

Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
Montville Town Hall – Town Council Chambers

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 Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.

4. Special Recognitions/Presentations

- a. Presentation by Sarah Lufler, Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity, regarding partnership opportunities for housing.

Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut Executive Director Sarah Lufler provided a handout to the Councilors, stating that she is in the process of reaching out to and providing communities with information and updates regarding their current housing projects. In the past, they have benefited from partnering with local municipalities to rehabilitate derelict, vacant, or similar properties and offer housing with affordable mortgages.

Chairman May expressed their interest in speaking and working with them to investigate how they could better utilize their abandoned and/or dilapidated properties to provide more affordable housing to their community.

Councilor Lathrop stated that he had thoroughly enjoyed volunteering for the organization many years ago and expressed his interest in volunteering again.

- b. Presentation by Goman+York Property Advisors, LLC, regarding development in Montville.

Chairman May introduced Goman+York Property Advisors, LLC, with whom the Economic Development Commission has been in contact to review ways in which the town might be able to invite new businesses and development.

Goman+York Principal Mike Goman, who has over 40 years of experience in commercial real estate, stated that he established the Company approximately 15 years ago. The Company primarily works with municipalities and government agencies to conduct market and financial feasibility studies, fiscal and economic impact studies, economic development advisory and support, and town planning services.

He provided an overview of the main industries, including the office, retail, restaurant, and hospitality sectors. Approximately 50% of the offices are currently occupied and we are experiencing the highest vacancy rate since the 1970s as the trend towards remote working continues to grow. The trend is changing how companies function and the technology will continue to improve and support the trend. Satellite suburban locations are gaining popularity and companies are designing “cruise ship” office environments, which offer more interesting, comfortable, and inviting office spaces. The impact of this trend is significant as the use and value of office buildings are decreasing. It is estimated that approximately 21% of office buildings will go into default and the majority of the buildings, which were built in the 1980s, will need major repairs or replacement, significantly decreasing their value.

The Retail Industry appears to be recovering with more store openings than closings for the first time in the last few years. Holiday sales appear to be comparable to the previous year and have grown since the onset of the pandemic. E-commerce sales represent approximately 16% of total retail sales and are not expected to grow beyond

20%. Shoppers continue to prefer physical stores for specialty products, e.g., apparel, electronics, etc. Inflation is also having an effect as shoppers are purchasing more store or private brands over national name brands. Many enclosed malls have gone into bankruptcy and are experiencing a diminution of value. Located on large pieces of property at ideal locations, these malls represent good development opportunities for conversion to medical offices, indoor sports arenas, housing, and the like. There are an estimated 1,900 shopping centers of approximately 400,000 square feet that will need to be redeveloped or converted.

An estimated 90,000 to 100,000 Restaurants have permanently closed, most of which were local or casual dining establishments. The industry continues to battle staffing shortages and increased costs. The closure rates have stabilized and fast-food restaurants are expanding and introducing new concepts.

While air passenger traffic has returned to 2019 levels, business travel remains low and convention center hotels have not fully recovered. Millennials appear to favor experiences over things, resulting in a rise in airfares, room rates, and tourist resorts. Like the restaurant industry, hotel staffing continues to be an issue. Approximately two-thirds of the reservations are being made via a mobile phone app rather than through a website. Remote working, which allows individuals to continue working while traveling, is a trend that will most likely continue. Similar to retail properties, many of the older hotel properties are being converted into housing units.

Though in low supply, single-family residences continue to be in demand resulting in higher prices. Though interest rates have risen and have dampened the demand, the average mortgage rate over the past 40 years of 7% will, most likely, be maintained. Single-family residences that are specifically built to be rented have significantly increased nationwide and is expected to continue to grow as it has become more economical to rent than own a home. These residences may eventually transform into single-family residences. Multi-family developments or apartments have significantly decreased throughout the state and financing for such projects has become more difficult to obtain.

Self-storage units, especially those that are highly secured, well-lit, and climate-controlled, continue to grow. More storage facilities are now built with attractive designs and architectural details. While there has been substantial activity with warehouse/logistics buildings, it is beginning to level out. Approximately 600 million square feet of warehouse space was constructed in 2023 nationwide. The current vacancy rate of such buildings is approximately 4%. Similar to self-storage units, these buildings are attractively designed with landscaping.

On Goman+York's watch list are the central business districts, regional malls, approved projects that have not started, casual dining restaurants, and older hotels and apartments – all of which impact the assessed values of the community's commercial real estate. Those buildings that are 40 to 60 years of age are the most vulnerable, due to upgrading costs and vacancy rates.

