

**Town of Montville Town Council  
Public Hearing Minutes  
Monday, September 12, 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
3. Roll Call  
Present were Councilors Bunnell, Caron, Mandler, Rix, Yuchniuk, and McNally. Absent was Councilor May. 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 special meeting of the Town Council held August 25, 2022 and a public hearing thereon and for its consideration by the Town Council will be held at Town Hall Council Chambers, September 12, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

**ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE MONTVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Town of Montville hereby ordains that:

Section 1. Police Department Established and Police Department Functions

- (a) Pursuant to powers given the Town of Montville by the Connecticut General Statutes, including without limitation by C.G.S. § 7-148(c)(4)(A), and powers given the Town Council by the Charter, there is to be established hereby an Administrative Department of the Town of Montville to be known as the Police Department (“Department”). The head of the Department shall be the Chief of Police (“Chief”), who shall be a Department Head per Charter § 408.
- (b) The Department shall have the authority to perform all functions and take all actions that an organized municipal police department in the State of Connecticut is allowed by federal and state law to perform and take and generally shall provide for police protection, and perform criminal law enforcement activities within the limits of the Town of Montville and, to the extent allowed by state and federal law, outside its limits. Without diminishing the foregoing, the rights and duties of the Department shall include:
  - (i) Crime Prevention – The Department shall preserve the public peace, prevent crime, detect and arrest offenders, protect the rights of persons and property, and enforce the laws of the State of Connecticut and where appropriate the ordinances and regulations of the Town of Montville;
  - (ii) Traffic Enforcement – The Department shall administer and enforce laws regulating, directing, and controlling the movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;

- (iii) Training – The Department shall operate training programs to maintain and improve the efficiency and competency of the employees of the Department;
  - (iv) Weapons Disposition – The Department shall establish a procedure for the sale, destruction, or other disposition of all weapons or other articles used in the commission of crime or coming into the custody of the Department, in accordance with the requirements of state and federal law; and
  - (v) Lost Property – The Department shall establish and implement a procedure for the sale of unclaimed, lost or stolen articles coming into the custody of the Department
- (c) Police Officers shall have the powers and duties with respect to the service of criminal process and enforcement of criminal laws as are vested in peace officers by federal and state law, including without limitation by C.G.S. §§ 53a-3(9) and 54-1f.

Section 2. Chief of Police

- (a) Appointment. There is hereby created the non-classified position of Chief of Police. The Chief shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Town Charter, and need not be a resident of the Town of Montville.
- (b) Powers and Duties. The Chief of Police shall be accountable to and under the supervision of the Mayor, and shall perform duties including but not limited to:
- (i) Having general management and supervision of the Department and of the property and equipment used in connection therewith, in accordance with policies or procedures of the Public Safety Commission and/or the Police Department, and consistent with all requirements of federal and state law;
  - (ii) Prescribing rules and regulations not inconsistent with the administrative policy created pursuant to Charter § 408 as the Chief deems necessary or expedient for the proper operation of the Department and, to that end, keeping informed of the latest administrative practices;
  - (iii) Initiating and implementing a continuing program for instruction and training of Department personnel;
  - (iv) Having general authority and control over all Department employees and overseeing scheduling, assignments, and proper fulfillment of all assignments, tasks, and duties of the Department;
  - (v) Within the powers granted to Town of Montville Department Heads by the Charter, and pursuant to the General Statutes and any Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Montville and AFSCME, Council #4, Local #2504 or any successor labor organization, and under state and federal law, taking all personnel actions the Chief deems appropriate including without limitation assigning and reassigning personnel, supervising personnel, imposing discipline, and making recommendations for hiring;
  - (vi) Developing and implementing a system to maintain and preserve records with respect to law enforcement and other activities of the

Department and its personnel;

- (vii) Reporting on the operation and affairs of the Department to the Public Safety Commission, the Mayor and the Town Council at such intervals, as each shall require; and
  - (viii) Working with the Public Safety Commission to prepare the Police Department's annual budget for submission to the Director of Finance pursuant to Charter § 408.
- (c) The Chief may be assisted in the execution and performance of his/her management duties by non-union personnel including, but not limited to, Assistant or Deputy Chiefs and Captains.
- (d) Removal of Police Chief. Dismissal of the Chief shall be pursuant to the provisions C.G.S. § 7-278.

