

**Town of Montville Town Council
Public Hearing Minutes
March 21, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Council Chambers**

Town of Montville has lifted the mask mandate effective Monday, February 28, 2022 throughout Town facilities in coordination with our schools. Although the mask mandate has been lifted, Uncas Health strongly recommends that all individuals, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, continue to wear masks indoors.

1. Call to Order
Chairman McNally 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 Leonard Bunnell, Sr., Alfred Mandler, Thomas McNally, and Robert Yuchniuk. Absent were Councilors Billy Caron, Tim May, and Collen Rix. Also present was Mayor Ronald McDaniel.
4. Public Hearing

**TOWN OF MONTVILLE
NOTICE OF ORDINANCE HEARING**

The following Ordinance, copies of which may be obtained at the office of the Town Clerk during office hours, was introduced at a regular meeting of the Town Council held March 14, 2022 and a public hearing thereon and for its consideration by the Town Council will be held at Town Hall Council Chambers, March 21, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND “ORDINANCE 2006-003,
ESTABLISHING THE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS’ RELIEF PROGRAM OF
THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE”**

THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY ORDAINS:

WHEREAS, the Town of Montville is served by four volunteer Fire Departments, and

WHEREAS, the volunteer Fire Departments are served by dedicated and loyal volunteers who selflessly provide their personal services and time to train and maintain their preparation to provide competent and prompt firefighting services within the Town of Montville, and

WHEREAS, the volunteer firefighters expend substantial amounts of personal time, resources, and funds to maintain their individual qualifications, and

WHEREAS, the volunteer firefighters receive no compensation for the time, resources and funds they expend in providing volunteer services and in maintaining the proper level of qualifications, and

WHEREAS, the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 201 et seq., permits payments for reimbursement of expenses, reasonable benefits, and nominal fees to volunteers without impairing their status as volunteers, and

WHEREAS, the Montville Town Council pursuant to § 7-148(c)(4) of the Connecticut General Statutes desires to enact an ordinance to organize, maintain and regulate the persons providing fire protection and to provide benefits by way of an annual stipend to qualifying Town of Montville Volunteer Firefighters in recognition of their loyal and dedicated service,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Montville that:

1. Article I-V is on file in the office of the Town Clerk and is available for public inspection.
2. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after adoption.

Dated at Montville, Connecticut this 14th day of March, 2022.

Katie Haring, Montville Town Clerk

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS' RELIEF PROGRAM

ARTICLE I

DEFINITIONS

When used, the following terms have the meanings set forth below unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context:

- Section 1.01 "Effective Date" means ~~July 1, 2019.~~ January 1, 2022.
- Section 1.02 "Junior Member" means any member under the age of 18 years who is qualified to be a Volunteer Firefighter under the laws of the State of Connecticut.
- Section 1.03 "Mandatory Paperwork" shall mean that list of documentation pertaining to training and responses to calls required by the Chief of each volunteer company, which documentation shall be published not less than once annually and shall be posted in a prominent location within each fire company.
- Section 1.04 "Member" means a Volunteer Firefighter who has met the criteria described in Article II, but unless specifically provided otherwise, shall not include a Retired Member, a Terminated Member, a Disabled Member, or a Member who has become ineligible for any reason.
- Section 1.05 "Program" shall mean the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Program of the Town of Montville.
- Section 1.06 "Program Year" means any year commencing on ~~July 1~~ January 1 and terminating on ~~June 30~~ December 31.
- Section 1.07 "Program Quarter" means the three-month period beginning January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1.
- Section 1.08 "Recognized Department" or "Department" means the following individual Volunteer Fire Departments:
Montville Fire Company
Mohegan Fire Company
Chesterfield Fire Company
Oakdale Fire Company
- Section 1.09 "Relief Committee" or "Committee" means the Firefighter Relief Committee that shall review, administer and authorize quarterly stipend payments and tax abatements as more specifically set forth in Article IV.
- Section 1.10 "Town" means the Town of Montville.
- Section 1.11 "Volunteer" or "Volunteer Firefighter" means any member of the four Volunteer Firefighters' Departments of the Town of Montville who performs services as a Volunteer Firefighter for the benefit of the Town. This term

excludes those firefighters who are paid wages as firefighters for the Town of Montville and any part-time firefighters who are compensated on more than an occasional or sporadic basis. In any case no service points are counted for calls where the firefighter is paid compensation by the Town. A Volunteer must declare from which department he/she is going to be eligible to receive the benefit provided for herein.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP AND STIPEND REQUIREMENTS

Section 2.01 Commencing with the Program Year of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, a Member and/or a Junior Member who meets all of the requirements as stipulated herein shall receive a yearly stipend as hereinafter set forth.

Commencing with the Program Year of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020, a Member and/or a Junior Member who meets all of the requirements as stipulated herein shall receive a quarterly stipend as hereinafter set forth.

Commencing with January 1, 2022, this program shall run on a calendar year and an eligible member can choose a tax abatement in lieu of a quarterly stipend as long as the eligible member notifies their respective Fire Chief in writing by March 31st in any given year.

Section 2.02 Each Volunteer Firefighter eligible for membership and/or Junior membership shall file an application for membership in this Program with the Relief Committee within such time as the Committee may prescribe. The Volunteer Chief of the appropriate Department shall certify to the Committee that the prospective Member or Junior Member as the case may be has fulfilled the requirements of a Volunteer Firefighter.