Principal Goman provided a brief history of the trends, stating that most of the trends began during the 1990s and were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic through the growth in e-commerce and remote work. He also provided their predictions for the future based on past and current trends and reviewed the financial environment and possible challenges.

Development and Redevelopment Opportunities will require more research-based market analysis, extensive conceptual planning, increased community engagement, minimal risk, access to debt/equity, and a low cost per square foot. There is a substantial demand for upscale, amenity-rich projects attracting fully retired empty

nesters who wish to remain in the community, working empty nesters, double income/no children, and recently divorced individuals. Such individuals seek very few services and most likely do not have children who would enter the school system. Such individuals are in search of residing in areas with adequate transportation, food and beverage options, and recreational activities. Industrial developments are also seeking locations that are close to highways and transportation nodes, have available labor pools, and have similar uses to offer shared services. Office buildings may be converted into warehouse/industrial, medical offices, satellite/remote working offices, schools, apartments, and self-storage spaces. Hotels may be converted into residential units and Retail spaces may be converted into health clubs, medical offices, residential units, schools, food and beverage spaces, and arts and entertainment uses. There is continued interest from out-of-state investors for Connecticut properties due to the lower price points, stability, and reduced competition.

A brief review of the demographics and community profile of the Town, including the town's age, gender, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic data, was also provided.

In conclusion, he stated that, without any unexpected or unforeseen major events, it is a good time to be in business and sell quality assets. There are several redevelopment opportunities that will become available at a lower cost and an emerging demand for new products and services. There will be great opportunities in a new environment.

Mayor Bunnell thanked the public for their patience and attention during the presentation. It is hoped that Goman+York will help guide and assist the town, which includes highways, waterways, a rail system, and properties, on a project-by-project basis to determine the appropriate incentives allowing the Town to compete and offer developers incentives to attract their business.

Principal Goman concurred, stating that only two or three of the approximately 1,000 site submittals that are reviewed annually turn into deals. It is critical for towns like Montville to rise to the top of the list. In addition, he noted that roughly 60% to 70% of the projects they have reviewed over the past few years include some form of tax abatement. Without the tax abatements, he stated, such projects do not make financial sense and are not completed.

Working Arrangement (Councilor Jaskiewicz) – While they conduct the analysis work for developers, the Company primarily works for the town, protecting and ensuring that the town receives the best possible outcome.

Economic Development Strategic Plan (Chairman May) – A detailed in-depth Trade Area Analysis, i.e., Market Analysis, would be conducted upon which the sites and strategies to attract the investment capital for those uses would be discussed.

Zoning Change Recommendations (Chairman May) – Much of the Company's work involves making towns more attractive to investors, including a review of the zoning regulations. Developers will initially review a town's regulations for any problematic areas and will, most likely, not pursue the project based on their findings.

Councilor Lathrop commented on the abundance of information and his curiosity to see how their vacant properties could be developed in a town that is home to a Casino and farms. Councilor Sabilia also thanked him for his time and for providing the information, which he looks forward to reviewing.

Arrangements may be made for a presentation to the Planning & Zoning Commission and Economic Development Commission.

5. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Lathrop, to add the following item to the Agenda:

5(a) Status of the Animal Control Facility and Options Available to Move the Project Forward

Discussion: Councilor Yuchniuk expressed his appreciation to the public for attending the meeting and wished to note to the Councilors that the public voted for them and it was their job to work for them and provide them with the necessary information. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Caron, to move item 8, Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit, to item 6. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

a. Status of the Animal Control Facility and Options Available to Move the Project Forward

Councilor Yuchniuk confirmed that the current Animal Control Facility was inadequate. He reported that approximately \$675,000.00 of the \$800,000.00 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds that was allocated for a new Facility remains. Seven (7) bids were received for the construction of a new Facility, ranging from \$2.1 to \$3.3 million. He proposed three (3) options:

- 1) An Animal Control Facility constructed in the Town of Montville – While the town can apply for grants, there is a possibility that the cost could add a tax burden to the residents. It is possible that neighboring towns, including Norwich and Bozrah, may be interested in regionalizing with the town.
- 2) Partner with the City of New London – Like the Towns of Waterford and East Lyme, the town may opt to build an addition to New London’s existing facility to house their animals. This option is effective in that it will provide a safe haven for their animals.
- 3) Eliminate the town’s Animal Control Program and engage the services of NECCOG (Northeastern CT Council of Governments) – NECCOG currently handles 16 (sixteen) towns and employs four (4) Animal Control Officers. The town would surrender its Operational Control and residents would be directed to NECCOG, rather than the Mayor or Chief of Police, for any concerns or issues.