### Section 3. Effective Date

- (a) The effective date of this Ordinance shall be as provided in Charter § 312(C), however, the existing department shall not be abolished and the Police Department created by this Ordinance shall not come into existence until the day on which the person appointed Police Chief is sworn into office.
- (i) On the day the Chief is sworn in the existing police department shall cease to exist and its employees and officers shall be at that time be employees of the Police Department created by this Ordinance.

Dated at Montville, Connecticut this 26th day of August, 2022.

Katie Haring, Montville Town Clerk

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

Bob Lawton, 1921 Route 32, Uncasville, Owner, Classic Country Furniture, spoke in support of the Ordinance. He felt it was time for the Town to stop procrastinating and phase out and eliminate the Resident State Trooper Program, which he thought the Town had voted to do ten years ago. It does not make sense for the taxpayers to be paying nearly \$250,000.00 for double duty.

Dave Rowley, 93 Driscoll Drive, Uncasville, who joined the Montville Police Department in 1987, spoke in favor of an independent police department. Over his 24-year career, numerous Resident State Troopers came and went, one of whom, he felt, did not serve them well (Mike Thomas). He felt that it was time for the Town to declare the Montville Police Department as an independent police department. He thanked them for the opportunity to speak and hopes that they'll be able to act on the Ordinance in the near future.

Karen Aleshire, 45 Harvard Terrace, Gales Ferry, President, Montville Police Union, spoke on behalf of the Union and expressed their full support for an independent police department. She expressed their faith in the Town Council and their belief that an Independent Police Force would be in the best interest of the town, its businesses, and the community.

Joseph Jaskiewicz, 89 Park Avenue, Uncasville, urged the Town Council to support the Ordinance. He expressed his full support of the State Police, but felt that it was time for the Town to move towards an independent police department. The Town pays \$235,000.00 for the Resident State Trooper – an individual who answers to the Barrack's Commander,

unlike a Police Chief who would be working for the Town Council. He added that the Public Safety Building was designed and constructed with the future in mind and, with only 50% of the building being utilized, the establishment of an independent police department is long overdue. The funds that are saved could be used to fund the Police Chief's salary and any necessary upgrades to the building.

Jeremiah Ross, 41 Carol Drive, Uncasville, also spoke in support of the Ordinance. Like many residents, he, too, thought that the establishment of an independent police department was "a done deal". The Town has been serving two masters – the Town and the Resident State Trooper. Based on the size and diversity of the Town, it should have been home to an independent police force years ago. He stated the importance of maintaining control, consistency in communication and command, maintaining cost control, saving time and money, improving efficiency, and using the space the way it was meant to be used. In addition, the Town would be able to receive grant funding. He felt that the Town Council would not be doing their job if they do not approve the Ordinance – it is what the Town and its residents want.

William C. Bucko, 106 Wildwood Lane, Uncasville, a 55-year resident, spoke in favor of the Ordinance. Having grown up as the son of a Police Officer in New London, he became familiar with many Officers. He expressed his pride in serving as one of the members of the Public Safety Building Committee under the professional guidance of Town Planner Marcia Vlaun. One of their main priorities was to design and construct a 40-year maintenance-free building that would fulfill the needs of an independent police department. As part of the process, the Committee visited police stations throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island and interviewed several Police Chiefs, receiving pertinent information that they were able to incorporate into the building. He was also a member of the Montville Law Enforcement Feasibility Committee which, after many discussions, drafted a report stating its unanimous findings in favor of an independent police force.

Mike Tomaszek, 38 Lathrop Road, Uncasville, who has lived and owned a business in Montville for over 50 years, spoke in favor of an Independent police department. He felt that people who are looking for a place to reside are increasingly using technology to research towns and what they offer for public safety and, given the current climate, are often scared away by the town's lack of an independent police force. He felt that it is a long-time coming for the town to have a Police Chief and Force that supports the Town of Montville.

