

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION
Regular Meeting – December 27, 2023 -- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

Comments will only be accepted at times designated for public comments by the Chair of the meeting. The Montville Town Council Rules of Procedure, decorum, timeliness, and suitability shall be followed and enforced.

1. Call to order.

Chairman Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Moment of Silence in Remembrance of Connecticut State K9 Officer Broko and Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Pedersen.

A moment of silence was held to acknowledge the passing of Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Pedersen and Connecticut State K9 Officer Broko who was killed in the line of duty this past week.

4. Roll Call.

Present were Chairman Gary Murphy; Vice-Chair Stephen Stewart, and Commissioners William Bauer, Traci Callaghan, Mickey Gillette and Karen Perkins.

5. Amendments to the Agenda – *None*

6. Special Recognitions and Presentations.

- a. Swearing in Ceremony:** Volunteer Montville Police Chaplains Deacon William Herrmann and Pastor Dominic Brewer.

Police Chief Blanchette offered his sincere condolences on the passing of Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Pedersen. He noted that he met Commissioner Pedersen 38 years ago who was then serving as a sergeant in the Norwich Police Department and as an adjunct instructor at the Police Academy. At the time, Chief Blanchette was newly hired at the Norwich PD where he met Commissioner Pedersen who immediately became a mentor and friend who was clearly one of the best in the business and will be missed in the law enforcement community.

As to the Police Chaplains, Chief Blanchette, who remarked he was fortunate to be hired as the Town Police Chief, began to implement small changes to better serve the citizens of Montville and the police officers. Using the pillars of 21st century policing, he noted that Pillar #6 acknowledges “The wellness of officers is a crucial component of public safety and calls for cooperative efforts to support our officers’ wellbeing.” To care for the Town officers, a

wellness team comprised of police officers, police supervisors and dispatchers was developed as a pier support system for all of their employees. The Chief discussed with Lt. Radford about implementing a police chaplaincy program that both agreed was long overdue. The chaplaincy would serve as a partnership with faith-based leaders during times of crisis. The purpose of the chaplains would be to respond and support police officers and to provide an overall better quality of life to the citizens of Montville. By having the chaplaincy and police department working together, the goal would be to create a more comprehensive support system in times of crisis or incidences with a more comprehensive response given to those in need. The faith-based leaders will perform tasks with a focus on the more emotional, social and spiritual needs while the police officers will focus on those tasks associated with law enforcement needs. The role of the chaplain would be to act as a balancer to provide support in times of need; i.e., to provide assistance, advice, counsel, comfort or make a referral if requested. The Montville Police Department is excited to embark on this new chapter of service for the community. Chief Blanchette introduced volunteer chaplains Pastor Dominic Brewer and Deacon William Herrmann. Pastor Brewer ministers at the Montville Union Baptist Church where he has served for the past five (5) years; is an 1995 Montville High graduate; served eight (8) years in the Army Reserves; graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Religion and Theology; and attended the Chaplain Basic Training Course hosted by Resilient Minds of the Front Lines in September of 2023. He is also married to his wife Christine and has three (3) children (Gabriel, Alice, and Isaiah), and other family members that are present this evening—his father Skip, his mother-in-law Linda; his father-in-law Bob, brother-in-law Sean, and his family. Pastor Brewer was sworn in by Town Clerk Katie Haring to perform his duties as chaplain of the Town of Montville Police Department. Deacon William Herrmann was ordained a deacon in June of 2007 by Bishop Michael Cote and since has been serving as a chaplain of The Divine Mercy Parish that includes Our Lady of the Lakes, Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Churches. He is also a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy Submarine force and has worked 25 years at Electric Boat as a nuclear trainer. The Deacon holds a Bachelor's Degree in Workforce Education Training and a Master's Degree in Theology. He also currently serves as chaplain at the Chesterfield Fire Company, New London County Fire Chiefs Association, Montville Area Fire Police Association, and the Montville Rotary. He also attended the Chaplain Basic Training Course hosted by Resilient Minds of the Front Lines in September of 2023. Deacon Herrmann has been married to his wife Connie for 55 years and has four (4) adult children, 13 grandchildren and has been a resident of the Town for 46 years. He was also sworn in by Town Clerk Haring to perform the duties of chaplain for the Montville Police Department.

b. Swearing in Ceremony: Montville Deputy Fire Marshal John Meigel.