He expressed his appreciation to everyone for their passion, for attending this evening’s meeting and reaching out to him regarding the matter. He urged the public to email or call the Councilors and Mayor. He reiterated the importance of their presence this evening, which reflects its significance and the need to immediately address the matter.

Chairman May recognized the need and stated that they are actively searching for ways to provide an adequate facility, adding that it takes time for such projects to come to fruition. His primary focus has been to construct a new Facility, but are faced with a lack of funding. He reported that the town has submitted seven (7) grant applications over the past five (5) years to no avail. Immediate solutions are also being sought. He also responded to those who have commented on the funding for other projects, including the pickleball courts, which were funded through the town’s ARPA Funds, and the town dock and fishing pier, which is being heavily funded through the state.

Councilor Sabilia apologized for promising that the item would be included on this evening’s agenda. He stated that he was planning to speak on the matter during his report as the Public Safety Commission Liaison. A handout which includes links to additional information is available. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and commented on the importance of their input.

Mayor Bunnell recognized that the issue has been “kicked down the road” for several years and the urgent need for a new facility. All of the items that have been discussed are unknown, including the receipt of grants; the pricing of engaging the services of NECCOG; the cost of partnering with New London, with whom they had a deal four

(4) years ago, and; the cost of renovating the existing facility. After determining the costs, he will inform the public of his findings so that they may make an informed decision that would benefit the citizens of the town. Should the options fall through, he proposed the item go to a referendum for a vote to fund the cost of a new Facility.

Councilor Southard, who reviewed the Facebook comments, also recognized the time that the process has taken and that it is long overdue. She stated that the remaining ARPA Funds cannot be expended to begin the project without jeopardizing the possible receipt of the Grant. She confirmed that the Councilors are reviewing all of the options and are working hard to resolve the matter.

Councilor Jaskiewicz acknowledged the need to improve the Facility and added that they would also need to institute a plan to house their animals in an alternative location while the old Facility is being renovated or the new Facility is being constructed. He also confirmed that they have been actively discussing the issue and requested the public remain patient.

Chairman May noted that a town in Texas purchased a modular Animal Control Facility for \$200,000.00 and proposed investigating that option, as well, noting that the proposed design from the Town Engineer and Architect may be too large.

Councilor Caron concurred with the Councilors and the Mayor. He stated his support to send the item to a referendum to bond a new Animal Control Facility. He was pleased to see the residents at their meeting and voicing their concerns.

Councilor Lathrop expressed his pride in the number of residents who are attending the meeting and showing that they care.

6. Remarks from the public relating to matters on the agenda with a three-minute limit
Krista Serra, 46 Doyle Road, Oakdale, who runs Harlows Heroes, a non-profit charity, expressed her frustrations with the Town Council who did not add the item to the agenda until Councilor Yuchniuk's public request. As elected officials, the Councilors have been approached on numerous occasions regarding the Facility and were aware of the importance of the issue. She felt that the Councilors were conducting business without the public's knowledge and stated that, as elected officials, it was their duty to inform the public, allowing them to make an educated and informed decision in the best interest of the town. She appreciates their efforts to move forward on the project.

Tiffany Williams, 100 Simpson Lane, Oakdale, who also supported the new Public Safety Building, spoke in favor of a new Animal Control Facility, stating that their four-legged residents should be shown the same respect and compassion. She commented on the efforts being made by the Animal Control Officer (ACO) to keep the animals warm or cool, to separate the kittens and cats from the dogs, and to bathe the dogs. She quoted Channel 3's Renee DiNino who stated that "When you're kinder to animals, you're kinder to people".

Natalia Fanani, 50 Williams Road, Oakdale, stated that there is an exponential number of residents who are concerned about the issue. She expressed her disappointment with the Town Officials, who have been aware of the issue. Many great ideas were presented this evening. She felt it was an issue that the town's Transfer Station is cleaner and in better condition than the Animal Control Facility that houses living beings, adding that, while tennis and pickleball are amazing activities, it is not a priority. Shutting down the Facility would be "ludicrous" and an "embarrassment" to the town. Built in 1967, the Facility is in violation of the state's Department of Agricultural Regulations. She commended the staff for working with and under its existing conditions. She demanded that the Shelter be saved and a new facility be constructed and strongly urged the Councilors to volunteer at the Shelter for a day to experience the conditions, first-hand. The Facility, she felt, was not fit for the animals or the employees.