John P. Desjardins, 523 Raymond Hill Road, Uncasville, spoke in favor of an Independent Police Force. When he moved to the Town in August 1960 when the population was 5,000, a small Constable force supported by the Resident State Trooper program, was adequate. Currently, the town is now home to 18,000 to 20,000 residents and has outgrown the program. He felt that it was time for the town to move forward and be led by an independent force, governed by the Town, and utilize the building and their resources.

Ray Occhialini, 7 Anderson Lane, Oakdale, a former member of the town's Public Safety team, spoke in favor of the Ordinance. When the Public Safety Building was constructed, many pieces of the puzzle were missing to establish an independent police department, including equipment, staffing, and impound lot. Over the years, the pieces of the puzzle have been filled, completing the puzzle. Establishing an independent police force would be better for both the town's and the State's police force. He expressed his hope that once the transition becomes final, improvements are made to the town's dispatch center.

Stacy Gould, 22 Avery Road, Uncasville, Owner, Treats Pools and Spas, urged the Town Council to support the Ordinance. She cited the \$6.5 million complex that has been and is "woefully underused" and stated the town's ability to qualify for State and Federal Grants offsetting any additional costs. Without disrespecting the Mayor, who acts as the Chief of

Police, and the State Police, she felt that it was time for the town to have a full-time independent police department. Montville, she stated, is no longer the sleepy town it once was.

Robert Tringe, 167 Meetinghouse Lane, Oakdale, a 56-year resident, spoke in support of the Ordinance, citing the independent studies that reflect the need for an Independent Police Force. He stated that the Resident State Trooper Program was designed to support small towns. Under the Program, there is no continuity of leadership. With the town's qualified Lieutenant and Officers, building, and dispatchers, the Town would be able to easily transform itself from a Resident State Trooper town to an independent force without losing the support of the State Police. He recommended the town look to the towns of East Lyme and Ledyard, which also made the transition.

Nage Wong, 39 Dydo Drive, Uncasville, a 60-year resident, spoke in favor of the Ordinance. He expressed his support for the town's law enforcement. He questioned whether it was affordable for the town to continue under the Resident State Trooper Program. The town is home to its own efficient law enforcement, building, and call center – all of the elements necessary to take care of its issues. He noted that the town would continue to have access to the State Police for assistance. He felt that the citizens misunderstood the previous referendum regarding the establishment of an independent police force. He expressed his respect for the State Police and Resident State Troopers, but felt it was time for the town to have its own police force.

Joseph Brian Bonner, 774 Old Colchester Road, Uncasville, Owner, Bonner Electric, spoke in support of the Ordinance, stating that it was the next logical step for the town as it continues to grow.

Russ Wehner, 34 Powerhouse Road, Uncasville, spoke in favor of the Ordinance and the increased effectiveness and importance of capitalizing on and developing their officers' talents and skills and having officers who are familiar with the town and its residents. He cited the State Police's current staffing issues and the lack of continuity the town has been experiencing over the years under the Resident State Trooper Program.

Kate Southard, 89 Wildwood Lane, Uncasville, stated her past support for the Public Safety Building and the establishment of an independent police department, stating that the town has all of the tools and resources to do so. She also stated the importance of maintaining consistency and community.

Albert Ouellette, Jr., 401 Kitemaug Road, Uncasville, a 64-year resident, spoke in favor of the Ordinance both in the past and today. He concurred with the previous comments and felt that the establishment of an independent police force is long-awaited and that the town should take this opportunity to move forward.

Theodore J. Nelson, 16 Velgouse Road, Oakdale, a resident of the town since 1988, stated his support for an independent police force. He cited the successful transition of the Towns of East Lyme and Ledyard from a Resident State Trooper town to an independent police department. He cited the protection and uniformity it offers and the existing Public Safety Building that is ready to be utilized to its fullest.

Carol Burgess, 28 New Hampshire Lane, Oakdale, a resident of the town since 1978 who has watched the town grow, expressed her support for the Ordinance. She felt that the Resident State Trooper Program is no longer sufficient for their growing community. While the Troopers are outstanding and professional and have served the town well, the lack of consistency and duplication of effort is no longer sustainable.

