewing the Policy Authorization by the Fire Departments.

The Youth Service Bureau will be meeting this Thursday, November 12.

- b. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Social Services
Councilor Caron congratulated Social and Senior Services Director Kathie Doherty-Peck for providing 25 years of service to the Town of Montville and welcomed their newest employee. The Department continues to be busy as they prepare over 400 Thanksgiving boxes. He expressed his appreciation to the Mayor for securing the donation of 300 turkeys from the Mohegan Tribe and TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.) who donated one of their Meals on Wheels refrigeration trucks. Councilor Pollard offered her time and energy to deliver or pick-up any food items or goods to/from residents-in-need.
- c. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education (BOE)
Councilor Jaskiewicz commended the Board for their hard work as they continue to ensure that the children receive a quality education during these trying times. The BOE is in the process of contract negotiations.
- d. Councilor May: Water Pollution Control Authority, Conservation Commission
The WPCA meeting did not reach a quorum and the Conservation Commission meeting, which was scheduled for Election Day, was cancelled.
- e. Councilor Pollard: Non-Profit Organizations – *no report*
- f. Councilor Rix: Economic Development Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission
Councilor Rix reported that the Economic Development Commission meeting did not have a quorum and she was unable to attend the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting.

The Parks & Recreation Commission has reached out to Montville High School's graphic design class to redesign their logo. While a successful Trick or Trunk event was held for Halloween, the bus trips, basketball program, and the like have not been as successful. The Parade is currently on hold.
- g. Councilor Rogulski: Library Committee, Fire Fighters Relief Fund
There was no report for the Library Committee.

The Fire Fighters Relief Fund held discussions regarding the 457 Voya Retirement Plan (item 16(c) on this evening's agenda)

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Matthew Emilyta to the Conservation Commission with a term to expire on November 14, 2022.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rogulski. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Sheelagh Lapinski to the Youth Advisory Board, with a term to expire on December 10, 2022.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rogulski. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- c. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Chuck Longton to the Planning & Zoning Commission with a term to expire on December 12, 2024.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rogulski. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- d. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Louis Ziegler to the Commission on Aging with a term to expire on December 14, 2023.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- e. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Timothy Shanahan to the Youth Advisory Board with a term to expire on December 14, 2022.

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- f. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Daniel R. Dunn to the Youth Advisory Board with a term to expire on December 22, 2022.

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2020-63. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES TO** refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$6,953.87 (six thousand nine hundred fifty-three dollars and eighty-seven 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 #2020-64. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES TO** close Town offices one (1) hour early on Wednesday, November 25, 2020 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday for non-essential personnel and to award one (one) hour paid time off for Essential Personnel who must remain on the job to be used by the end of the calendar year. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rogulski.

Motion made by Councilor Bunnell, seconded by Councilor Rix, to amend the resolution as follows:

THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES TO close Town offices ~~one (1) hour~~ *two (2) hours* early on Wednesday, November 25, 2020 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday for non-essential personnel and to award ~~one (1) hour~~ *two (2) hours* paid time off for Essential Personnel who must remain on the job to be used by the end of the calendar year. (Councilor May)

Discussion: Chairman May reported that four (4) letters were received in support of the change from one to two hours. Councilor Bunnell stated that over 25 years ago, the employees were afforded the opportunity to leave three (3) hours early to prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday. The time was adjusted to two (2) hours in 2016. Reducing it to one (1) hour, he felt, would not be good for the morale of the employees. The cost is minimal and would only be accrued for the essential personnel, most of who do not take the opportunity. He felt that the early dismissal would be a small token of their appreciation for their hard work and efforts. Councilor Rix expressed her appreciation of the employees, agreed with both viewpoints, and questioned the reasoning behind the time reduction. Councilor Jaskiewicz did not feel that a reduction of time from two (2) to one (1) hour equates to the amount of appreciation the Councilors have for the staff. He also noted that many people are struggling, especially during these trying times. Councilor Bunnell reiterated that the cost is minimal and the reduction in time does not communicate a positive message. In response to Councilor Pollard, Councilor May stated that the time was reduced based on conversations he had with some of the Councilors when the item was presented for inclusion on the agenda. Councilor Pollard agreed with Councilor Bunnell. Councilor Caron expressed his appreciation of the employees, especially the First Responders, and questioned how many other towns provide the benefit. He stated that there is a cost to providing the additional time, which Finance Director Hart confirmed, and added that however the Councilors vote on the

resolution, it was not a reflection of their appreciation or lack thereof. Councilor Bunnell stated that overtime costs are only accrued when the void directly affects the patrol base and he felt that the employees of other towns are compensated differently. Roll Call vote, 2-5. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell and Pollard. Voting in Opposition: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Resolution failed.

Discussion on original motion: None. Roll Call vote, 5-2. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: Councilors Bunnell and Pollard. Resolution passed.

In response to Councilor Caron, Mayor McDaniel stated that the item could be included in their Union negotiations should they wish to do so. In the past, it was a bonus provided to the employees by the Town Council. Councilor Rogulski stated care should be taken when making comments that might open any doors. The time off is and should be viewed as a bonus and would be derived from the taxpayer's funds. He agreed that the reduction in time is not an expression of their lack of appreciation. Councilor Caron stated that he wished to ensure that the Union would be able to include the item in their negotiations should they wish to do so and agreed that the Councilors should take into consideration that the funds derive from the taxpayers.

- c. **Resolution #2020-65. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES TO** authorize the Mayor to forward the Town of Montville 457 Voya Retirement Plan to the Town Attorney and have it amended to include the Volunteer Firefighters. (Councilor Jaskiewicz)

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. Resolution passed.

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

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Rogulski expressed his pride with the Town of Montville, which had a nearly 80% voter turnout for the recent elections. All of the veterans throughout the world will be in his thoughts on Veterans Day.

Councilor Bunnell gave a shout out and expressed his appreciation to Social and Senior Services Director Doherty-Peck, who he felt is one of the best-kept secrets in town and to whom the seniors look to with gratitude and dedication. He also wished all of the veterans a very Happy Veterans Day and thanked them for their service.

Councilor Pollard also congratulated Social and Senior Services Director Doherty-Peck with whom she worked for two years as a liaison. She also acknowledged her veteran brother-in-law who lost his life last year; he and all of the veterans are always in her heart. She thanked her fellow Councilors and wished everyone to stay safe.

Councilor Jaskiewicz also extended his congratulations to Social and Senior Services Director Doherty-Peck. He thanked his fellow Town Councilors and the Mayor for holding the Veterans Day event. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilor Rix wished everyone a Happy and enjoyable Thanksgiving. She is pleased that the American Legion will continue their tradition of hosting the Veterans Day ceremony, adding that this Veterans Day will be a very special day as her brother returned last year on Veterans Day from a tour in Iraq. She also thanked her fellow Town Councilors.

Councilor Caron wished everyone a Happy Veterans Day and Happy Thanksgiving and thanked the employees, veterans, and First Responders, especially during these trying times.

Mayor McDaniel stated that due to the pandemic and the weather forecast, they are unsure as to what the Veterans Day ceremony will entail. Nevertheless, he is pleased that the event will take place and stated the importance of ensuring that they honor their veterans. He wished everyone

a Happy Thanksgiving. He also reported that they are awaiting news on the Executive Order allowing hybrid meetings.

Chairman May also gave a shout out to Social and Senior Services Director Doherty-Peck and congratulated Town Clerk Katie Sandberg and the Registrar of Voters Robin Marquand and Dana McFee on their preparation and organization of Election Day. He also gave a shout out to his fellow veterans and wished everyone a Happy Veterans Day.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rix, to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 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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