Frank Miceli, 693 Route 82, Oakdale, a previous Town Council Candidate whose primary interest centered on the Animal Control Facility, concurred with Councilor Caron regarding the need to bond the funds to build the Facility. Many of the issues center around the town's lack of transparency. He applauded the Mayor's proposal to send the item to a referendum should no funds be available for the project. The number of residents present at this evening's meeting reflects their support for a new Facility.

Richard Gladue, 44 Cook Drive, Uncasville, believed that the answer is usually always in the middle and felt that their best option was to build an addition to the Animal Control Facility in New London. Many residents are unable to pay their current taxes and their mil rate for the next fiscal year is unknown. He felt that there was no need for a referendum and partnering with another town would be acceptable.

Carol Howard, 23 Bayberry Lane, Uncasville, thanked the Town Council for raising the issue and providing the public with the opportunity to discuss the issue. As previously stated, the number of residents present at this evening's meeting reflects the importance of the issue. She agreed with the Mayor regarding the need for fiscal responsibility. She questioned the adequacy of the staffing at the New London Facility should their animals be housed there. She stated the importance of having all of the information so that they could make an informed decision and the need for action.

Charles Nicholson, 16 Allen Drive, Uncasville, expressed his appreciation to the Councilors for their efforts to do what is in their best interest and present the pertinent information. He stated the difficulty in moving forward due to the many unknowns.

Brian Baker, 560 Chesterfield Road, Oakdale, respectfully requested that once the information is gathered with the financial ramifications, a well-publicized meeting be held during which the options are presented, allowing the residents to make an informed decision. The presentation should include any possible mil rate increases and the potential for receiving grants.

Rebecca Maurice, 1567 Route 85, Oakdale, a 12-year owner of a pet care facility, urged the Councilors to thoroughly research, investigate, and review the facilities at NECCOG and New London before making any final decisions, including their euthanasia numbers, response times, and consulting with the Department of Agriculture regarding any outstanding issues. She questioned whether the Town of Salem was aware of the situation and proposed a Committee be formed. She stated the importance of taking care of and investing in their animals.

Chairman May thanked everyone for attending, speaking, and providing information this evening. He stated that it was not his intention to exclude the item from the Agenda; the item was not included on the Agenda due to a lack of action to be presented. They will continue to work on the matter and aim to provide information through the town website. He appreciated their attention and invited the residents to reach out to them.

The Councilors thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:

- a. The Special Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023
- b. The Regular Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023
- c. The Special Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2023

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Southard, with the following amendment:

3. Roll Call

... Also present was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, ~~Jr.~~ Sr.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

7. Executive Session – *none*
9. Communications
 - a. Copy of the December 2023 Financial Reports from Finance Director Barbara Griffin
 - b. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of November 2023
 - c. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of November 2023

10. Report from the Town Attorney on Matters Referred – *none*

11. Remarks from the Mayor and/or Administrative Department Heads to include Matters Referred

Montville Police Chief of Police Wilfred Blanchette, III, reported that Officer Dan Witts has graduated from the Connecticut State Police Patrol Dog School and he is now patrolling the town with K-9 Sig. K-9 Barrett, his former dog, will be added to the Law Enforcement Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., on May 11. As a result of the honor, the Police Department will receive a \$15,000.00 Stanton Foundation Grant for a new K-9; a spot has been reserved at the School for Fall 2024. Officer Fazzino will continue to conduct drug investigations with K-9 Gage, the Narcotics Detection Dog. Thanks to the efforts of Officer and Accreditation Manager Lindsay Michaels, the Police Department recently received a tentative Tier 1 State Accreditation. The Accreditation will be finalized in March by the Police Officers Standard and Training Council. A meeting was held with Lt. David Radford, II, and the Mayor regarding the installation of Flock Security Cameras, which capture and send real-time alerts of activities to law enforcement. ACO Christian Swanson's resignation will be a big loss; arrangements are being made to ensure that there will be no interruption in service. A concerted effort is being made to respond to the numerous complaints of reckless driving. While tickets are often warranted, warnings are also very effective. He noted that the funds received from tickets are deposited into the state's, not the town's, General Fund. He ensured the community that the Police Department was working diligently to keep the town safe and is always available to receive their comments and concerns.

The Councilors expressed their appreciation to Chief Blanchette. Councilor Lathrop thanked him for addressing the speeding issues. Councilor Caron expressed his appreciation to Chief Blanchette and the Officers for attending the meeting, keeping them updated, and maintaining a presence throughout the community.