Fire Marshal Barnes introduced Deputy Fire Marshal John Meigel and provided background information on him as follows: John Meigel is a Lebanon resident and has been married to Susan Meigel for 19 years. He has 6 kids (2 boys and 4 girls) and his parents are Donna and Richard Meigel. John was awarded the public Service award and Congressional Recognition in 2004 for a Life Rescue in a structure fire. He has an Associate's Degree in Fire Science, holds multiple certifications in the field for firefighting, is nationally certified as a Fire Investigator, and has several certifications from FEMA. John has been a Firefighter for 24 years, an EMT for 26 years, and 911 dispatcher for 15 years. He is the first Fire Lieutenant at

the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. John became a Fire Marshal in 2019 for the Town of Lebanon and has investigated multiple fires from basic fires to fatalities. His goals are to educate the public about fire safety and prevention, mitigate risks in the community and work with the community to be prepared for large events and disasters. John's father Richard pinned his badge.

Chairman Murphy thanked Town Clerk Haring for swearing in Volunteer chaplains Pastor Brewer and Deacon Herrmann and Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel.

7. Communications:

- Copies of monthly statistics reports from Fire Departments, Fire Marshal, Police, Animal Control and Building Official.

Chairman Murphy confirmed the receipt by the Commission of statistical reports from the departments for the month ending December 2023. Vice-Chair Stewart remarked that there is no report for the Building Department but he did receive the fire company reports for Chesterfield and Oakdale.

8. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve minutes:

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of November 27, 2023.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 27, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor.
Motion carried.

9. Remarks from the Public. (Agenda items only—three-minute limit.)

Chairman Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

10. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Lt. Radford reported the Police Department statistics for month ending November 30, 2023. Reported were 992 calls for service. A total of 212 citations were issued that included 37 infractions, 16 misdemeanors, and 159 written warnings. The Lieutenant also read into the record complimentary and/or Performance Observation Reports (POR) issued as follows: (1) a letter regarding Officer Kirsten Todd from Montville Schools Special Education Supervisor Amanda Brown who praised Officer Todd for her balance between authority and compassion. Supervisor Brown was incredibly impressed with how Officer Todd handled a situation; (2) a letter regarding Sergeant Mike Pierce and Officer Fazzino from Waterford Police Chief Marc Balestracci thanking them for being well prepared and for their professionalism concerning their assistance with a fatal accident at the Crystal Mall; as part of the Shoreline Traffic Accident Reconstruction Team (START); (3) a letter from New London Police Chief Brian Wright who praised and thanked all police departments who sent mutual aide to their City during an officer involved shooting; and (4) a letter regarding Dispatchers Lee Rummel and Josie Snarski from Fire Marshall Paul Barnes commending them for a job well done during a structure fire on Park Avenue Ext.; the Dispatchers also remained on call and were professional during the entire incident.

Fire Marshal Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending November 30, 2023, as follows: Inspections of businesses and apartments (30), Fire investigations (0), Incident responses/requested to the scene (9), Burn permits issued (3), Construction Project Inspection (2), Final C/O Inspection (2) and Sprinkler Inspection (1). During the month of November, a total of 16 hours were spent on Emergency Management obligations. The Fire Marshal also reported that the next round of posting is this Friday, December 29th and the Commission will be tasked with providing initial interviews. An email will be sent on the same to the Commission and will include the number of applicants.

11. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)

Commissioner Perkins emailed the monthly statistical reports for the fire companies to the Commission as shown below. She also reported on a packet she received from the Finance Director of the pending budget requests and the Capital Improvement Plan that falls under the purview of the Commission for its review. This packet was distributed to the Commissioners.