Tom Pedersen, 6 James Way, Oakdale, a retired Norwich Police Department Captain, stated his support for an independent police force. During his tenure at the Norwich Police Department, he was afforded the opportunity to work with the Montville Police Officers

and always found them to be a very capable, competent, and professional group of officers. He concurred with the previous comments and added that the officers receive the same training as the State Police.

Mark Hallbauer, 24 John W. Luty Drive, Oakdale, a 24-year resident, spoke in favor of the Ordinance. As a Police Officer in the Town of East Lyme, he has worked with numerous Resident State Troopers over the years and spoke of the constant turnover of Troopers and related inconsistencies. The town has outgrown the Program, which is designed for smaller towns. An independent police force, he felt, would improve the morale and discipline of the department. An independent police department is what is needed for the Town of Montville.

Carol Rowley, 93 Driscoll, Drive, Uncasville, a 50-year resident, stated her ongoing support for the Ordinance. She expressed her disappointment that the Ordinance was not passed when it was initially introduced and stated it needs to be passed.

Charles Nicholson, 16 Allen Drive, Uncasville, a resident of the town since 1980, spoke in support of the Ordinance. A former resident of Brooklyn, NY, he stated his experiences with former Police Lieutenant and Councilor Bunnell and the Montville Police Officers as being very professional. The town is becoming more and more like Brooklyn as a result of the casinos and an independent police force would benefit the town.

Wills Pike, 71 Pheasant Run, Oakdale, a 28-year resident, expressed his support for an independent police department. He provided a brief history of the formation of the Montville Law Enforcement Feasibility Committee, on which he served as the Chairman. With the support of former Lieutenant and Councilor Bunnell and the then-Resident State Troopers, the Committee drafted an exhaustive report stating their unanimous support for an independent police force regardless of the downsides. He recalled that, as a result of a negative article published in *The Day* newspaper at the time, the referendum to establish an independent police force failed. He hopes that the Town of Montville will continue going in the right direction.

Mark Adams, 98 Canterbury Turnpike, Norwich, a State Representative Candidate, expressed his full support for an independent police department. He reported that his father worked to establish the Resident State Trooper Program in the towns. The purpose of the Program was not to be a long-term solution, but to support the existing department and help it grow and become an independent entity. He felt that the money they save from moving away from the Program could be used to fund two to three additional officers, helping them create a safer community.

Mickey Gillette, 24 Walnut Drive, Uncasville, spoke on behalf of the Montville Police Department, which supports the Ordinance. He felt that it was long overdue and that the officers who work hard to support and protect the community deserve to work for a Police Chief who will “have their back”. He commended Lt. Dave Radford and his staff for preparing for the implementation of an independent police department.

Lynda J. Jean, 1583 Route 163, Unit 8, expressed her support for the Ordinance. She has contacted and had positive experiences with the Montville Police Department. She stated the importance of feeling safe and having their children feel safer under their protection. Some children, she added, might feel intimidated by the State Police and feel more comfortable with a local police officer with whom they become more familiar.

Carol Howard, 23 Bayberry Lane, Uncasville, a 53-year resident, expressed her 100% support for the establishment of an independent police department.

*Chairman McNally asked if there were any additional members of the public who would like to speak.*

Gary Murphy, Laurel Point Drive, former Oakdale Fire Company Chief, stated his ongoing full support for an independent police department. He felt that it was time for the town to take responsibility for its town. An avid listener of his scanner, he stated that there is a lot of activity in the town. He recommended the residents review the number of calls they respond to in town's Annual Report and the Police Department's online reports. He stated the importance of supporting a Chief of Police, citing the staggering number of Resident State Troopers that have served the town. The funds that would be saved could be utilized to pay for the Chief's salary and additional dispatchers.

Traci Callaghan, 16 Oak Road, Oakdale, a resident of the town since 1977, a volunteer for the Oakdale Firehouse, member of the Fire Police and Public Safety Commission, stated her support for the Ordinance. She expanded upon Ms. Jean's comments regarding the Police's support for the children of the community, who grow to develop a positive relationship with the town's officers.

Bob Bedard, 102 Park Avenue, Uncasville, a 65-year resident and father of a former member of the Montville Police Department, also stated his support for the Ordinance. He unsuccessfully provided PowerPoint presentations to the town's local organizations supporting the Ordinance in the past. He stated that the town has already invested in the creation of an independent police department and the members of the force would continue to be recognized as they currently are.

