

**Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2021, 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., Joseph Jaskiewicz, Tim May, Kathleen Pollard, Colleen Rix and Joseph Rogulski. Absent was Councilor Billy Caron. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.

4. Special Recognitions/Presentations – *none*

5. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski, seconded by Councilor Pollard, to add the following item to the agenda:

Item 16(h) **THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to allocate \$18,477.00 to the Uncas Health District from the funds received from the State of Connecticut as part of the Municipal Coronavirus Relief Fund Program (Mayor McDaniel)

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2021
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session
 - a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing a candidates for the Commission on Aging and Conservation Commission. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Ronald McDaniel. Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rogulski, to enter into Executive Session at 7:04 p.m. Discussion: None, Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

The candidates opted to be interviewed in public.

Jeff Carver, 9 Lathrop Court Ext., who is interested in serving on the Conservation Commission, felt that the town is home to many resources and opportunities that could be utilized to benefit the community and the environment. As a forward-thinking person, he aims to create a town that is economically viable to reside in; he is seeking to retire in Montville and, Connecticut being one of the most expensive states to reside in, has sought to reduce his environmental and economic footprint by installing solar panels and purchasing an electric vehicle. He expressed his love for the environment and the need to preserve the town's natural and historical resources.

The Councilors thanked Mr. Carver for stepping up and volunteering to serve on the Commission. Councilor Bunnell agreed that the town offers many resources and appreciated his willingness to dedicate his time and energy to find ways to take advantage of its resources. In response to Councilor Jaskiewicz, he stated that he currently does not serve on any other boards or commissions and would be able to attend the meetings. In response to Councilor Rogulski, Mr. Carver stated that he hopes to seek ways to encourage the town to invest in EV stations and incentivize local businesses and residents to utilize alternative energy sources. He also felt that the town should seize the opportunity to revitalize and renovate the old Raymond Hill Church by creating a virtual waypoint where visitors could learn about the history of the Church and the town. He is also interested in creating recreational trails that link with each other and include fitness or informative explorational trails. Councilors Pollard and Rix felt he had some interesting ideas and wished him well.

DeeAnn Morton, 48 Hewitt Drive, who currently works as the Social Services Assistant for the town and has been working with the town's seniors, expressed her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging. She stated her passion to help the elderly, many of whom are faced with isolation, food insecurities, and mental health issues, which were exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic.

The Councilors thanked Ms. Morton for her willingness to serve on the Commission. In response to Councilor Rix, she stated that she has been working as the Social Services Assistant since October 2020 and her educational background includes human services, aging, and mental health. Prior to being hired as the Assistant, she worked as a volunteer for the department for over seven years. Councilor Bunnell, who is a past member of the Commission, stated the importance of the Commission and its role with the townspeople.

Councilor Jaskiewicz felt that she would be a great candidate, but stated that the Town Council would need to check with the Town Attorney as to whether she would be able to both serve on the Commission and work as a town employee.

The Councilors and the Mayor exited from Executive Session at 7:18 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session.

8. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Linda Tomasek, formerly of 611 Route 163, spoke with respect to item 16(g). She stated that she was evicted by the town and is now homeless. The §8-24 review notes that the property is home to a brook, which is incorrect. She informed the Town Council that the town does not have the correct deed to the property indicating the easement for underground piping that was installed by the State of Connecticut during the summer of 2006 to reroute the flow of water from the road. She expressed her concern for the town, which might be subject to legal action as a result. She also stated that she attended last month's Town Council meeting virtually but was unable to make a public comment due to technical difficulties. She has also left numerous messages with the Planning & Zoning Department.

Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, stated his support of items 16(b) and (g). He questioned whether a provision regarding the clean-up of the blight violation connected to the property located at 916 Route 163 would be included in the sale of the property. He also expressed his support for the BOE's request to allocate their FY2020/21 unexpended funds into their non-lapsing account, stating that the Schools' need to invest approximately \$4.2 million in Capital Improvements, including IT upgrades, re-roof or re-tiling of the school roof(s), and a boiler system replacement, over the next five years and. He applauded Superintendent Laurie Pallin who has created an open, transparent relationship with the town.

