

Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

1. Call to Order
Chairman May called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in honor of our military.
3. Roll Call
Present were Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May.
Absent was Councilor Caron. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell.
4. Special Recognitions/Presentations – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Southard, to remove item 7(a), Executive Session from the Agenda. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-1. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Yuchniuk. Motion carried.

The following item was added to the Agenda:
7(a) To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidate for the Parks & Recreation Commission. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell.
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Organizational Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2023
Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. 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 discussing a personnel issue. Discussions to include members of the Town Council, Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Jr., and Human Resources Director Maria D’Amelia.
Item was removed from the Agenda.
 - b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidate for the Parks & Recreation Commission. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: Candidate Florence Turner was interviewed for the Parks & Recreation Commission. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:07 p.m. Chairman May resumed the meeting at 7:15 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 – *none*
9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the November 2023 Financial Reports from Finance Director Barbara Griffin
 - b. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of October 2023
 - c. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of October 2023
 - d. Copy of a Letter regarding Holly Bush Pruning Best Practice, forwarded from Ellen Desjardins
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 Bunnell reported on a very busy first month as Mayor. He attended two (2) OPM (Connecticut Office of Policy and Management) meetings with the State Representatives to discuss House Bill 5474, Property Tax Exemption for Property located on Certain Indian Lands, and numerous board and commission meetings. He also attended the recent SEAT (Southeast Area Transit District), SCCOG (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments), and SCRRRA (Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority) meetings and has met with most of the Department Heads. He also sat in on the interviews for the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) Treatment Operator, Deputy Fire Marshal, and Firefighter. He wished the Director of Land Use and Development Liz Burdick well after receiving her letter of resignation; the position has been posted. He also participated in the Holiday Thanksgiving box giveaways and thanked Social and Senior Services Director Kathie Doherty-Peck and her family for their help. He also thanked Montville Police Department Sgt. Stuart and Officer Kuckel for going above and beyond by helping them distribute the baskets. Sixty-five (65) baskets were delivered to homebound seniors and 114 holiday baskets were delivered to those in need. He also took part in the Animal Control Facility bid openings and attended several holiday gatherings, including the Seniors Holiday Lunch and Raymond Library's Meet the Grinch and Santa Claus events. He also reinstated the monthly department head meetings, which should prove beneficial.

Director of Land Use & Development Burdick expressed her appreciation to the Mayor and Town Councilors who have reached out to her and wished her well in her new endeavors. She has accepted a position as SCCOG's Director of Municipal Services and looks forward to working with the Town of Montville on a regional level. She will be getting her office in order, will be available for questions, as necessary, and was confident that the Town is in good hands with an excellent hardworking staff. She thanked them for the opportunity to serve the town. She provided a brief update on the Planning & Zoning Commission, which is currently updating the Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD), which must be updated every ten (10) years, and the Affordable Housing Plan, which must be updated every five (5) years, with the new Census data. She recommended the documents be updated more regularly, re-starting the five/ten-year deadlines. The Commission will be holding a Special Meeting in January to discuss the Cannabis Regulations, which will be sent to the new Councilors for comment. She informed them that the application for a proposed dredging operation on Depot Road has been rescinded. The Economic Development Commission Support Services Consultant Robert Santy has interviewed key individuals and an Open House event will be organized to present his findings. Goman + York Property Advisors is scheduled to provide a presentation during the Town Council's January Regular Meeting regarding future development in Montville. Concerning item 16(c) for the additional allocation of funds for the geotechnical work for the proposed Animal Control Facility, she explained that the cost was unknown when the original contract was drafted as the location of the stormwater retention was not yet determined. Item 16(d) will allow the Town to apply to the State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund Round 4 for funding for a new Animal Control Facility; their previous application was denied. Possible future developments include multi-family housing, a grocery store, and a coffee retail chain.

Old Colchester Road Development (Councilor May) – Two (2) developments are in process on Old Colchester Road – a three-lot subdivision and an eight-lot subdivision. Both applicants have received permission to clear the property.

State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund Grant (Councilor Yuchniuk) – The previous grant application was not approved and no feedback was received. She has been

working with the Community Investment Fund to draft the new application. The status of the application to the State Bond Commission, submitted by the ACO (Animal Control Officer), in September is unknown.

Finance Director Barbara Griffin reported that seven (7) bids, ranging from \$2.1 to \$3.3 million, were received for the proposed Animal Control Facility. Currently, the only funding source for the project is the Town's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds of \$800,000.00, \$100,000.00 of which has been expended for the Architect's services. She also reported that the Auditors have requested a one-month extension with the state. Copies of past Audits are available online and in the Finance Office. In preparation for the upcoming budget season, the budget sheets have been distributed to the Town Departments. Once received, the budget requests will be sent to the Mayor, who will review and draft his budget, which will be sent to the Finance Committee. On this evening's agenda is a motion to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Town Attorney, which is renewed every two (2) years.

Three (3) Lowest Bid Amounts (Councilor Yuchniuk) – The three (3) lowest bid amounts were: \$2,132,000.00, \$2,687,000.00, and \$2,827,000.00. Land Use & Development Director Burdick stated that the lowest bids have been referred to the Architect for review.