Dave Radford, 33 Glen Craig Place, Lieutenant, Montville Police Department, spoke in favor of an independent police department. He expressed his appreciation of the public's comments and reiterated the sentiment regarding their respect and support for the State Police. He believed that it was in the best interest of the town, which is currently in a good position to move forward. He noted that the services they receive from the State Police are already guaranteed, per State Statute. An independent police force would make the department more accountable to the residents, who will receive the full service they deserve without the bureaucracy of the State Police; qualify them for additional grant funding, and; provide them with the opportunity to utilize the Public Safety Building to its fullest potential.

Ellen Desjardins, 513 Raymond Hill Road, spoke in support of the Ordinance. She suggested that the Police Department make an effort to promptly greet the public as they enter the Public Safety Building and call for service. This would make it easier for the public and improve communication.

*Chairman McNally asked if there were any additional members of the public who would like to speak.*

Howard R. Beetham, Jr., 60 Riverview Road, Uncasville, stated his opposition to the Ordinance. He felt that the current system was good and should not separate itself from the Resident State Trooper Program. According to an advertisement he received from their State Senator, the Resident State Trooper Program would be offered free of charge to the towns. He felt that there was no need to change the current system, adding that "two police departments are better than one".

*Chairman McNally asked three times if there were any additional members of the public who would like to speak.*

Jen Rheume, 236 Oxoboxo Cross Road, Oakdale, speaking on behalf of the Rheume family, expressed their support for an independent police department. Without disrespecting Mr. Beetham, she stated that one boss is better than two. She stated that the town misunderstood the previous referendum and that it was time to move forward, not backward.

6. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Mayor McDaniel thanked the public for attending this evening's meeting and expressing their support. He estimated that this was his third time discussing the Ordinance. In his 11-year tenure as the Mayor, he recalled that the town has been home to approximately 10 Resident State Troopers. While he had positive experiences with all of the Troopers, he commented on the lack of consistency and the resulting loss of morale in the department. Per the Town Charter, the Mayor is designated as the Chief of Police, a position he does not qualify for. Similarly, the Town Charter anticipated this and states that once the town has established an independent police department, the Mayor is no longer the Chief of Police. He urged the town and the Town Council to complete the process and not petition the item, forcing a referendum.

Councilor Bunnell thanked the public for attending the meeting. He confessed that he submitted an article to *The Day* newspaper to not only help promote the item positively, but to also bring out those members of the public who are opposed to establishing an independent police department. He felt that, with only one individual speaking in opposition, it was indicative that it is time for them to move forward.

Councilor Caron also thanked the public for attending the meeting and was pleased with the turnout. He stated that their job is to listen to the public and hear their voices. He agreed that the town is ready for an independent police department and that it was time to move forward.

Councilor McNally also thanked everyone for attending the meeting and invited everyone to stay for the Town Council Regular Meeting. He explained that the Town Council had passed the Ordinance and a petition was submitted, sending the item to a referendum in which a "yes" vote signified an overturning of the Town Council's vote. The Town Council will be voting on the item on Tuesday, September 20. A transition plan has been developed in anticipation. He stated that the Councilors are open to any additional comments the public might have.

Councilor Rix thanked the public, including business owners, veterans, and law enforcement individuals, for attending the meeting and expressing their views. Feeling that it should be the residents' decision, she stated that she was one of the individuals who supported the petition. Having heard the public's comments this evening, she did not feel a referendum would be necessary.

Councilor Yuchniuk stated that, during his 28-year tenure as a member of the Waterford Police Department, he has worked with the members of both the surrounding towns' police departments and Resident State Troopers. He respects the Troopers, but felt that it was time for the town to move forward and establish an independent police department.

Councilor Mandler, whose family has lived in the town since 1967, has listened to the public's comments and the Town Council would be crazy not to listen to them. He was also pleased that Montville Police Lt. Radford spoke. He agreed that it was time for the Town to establish an independent police department.

7. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Rix, seconded by Councilor Caron, to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 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



**AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – MEETING RECORDINGS**