9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the March 2021 Financial Report from Terry Hart, Finance Director

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 reported that most of the month has been spent dealing with the FY2021/22 budget; legislative public hearings regarding the proposed gaming, environmental, and affordable housing bills, and; attending webinars regarding the funding the town will be receiving through the CARES and ARP Acts. The town has received \$184,778.00 through the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act last year and item 16(h) on this evening's agenda seeks the approval of the Town Council to allocate 10% of those funds to the Uncas Health District to help fund their efforts during the pandemic. The town is also slated to receive approximately \$1.8 million in ARP (American Rescue Plan) Funds as well as funds from New London County, which will be receiving approximately \$51.4 million that will be allocated to the towns; parameters for spending those funds are to come. The expenditures will be presented to the Councilors and will be expended on one-time, rather than ongoing, expenses, including a touchless body temperature screening station for the Senior Center, Town Hall, and Public Safety Building. Additional funding might be received through the proposed tiered-funding system of PiLOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) funds and/or funding as a designated distressed municipality.

The Mayor met with Landmark Dividend, a company specializing in ground lease acquisitions, regarding the possibility of entering into a lease agreement for the tower located at the Public Safety Building. A cost-benefit analysis for each of the terms was provided to the Town Council for review. Upon approval, the company would be responsible for marketing the tower and the funds would be invested into the Cook Drive Water Tower.

The Montville Rotary Club is considering sponsoring the town's annual Carnival event. The Memorial Day Parade is on schedule. He was very happy to participate in Murphy Elementary School's Head Start Program during which he provided virtual Zoom readings to the children.

In response to Councilor Rix, Mayor McDaniel stated that Raymond Hill and Black Ash Roads are scheduled for paving this spring and repairs will be made to Fitch Hill Road.

In response to Chairman May, he explained that the State's PiLOT Program has been continually underfunded. Under Governor Ned Lamont's proposed \$100 million for distressed municipalities, Montville would be slated to receive approximately \$1.68 million for one year while Senator Martin Looney's proposed tier system would allocate more funds than they have been receiving in past years for an extended period of time.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – Councilor Jaskiewicz

The Committee began discussing the proposed Wall of Honor at their last meeting; no votes were taken.

b. Finance – Councilor Jaskiewicz

The Finance Committee began reviewing the departmental budgets and will be reviewing the Mayor's proposed budget.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal – Councilor Caron

Mayor McDaniel reported that, relative to the State, the tipping fees for the town are currently stable due to their 10-year agreement.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

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

Youth Services Bureau

The Bureau discussed the installation of the Route 32 billboards, the upcoming Blood Drive on Tuesday, April 13, 8:30 to 5:00 p.m. at the Community Center, a film called "Like", the Return to School Plan, and the Sweatshirt Sale. Beginning on Wednesday, April 14, members of the community may pick up supplies to create a square for a Remembrance Quilt in honor of those who have lost family members to addiction. On April 8, a documentary entitled "Like" and a live virtual panel discussing the impact of social media were presented. The Youth Action Council, which is comprised of Middle and High School students, recently launched a community campaign related to vaping, mental health, and issues related to the impact of gambling on families. The Bureau is currently working with State Officials on how to mitigate the potential litigation of recreational marijuana. The Bureau also launched its first podcast featuring host Grace Carlos who will be meeting with town and police officials to create positive and meaningful conversations about race relations.

Public Safety Commission

Police Department

1,198 Calls for Service 81 Type I Calls
35 Arrests; 0 Juvenile Arrests

Thanks to the help of Officer Vinny Weyel, the Montville Police Department received a \$25,000 Grant from the Point of View Foundation for the purchase of ballistic vests.

Fire Department

191 Calls for Service 139 Medical EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Calls

Animal Control Officer

Montville: 68 Complaints, 667 YTD Salem: 4 Complaints, 43 to YTD

Discussion continued regarding the Animal Control Facility. He, along with Commissioner Gary Murphy and the Animal Control Officer have visited the Norwich

and New London facilities. The Mayor is in the process of discussing the possibility of regionalizing the town's facility with either Norwich or New London.

Building Department

73 Permits Issued

123 Open Permits (new system), 3,060 Open Permits (old system)

88 Inspections Conducted

He also reported that he took a walk with an Eagle Scout who is interested in creating a walking trail(s) along the 13-acre property behind the Police Department and its neighboring businesses.