Montville Fire Company (November 2023) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	
EMS Calls	
Fire Calls	
Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	
Other Calls	
Total Calls:	

Mohegan Fire Company (November 2023) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	
EMS Calls	
Fire Calls	
Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	
Other Calls	
Total Calls:	

Oakdale Fire Company (November 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	12
EMS Calls	29
Fire Calls	0

Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	5
Other Calls	19
Total Calls:	65

Chesterfield Fire Company (November 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	11
EMS Calls	9
Fire Calls	1
Motor Vehicle	4
Other Calls	20
Total Calls:	45

b. Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)

The statistical reports for the month ending November 30, 2023, submitted by ACO Swanson are as follows. Commissioner Callaghan read the year-end data into the record and reported that bids are coming in for the Animal Control facility.

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (November 2023)

	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded	9	56
# of Animals Sold as Pets	8	34
# of Animals D.O.A.	0	2
# of Animals Euthanized	1	5
Total Complaints Investigated	77	458
Total Animal Bites Investigated	4	8
Total Infractions/Summons	3	9

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (November 2023)

	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded	1	6
# of Animals Sold as Pets	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized	0	2
Total Complaints Investigated	3	24
Total Animal Bites Investigated	0	0
Total Infractions/Summons	0	0

c. Report from Police Department Liaison. (Gillette)

Commissioner Gillette had nothing new to report.

d. Report from Building Department Liaison. (Stewart) – No Report

2023-2024 Building Department Report												
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Permits Issued												
Pending Permits												
Inspections												
Plan Reviews CO's												
Violation Notices												
Unsafe Notices												
Blight Identified												
Blight Abated To Date												

12. Remarks from Fire Chiefs. -- None

13. Unfinished Business.

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve a Policy to systemize and retain firefighter data to observe trends and effectiveness.

Chairman Murphy reported this item would remain on the agenda as it still be worked on.

14. New Business. -- None

15. Remarks from the Public. (Non-agenda items only—three-minute limit)

Chairman Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. There were none.

16. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell praised Commissioner Pedersen noting he was a Vietnam veteran, a sergeant with the Norwich Police Department, an instructor with the Police Academy, and a security dispatcher. He also described him as helpful, kind and compassionate remarking he will be missed and that in his time with Montville he was always there when needed. Mayor Bunnell also thanked Chief Blanchette for the starting the chaplaincy program and the newly sworn in chaplains in appreciation for their willingness for their time. He also has spoken with the new Deputy Fire Marshal who thanked him and from whom he expects good things. The Mayor also reported the Animal Control Officer has resigned and moved on. He described her as effective, passionate and said she will be missed. He also thanked Officer Todd for her actions and support of the student and thanked Chief Blanchette for deployment of personnel to the Waterford fatality and the New London shooting incident. According to Mayor Bunnell, the Town hit a homerun with him. He also commended the Officer regarding the fire on Ft. Shantok Road. As for the firefighter interviews, he reported that two (2) applicants withdrew and one (1) continued. Lastly, the Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and wished all a Happy New Year.

17. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia thanked all of the first responders for keeping the Town safe.

18. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Gillette congratulated the Volunteer Police Captains sworn in earlier during the meeting. Commissioner Callaghan remarked that Commissioner Pedersen would be greatly missed describing him as awesome. Commissioner Perkins thanked Mayor Bunnell, the career and volunteer firefighters and the police department for their ongoing efforts for the Town. Vice-Chair Stewart wished everyone a Happy New Year with the hope that 2024 would be better. He also congratulated the firefighters and police officers recognized in letters of recognition reported this evening. Commissioner Bauer thanked Mayor Bunnell for doing a good job; thanked the new hires and asked that everyone be safe in 2024. Chairman Murphy remarked on the last six (6) firefighters interviews conducted by the Commission. He explained that the pool of applicants are getting younger and spoke of the need for seasoned qualified applicants who can train for two (2) weeks and be ready to work that has created a longer time in order to fill positions. He also thanked everyone that were sworn in this evening and then spoke of Commissioner Pedersen as a great man and his frequent lunch buddy who was a good human being. He noted that their grandsons were best friends.

19. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0, all in favor. **Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Gloria J. Gathers
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN
OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**