Fire Department Overtime Calculations (Councilor Yuchniuk) – Director Griffin was unaware of any issues with the calculations.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure – *no report*

b. Finance

Councilor May reported that two (2) productive meetings have been held during which the Members were brought up to speed on the budget process.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

Councilor Southard reported that the Chairperson was elected and the 2024 Meeting Dates were approved. Councilor Lathrop reported that the Members were also provided with a brief update on the current projects.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services, Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund – *not present; no report*

b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education, Planning & Zoning Commission – *no report*
Chairman May acknowledged the Councilors' receipt of the teachers' contract and encouraged them to reach out to the Superintendent to discuss any questions or issues they might have before the December 20 deadline.

c. Councilor Lathrop: Economic Development Commission, Water Pollution Control Authority

Economic Development Commission – An update on their current and future plans was provided. As stated by the Director of Land Use & Development, EDC Support Services Consultant Santy has met with several individuals to gauge the future of the town and its abandoned buildings and a presentation will be provided regarding his findings. He added that the departure of Land Use & Development Director Burdick will be a huge loss to the Town; he hopes they will be able to find an equally competent individual.

Water Pollution Control Authority – The signage for the Cook Hill Water Tower will be installed and the project will soon break ground. Projects related to the digestion of the solid waste are being explored.

- d. Councilor Sabilia: Conservation Commission, Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board
- Conservation Commission – The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson were elected during their last meeting. He encouraged everyone to visit the Conservation Center to view their recent improvements.
- Public Safety Commission – With the completion of the remaining officers’ training, the Police Department is now fully staffed. Letters from the community were received recognizing Officers Smith, DiColella, and DeSimone for their response to a motor vehicle accident and Officers Hughes and Fazzino for locating a missing child.
- Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board – The last day to drop off \$5 and \$10 Gift Cards for the Annual Stocking Drive is Wednesday, December 13. Everyone is encouraged to wear green in observance of the 11th Anniversary of the Sandy Hook Tragedy. The Annual Holiday Social/Ugly Sweater Contest will be held on Friday, December 22.
- e. Councilor Southard: Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission
- Farmers Market Committee – *no report; will not begin until January/February 2024*
- Library Committee – *no report, will be meeting with Director Kari Wall next week*
- Parks & Recreation Commission – The Commission’s discussions included the completion of the dance room floors, the repaving of the basketball courts, and the Desjardins Park upgrades. The elections for a new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be held during their January Regular Meeting.

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a motion to accept the resignation of Kate Johnson from the Gardner Lake Authority, effective January 1, 2024.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Councilor May stated that Ms. Johnson, who has been a valuable member of the Authority for several years, will be sorely missed. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Alternate Member Serg St. Felix to fill a vacancy as a Full Member of the Economic Development Commission with a term to expire on January 11, 2025.
Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- c. To Consider and Act on a motion to re-appoint Sean Furlow as an Alternate Member of the Board of Assessment Appeals with a term to expire on November 13, 2027.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- d. To Consider and Act on a motion to re-appoint Arthur Montorsi as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Appeals with a term to expire on November 13, 2027.
Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.

- e. To Consider and Act on a motion to waive the waiting period for appointments, Rule 14C of the Town Council Rules of Procedure, for the Conservation Commission, Montville Housing Authority, and Parks & Recreation Commission.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- f. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Adam Heckle to fill a vacancy as a Full Member of the Conservation Commission with a term to expire on May 10, 2025.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- g. To Consider and Act on a motion to appoint Kari Wall to fill a vacancy as an Alternate Member of the Conservation Commission with a term to expire on June 11, 2024.
Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- h. To Consider and Act on a motion to nominate and appoint one of the following candidates to fill a vacancy as a member of the Montville Housing Authority with a term to expire on April 30, 2027: Kathleen Doherty-Peck, Alfred Mandler.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Councilor Yuchniuk expressed his appreciation to Montville Housing Authority Administrator Shirley Smith for her comments during the Special Meeting. Roll Call vote. Voting in Favor of Kathleen Doherty-Peck: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Favor of Alfred Mandler: Councilors Lathrop and Yuchniuk. Kathleen Doherty-Peck was appointed to the Montville Housing Authority.
- i. To Consider and Act on a motion to accept the resignation of Kevin Clang from the Parks & Recreation Commission, effective immediately.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- j. To Consider and Act on a motion to nominate and appoint one of the following candidates to fill a vacancy as a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission with a term to expire on May 11, 2027: William Barlow, John Plikus, Jeffrey Rogers, Florence Turner.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote. Voting in Favor of William Barlow: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Favor of John Plikus: Councilor Lathrop. Voting in Favor of Florence Turner: Councilor Yuchniuk. William Barlow was appointed to the Parks & Recreation Commission.
- k. To Consider and Act on a motion to nominate and appoint one of the following candidates to fill a vacancy as a member of the Parks & Recreation Commission with a term to expire on October 12, 2027: John Plikus, Jeffrey Rogers, Florence Turner.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote. Voting in Favor of John Plikus: Councilor Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Favor of Florence Turner: Councilor Lathrop and Yuchniuk. John Plikus was appointed to the Parks & Recreation Commission.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2023-124. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$3,057.67 (three thousand fifty-seven dollars and sixty-seven cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Town Attorney. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2023-125. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve an additional allocation of \$1,450.00 (one thousand four hundred and fifty dollars) to be paid to Silver Petrucelli Architects for geotechnical work for the proposed animal shelter. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Yuchniuk. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2023-126. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize the Town of Montville to apply to the State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund Round 4 for funding for a new Animal Control Facility. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Yuchniuk. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- e. **Resolution #2023-127. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the 2023 holiday bonuses for Town employees on Schedule A. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: It was noted that there are no changes to the bonus amounts. Roll Call vote, 6-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