- b. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Social Services
Chairman May recited Councilor Caron's report, which stated his disappointment with the Housing Authority and request to schedule a Special Meeting to discuss the situation with its members and tenants. While the Town Council has very little power over the Housing Authority, he felt that they had a moral responsibility to do what they can to help remedy the situation and resolve their issues.
- c. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education – *no report*
- d. Councilor May: Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), Conservation Commission
The WPCA reviewed and discussed their FY2021/22 budget and have submitted the Sewer Budget for review and the Water Budget for approval by the Town Council. While the budget indicates a slight increase, no rate increase is being proposed.

The Conservation Commission held two successful meetings. Commissioner Jessica LeClair has stepped down as the Chairperson and a new Chairperson will be elected. Discussions included the proposed renovations for the Conservation Center and the installation of new signage.
- e. Councilor Pollard: Non-Profit Organizations – *no report*
- f. Councilor Rix: Economic Development Commission, Parks & Recreation Commission, Planning & Zoning Commission
The Parks & Recreation Commission has set a tentative date for their 2021 Carnival and the Summer Concert. Director Peter Bushway is in the process of securing the use of the high school for the Summer Camp in case of inclement weather.
- g. Councilor Rogulski: Library Committee, Fire Fighters Relief Fund – *no meetings; no report*

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Joseph Berardy to the Inland Wetlands Commission with a term to expire on May 11, 2025.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Walter Hewitt to the Economic Development Commission with a term to expire on May 13, 2025.
Motion made by Councilor Bunnell, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2021-16. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$6,888.68 (six thousand eight hundred eighty-eight dollars and sixty-eight cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2021-17. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Ron McDaniel to consummate the sale of 916 Route 163, Oakdale, CT to Jeff Roderick by virtue of a quit claim deed for \$42,000 per the purchase and sales agreement dated April 6, 2021. (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: Mayor McDaniel reported that no conversations were held with the buyer of the property. Two other offers that were significantly lower were received. In response to Mr. Pike's question regarding the inclusion of a provision for the existing blight on the property, he stated that the removal of the blight cannot be placed as the condition of the sale. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2021-18. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Ron McDaniel to enter into an agreement to assign the Cellco Lease agreement to Landmark Dividend for a term of 25 years, 35 years or in perpetuity subject to legal review. (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: Mayor McDaniel presented the cost-benefit analysis, comparing each of the terms of the lease. The tower would be marketed by and funds would be collected by the company. Lead Dispatcher Jon Leonard and Acting Fire Marshal Paul Barnes have also reviewed the agreement and agreed with its terms. In response to Councilor Rogulski, the Mayor clarified that the funds received from any additional carriers who seek to lease part of the tower would be forwarded to the town. Councilor Bunnell expressed his support for the resolution, stating the limitations of the tower. The town would continue to own the tower and the company would own the equipment. The lease would be sold in perpetuity over the contract they currently have with Verizon. Roll Call vote: Voting in Favor of a 25-year term: None. Voting in Favor of a 35-year term: None. Voting in Favor of a term in perpetuity: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed, 6-0, in favor of a term in perpetuity.

- d. **Resolution #2021-19. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to receive the Mayor's proposed budget for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: Mayor McDaniel presented his FY2021/22 proposed budget and Capital Plan to the Town Council, stating the difficulties encountered with the budget during these trying times. He spoke of his hopes for a brighter future as individuals continue to receive vaccinations, restrictions are loosened, and consumer confidence grows. The town is slated to receive \$1.8 million in ARP Funds for COVID-19-related expenses, which is not included in his budget proposal. The BOE Operating Budget was maintained, as presented, while the BOE's Capital Budget has been adjusted in light of the unspent carryover funding (2% non-lapsing account) and ESSRII (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) and ARP Funding. He commended the Superintendent for her hard work and efforts during these difficult times. One of the positive aspects of the pandemic is the onset of the hybrid meetings, which he plans to continue to increase transparency and public participation. Adjustments may need to be made as the legislature continues its budgetary process. The proposed budget does not utilize any funds from their Unassigned Fund Balance and represents a mil rate decrease of 0.2 mils. He expressed his appreciation to the Town Hall staff for their hard work and for presenting realistic requests. He looks forward to working together in a positive manner. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Resolution passed.