Mayor Bunnell stated his success in reporting instances of aggressive and nuisance drivers to the Police Department that were reported to him. They are planning to reinstitute the posting of the Police Log on the town website, allowing the public to view their activities. He met with the Police Department and Youth Service Bureau to discuss the use of the Opioid Funds, Narcan Distribution, Free Issue Boxes, and weekly Mobile Health Van. He attended the Firefighters Municipal Practice Hearing during which no decision was made and met with the environmental engineering firm, Wright-Pierce, and the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) Superintendent to discuss the construction of the Cook Tower Project, which is slated to begin by February. Newly appointed Deputy Fire Marshal John Meigel was sworn in. He commended the Fire Companies, paid Firefighters, Public Works Department, Police Department, Emergency Management Director Paul Barnes, Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel, and the WPCA for their handling of the recent storm event which resulted in road closures and downed wires and trees. Applicants were interviewed for the Land Use and Development Director. He met with the State Board of Mediators for an informal hearing and is awaiting the receipt of a proposal from the Firefighters Union. A final interview was held with a firefighter applicant, who later withdrew his application. He met with Senior & Social Services Director Kathie Doherty-Peck who was joined by several volunteers, including members of the four Fire Companies, American Legion, and many others, to deliver holiday food and children's gift baskets. They are in discussions

with the Union regarding filling the vacancy left by ACO Swanson's recent resignation. He attended the funeral service for Public Safety Commissioner Tom Pederson, a former Marine who served in Vietnam and worked his way up as a Norwich Police Officer to Captain and the State's Attorney Office as an Investigator before serving the community on the Public Safety Commission; his wisdom, humor, and contributions to the community will be sorely missed. He witnessed the bid openings for the General Counsel for the town. He commended the Public Works Department for attending to the roads during the first snowstorm of the season. He also attended a pre-construction meeting for a building to be located on Enterprise Lane and Lakewood Drive.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Town Administration/Rules of Procedure

The Committee reviewed the revised position description for the Land Use & Development Director, which will be on the Town Council's February Agenda for approval. No major changes were made to the document.

b. Finance – *no meeting*

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

A Special and Regular Meeting was held. Discussions included the Raymond Hill Church, Camp Oakdale, basketball courts, roadside trash, upcoming maintenance projects of the town buildings, and the road improvement project. On this evening's Agenda is the approval of funds for the repairs to the Large Pavilion.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

a. Councilor Caron: Commission on Aging, Non-Profit Organizations, Social Services, Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund

Volunteer Firefighters' Relief Fund – The Fire Chiefs, Mayor, and Finance Director will be meeting at the end of the month.

Senior and Social Services – Thanks to the help of Mayor Bunnell, Chairman May, volunteers from Home Depot, Fire Departments, Police Departments, local businesses, seniors, and members of the community, 125 home-bound meals and nearly 400 bags of toys were delivered to those in need. New programs are slated to begin.

Non-Profit Organizations – An introductory letter will be mailed to the organizations.

b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education, Planning & Zoning Commission

Board of Education – A presentation of the District English Language Arts Program was provided to the Board.

Planning & Zoning Commission – The application for dredging at the end of Dock Road was withdrawn by the Applicant. There are approximately 14 (fourteen) projects in progress throughout the town. The Commission is also interested in improving the economic development in the town.

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

Economic Development Commission – *Due to a scheduling conflict, he was unable to attend the meeting.*

WPCA – Discussions included the progress of Rand-Whitney's project on Maple Avenue. A small, but pressing, project was approved and another project has gone out to bid. The WPCA is investigating future projects that would improve their operations.

Maple Avenue Project Timeframe (Councilor Caron) – They are currently in Phase 2 of a four (4) phase project. The timeframe for the complete repaving of the road is to be determined.