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

Lisa Terry, 82 Pires Drive E, Oakdale, spoke with respect to the importance of transparency in a legislative body for accountability and public trust, making informed decisions, and allowing citizens to understand the legislative process and track the actions of their elected leaders and hold them accountable for their decisions – all of which are fosters a democratic society in which the citizens are invited to actively participate and make informed decisions. She stated that she was informed earlier in the day that the Montville Public Schools Superintendent was to speak under Presentations – an item that should have been included on the Agenda. She also confirmed this with the FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) Director. In addition, she noted that a motion was not made to add an Executive Session to interview a Candidate under Alterations to the Agenda. She stated that Robert’s Rule of Orders and FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) should both be heeded. Furthermore, a copy of Schedule A should be made available to the public before

the meeting and cautioned the Councilors that, per Section 401 of the Montville Town Charter, the appointment of a Town Attorney must be made “not later than two months after each Town election”.

Gary Murphy, 55-F Laurel Point Drive, stated that it is very difficult for the public to hear the public comments and requested they consider providing a live broadcast of the meetings.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Yuchniuk felt that the Town would not be aware of how much Land Use & Development Director Burdick would be missed until her departure. He expressed his appreciation to her for all of her hard work, stating that she has been a great asset to the Town. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilor Lathrop concurred with Councilor Yuchniuk, stating that, while he is not upset that Land Use & Development Director Burdick is leaving to better her future, he is, at the same time, upset that she is leaving. He is pleased to see the members of the public present at the meeting this evening.

Councilor Sabilia echoed the Councilors comments and wished Land Use & Development Director Burdick luck in the future. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded them to vote in tomorrow’s referendum. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Councilor Jaskiewicz also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe Holiday. He concurred with Ms. Terry’s and Mr. Murphy’s comments. He wished Land Use & Development Director Burdick good luck, adding that he plans to continue contacting her at the SCCOG with questions.

Councilor Southard also congratulated and thanked Land Use & Development Director Burdick for all of her hard work and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Mayor Bunnell expressed his sadness to see the departure of Land Use & Development Director Burdick. He also expressed his regrets about the cancellations of the Light Parade due to inclement weather and reminded everyone that the Annual Tree Lighting event will be held on Saturday, December 16 at 6:00 p.m. He believed that Ms. Doherty-Peck’s appointment to the Housing Authority would be beneficial, based on her experience and the trust she has gained from the seniors. He also wished to acknowledge Sandy Hook Remembrance Day on December 14. While he is in favor of establishing a live video feed of their meetings, the requirements and costs would need to be considered, citing the hacking of the Town of Ledyard’s recent live video feed. He wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday.

Chairman May expressed his appreciation to Ms. Terry for her comments and stated that he would do his best in the future. He thanked all of the candidates who applied to serve on a board or commission and congratulated all of the appointed candidates, adding that the work is very rewarding. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah, and a Happy Holiday.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

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

Schedule A

Non-Union Employees

INDIVIDUAL

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|--------|
| pay codes | | | | | |
| code 970 | MALCHIODI | CONSTANCE | INDV | 08/01/2011 | 240.00 |
| code 977 | ROGERS | JEFFREY | REGISTRARS | 11/01/2020 | 100.00 |
| code 977 | HILLMAN | MARY | REGISTRARS | 08/15/2022 | 100.00 |
| code 970 | GRIFFIN | BARBARA | INDV | 10/27/2022 | 100.00 |
| code 970 | BUNNELL | LENNY | ELCT | 11/14/2011 | 100.00 |
| code 970 | DAMELIA | MARIA | INDV | 11/07/2022 | 100.00 |

PART TIME

OVER 780

HRS

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|----|----------|--------|
| CHAPMAN | LAURIE | PT | 805.50 | 100.00 |
| DEFORD | BRIAN | PT | 805.50 | 100.00 |
| MARS | HARRY | PT | 843.00 | 100.00 |
| MATHERS | DENNIS | | 865.00 | 100.00 |
| RICHARD | MELISSA | | 868.50 | 100.00 |
| BROWN | TINA | | 1,394.00 | 100.00 |

RECORDING

CLERKS

| | | | | |
|-----|---------|--------|----|--------|
| 569 | MIYUKI | AGNES | PT | 100.00 |
| 160 | GATHERS | GLORIA | PT | 100.00 |

TOTAL 1540.00