- e. **Resolution #2021-20. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to accept the fiscal year 2021-2022 Montville Water Pollution Control Authority proposed sewer budget in the amount of \$5,530,375.00 (Five million five hundred thirty thousand three hundred seventy five dollars). (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Rix, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: Chairman May confirmed that there will be no rate increase. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Resolution passed.

- f. **Resolution #2021-21. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to adopt the fiscal year 2021-2022 Town of Montville Water Pollution Control Authority proposed water budget in the amount of \$1,549,825.00 (One million five hundred forty nine thousand eight hundred twenty five dollars). (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Bunnell. Discussion: Chairman May confirmed that there will be no rate increase. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- g. **Resolution #2021-22. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the favorable §8-24 review for the sale of property located at 611 Route 163, Uncasville, CT (Map 30 Lot 18), as recommended by the Planning & Zoning Commission. (Councilor Rix)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Pollard. Discussion: Planning & Zoning Commission Vice Chairperson Wills Pike explained the purpose of the §8-24 review, stated that no specific discussions regarding the §8-24 review took place, and expressed his full confidence in the Town Planner and her staff's review of the property. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

- h. **Resolution #2021-23. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to allocate \$18,477.00 to the Uncas Health District from the funds received from the State of Connecticut as part of the Municipal Coronavirus Relief Fund Program (Mayor McDaniel)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Rix. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Bunnell, Jaskiewicz, Pollard, Rix, Rogulski, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Resolution passed.

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

Jeff Carver, 9 Lathrop Court Ext., questioned whether the town has any support available for those who have been evicted due to COVID-19; the possibility of installing a method to capture methane, and; the possibility of installing a bio-diesel fuel system enabling the residents to supplement their fuel usage with recycled oil at the Transfer Station.

Linda Tomasek, formerly of 611 Route 163, expressed her concerns regarding the process of the meetings, stating that, while she was able to listen to last month's Town Council meeting, the Councilors were unable to hear her comments. She also stated her concerns regarding the Councilors' appointment of the Mayor to handle all of the real estate transactions for the property located at 611 Route 163, which, she felt, was a conflict of interest since the Mayor acted as the Probate Judge who handled her husband's estate. She reiterated her concerns regarding the easement on the property that was not recorded by the State and her wish to save the town money for possible legal costs.

Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, reported that he has discussed the \$1.2 million ESSRII Grant Funds with the Superintendent who has drafted a detailed list of the allocation of the funds.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Bunnell commended the Youth Service Bureau for their hard work and efforts and encouraged everyone to read the *Youth Scoop* newsletter. With respect to the property located at 611 Route 163, he stated that the property has been an ongoing issue for many years and under various Mayors; it was not an easy decision for him to make, especially during such difficult times. The issue was litigated and the court's ultimately decided upon the matter.

Councilor Jaskiewicz reminded the Councilors that the Finance Committee will be meeting with the BOE's Finance Committee next Wednesday, April 21.

Councilor Rogulski hoped everyone had a nice Easter holiday. He also reminded everyone that it has been approximately one year since the onset of the pandemic and is curious as to when the Governor's Executive Powers would expire. He expressed his dismay with the State which has not been helpful in financing their needs with the Federal funds they have received and their consideration of Vice President Kamala Harris' request to house immigrant children when the State is unable to take care of its veterans.

Councilor Pollard thanked everyone for their hard work and urged everyone to be safe.

Councilor Rix wished to recognize Calvin of Uncasville, CT, who completed the 50-Yard Challenge for the Raising Men Lawn Care Service.

Mayor McDaniel stated that he would not be present for the Town Council's May Regular Meeting and is hopeful that their future meetings would allow for additional members of the community to attend their meetings.

Chairman May reported that he discussed the Everbridge project with the Fire Marshal's office, who is working with Lead Dispatcher Leonard. He thanked everyone for a very productive meeting, the public for attending, and the volunteers.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Rogulski, seconded by Councilor Bunnell, to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, 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 – MEETING RECORDINGS**