Section 2.03 A Volunteer Firefighter shall be eligible for the benefit established in Article III Section 3.02 if the firefighter has completed the following requirements: has undergone Blood borne Pathogens, SCBA Fit Testing (excluding Junior Members), TB Testing and Physicals, is current in the completion of all required mandatory paperwork and has responded to the following percentage of calls for the previous Program quarter:

Department with annual calls exceeding 500:	15%
Department with calls below 500:	20%
Training:	50% or 20 hours

Section 2.04 Maximum number of stipends per Fire Company is as follows:

Montville	25
Mohegan	25
Chesterfield	25
Oakdale	25

ARTICLE III

PAYMENT OF STIPEND

Section 3.01 Stipend payments for the prior Program year shall be made no later than two (2) months after the completion of said Program quarter. Fire Chiefs shall submit their lists of those eligible no later than one month after completion of the Program quarter.

Section 3.02 The annual maximum stipend under Section 2.02 shall be based on certification as herein listed.

EMR	\$700
FF	\$700
FF1	\$900
CERTIFIED FIRE POLICE	\$900
EMT	\$900
FF & EMR	\$900
FF & EMT	\$1,200
FF1 & EMR	\$1,200
FF1 & EMT	\$1,500

Section 3.03 A Junior Member eligible to receive a stipend as described herein shall be paid the same jointly to his/her and to his/her parent or guardian.

**ARTICLE IV
 FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION**

Section 4.01 Town's Contributions- To fund the stipends described herein the Town shall provide an annual appropriation of not less than \$50,000.

Section 4.02 The Relief Committee shall be made up of seven (7) persons as follows:

The Fire Chief from each Recognized Volunteer Fire Department or his alternate designee

- The Mayor
- One Member of the Town Council
- One Member of the Public Safety Commission

Additionally, the Finance Director shall be a member of the Committee but shall not be entitled to vote.

Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation.

The Committee may construe this Program and its construction thereof and action taken thereon in good faith and such determination(s) shall be final and conclusive. It may correct any defect or supply any omission or reconcile any inconsistency in such manner and to such extent as it shall deem expedient to carry the same into effect.

The Committee shall provide rules, regulations, and forms not inconsistent with the terms and provisions hereof for the administration of the Program and from time to time may amend or supplement same.

Section 4.03 The general administration of the Program and determination of eligibility shall be determined by the Relief Committee. In this regard, the Finance Director and the Finance Department shall provide staff services for the Committee. All such determinations made by the Relief Committee shall be final and conclusive.

Section 4.04 Stipends shall be paid quarterly to eligible members provided they meet the same requirements as outlined in Section 2.03. Eligible members shall be paid one quarter of the annual maximum stipend each quarter they meet said requirements. All call responses shall be aggregated at the end of the program year in calculating final total stipend eligibility.

Section 4.04a The tax abatement shall be applied first to real property taxes and second to motor vehicle taxes starting with the July 1st payment of the following year and the January 1st thereafter. The real property or motor vehicle must be owned in part by the eligible member. Eligible members cannot receive both a tax abatement and a stipend for any given year. Tax abatements and stipends cannot be combined.

Section 4.05 The Committee shall establish rules as to what constitutes a quorum. The Committee shall meet at least once every year after completion of the program year for eligibility authorization. All authorizations shall be by majority of those members present as long as a quorum has attended such meeting.

Section 4.06 Upon recommendation of the Relief Committee, the Town shall have the right to amend by resolution, annually in January for the upcoming program year the mandatory eligibility requirements or stipend amounts provided that no amendment shall decrease the annual appropriation below a total of \$50,000.

Section 4.07 Any portion of the annual appropriation not needed to fund stipend payments in any given year shall be transferred to the Volunteer Firefighter Stipend Sinking Fund. Said fund shall be used to augment annual stipend payments when they exceed the annual appropriation; provided, however, should the total of stipends authorized exceed the annual appropriation and the funds available in the sinking fund in any given year, individual stipends will be prorated to reflect the total amount available for distribution.

ARTICLE V

MISCELLANEOUS AND TERMINATION

Section 5.01 Separation- Should a Member or Junior Member be expelled from a Recognized Volunteer Fire Department during the program year, he/she shall receive no benefits of the plan for said year. However, should a Member leave of his/her own accord, the Relief Committee shall determine, in its sole discretion, whether said Member shall be entitled to any benefits.

Section 5.02 Termination- the Town shall have the right by action of the Town Council to terminate the Plan at any time through the ordinance process.

Section 5.03 Separability of Provisions- If any provisions of this Plan shall be held illegal or invalid for any reason, said illegality or invalidity shall not affect the remaining parts of the Plan but the Plan shall be construed and endorsed as if said illegal or invalid provisions had never been inserted herein.

Section 5.04 Applicable Law - The validity of the provisions of this Plan shall be determined under said provisions shall be construed according to the laws of the State of Connecticut.

This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after adoption.

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

Gary Murphy, spoke in support of the Ordinance, expressing his belief that more individuals would take advantage of the program and help increase their willingness to volunteer. He felt that individuals who might be hesitant to accept the stipend would be more willing to accept the tax abatement. He also stated his appreciation to the Town Council for proposing the amendment.

6. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Bunnell stated that the lack of an audience at tonight's public hearing is not an indication of the lack of support for the Ordinance. He expressed his full support for any incentives the Town could offer to attract, encourage, and support the town's Firefighters.

Councilor Mandler relayed a story of his father-in-law who volunteered as a firefighter following his retirement; he hopes that the amended Ordinance will attract additional mature volunteers to help fulfill the needs of the town.

Councilor Yuchniuk concurred and expressed his hopes that the word will spread and the stipend will encourage prospective firefighters to join the team.

Councilor McNally agreed that the flexibility would be, as stated by Mr. Murphy, beneficial, especially for those who might be hesitant to accept the stipend. He expressed his hopes to increase the amount of the abatement to \$2,000.00 in the near future.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Mandler, to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. 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 – MEETING RECORDINGS