- d. Councilor Sabilia: Conservation Commission, Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board
Conservation Commission – *will meet tomorrow evening*
Youth Services Bureau & Advisory Board – Youth Services is currently working with the Herren Project, which was founded by former Boston Celtics Player Chris Herren, to provide a presentation on addiction and opiates and his recovery journey. The program is supported by a State Opioid Response Grant. They are also partnering with the Police Department, Mayor’s office, and Uncas Health District to bring additional support and resources to address the ongoing opioid crisis; the program will be supported by the Federal Opioid Settlement Fund.
Public Safety Commission – Condolences were offered for the passing of Commissioner Pederson. Police Chief Blanchette introduced Volunteer Chaplains Pastor Dominic Brewer and Deacon William Herrmann, who will provide emotional, moral, and spiritual support to the officers, staff, and their families. Fire Marshal Barnes introduced Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel whose goals include educating the public on fire safety and prevention, mitigating risks in the community, and preparing the community for large events and disasters.
- e. Councilor Southard: Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission
Farmers Market Committee – *first meeting to be held this Wednesday, January 10*
Library Committee – *no meeting*
Parks & Recreation Commission – The floor, ceiling, and sound acoustics were scheduled for installation in the dance room today. The American Legion has offered to hold dance classes in their building during the renovation. Commissioner Morgan Matthewson was appointed as the Commissioner Liaison to the Farmers Market Committee. The Carnival Committee, which has reached out to approximately eight (8) ride providers, is seeking an additional ride provider to help host the carnival.
14. Appointments and Resignations
- a. To Consider and Act on a motion to re-appoint Mickey Gillette to the Public Safety Commission with a term to expire on January 9, 2027.
 Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a motion to re-appoint Gary M. Murphy to the Public Safety Commission with a term to expire on January 10, 2027.
 Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- c. To Consider and Act on a motion to re-appoint Daniel Boisvert to the Youth Advisory Board with a term to expire on January 13, 2027.
 Motion made by Councilor Southard, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- d. 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 Montville Housing Authority.
 Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Councilor Lathrop requested that the rule or a link to the rule be included on future agendas. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- e. To Consider and Act on a motion to nominate and appoint either Christine Dimick or Deborah Suarez to fill a vacancy as a Tenant Representative to the Montville Housing Authority with a term to expire on April 30, 2024.

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voting in Favor of Deborah Suarez: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Favor of Christine Dimick: None. Motion carried. Deborah Suarez was appointed as the Tenant Representative to the Montville Housing Authority.

15. Unfinished Business – *none*

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2024 -01. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$3,914.76 (three thousand nine hundred fourteen dollars and seventy-six cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- b. **Resolution #2024 -02. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** that the Town of Montville may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Leonard Bunnell Sr., as Mayor of Town of Montville, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of Montville and to do and perform all acts and things which he/she deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents. (Mayor Bunnell)

Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell stated that the Resolution is a formality that must be approved every four years and allows the town to apply for and receive available grants offered through the State's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- c. **Resolution #2024 -03. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to approve the transfer of \$70,000.00 (seventy thousand dollars) from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Improvement Plan for the Camp Oakdale Large Pavilion Repairs. (Councilor Caron)

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Councilor Caron stated that the Pavilion, which is used for a variety of community and private activities, is overdue for repairs. \$50,000.00 in ARPA Funds for a new roof, siding, doors, and painting was previously allocated. After the Pavilion was reviewed by the Town Engineer, it was found that the columns were rotted and in need of repair. The additional funds would cover the costs of new column footings, new rafters, LED Lights, and other upgrades will be made to the structure. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Resolution passed.

- d. **Resolution #2024 -04. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to retain the law firm of either Suisman & Shapiro, Halloran & Sage LLP or Savage Law Partners LLP as legal counsel for the Town of Montville with a term of January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025 and further to authorize the Mayor to Execute the Fee Agreement outlined in the proposal submitted by the law firm. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Southard. Discussion: The town's current attorney, Halloran & Sage, LLP, will continue to work on their current cases. Roll Call vote. Voting in Favor of Suisman & Shapiro: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Sabilia, and Southard. Voting in Favor of Halloran & Sage, LLP: Councilors Lathrop and Yuchniuk. Voting in Favor of Savage Law Partners, LLP: None. Voting in Abstention: Councilor May. Suisman & Shapiro will be retained as the law firm for the Town of Montville.

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

Carol Howard, 23 Bayberry Lane, Uncasville, felt that the presentation made by Goman+York was not appropriate for the Town Council Meeting.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Yuchniuk expressed his appreciation to and commended Police Chief Blanchette for all of his hard work and efforts. He also addressed some of the public's questions regarding the Animal Shelter, stating that the Towns of East Lyme and Waterford handle and take care of their calls and animals. As such, there should be no increase in the number of animals that are euthanized. Each town pays its share of the costs.

Councilor Lathrop thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Councilor Sabilia also thanked everyone for attending the meeting and sharing their voices.

Councilor Caron also expressed his appreciation to everyone for attending the meeting and speaking. He also thanked his colleagues for approving the funds for the Pavilion repairs. They will do their best to better inform the public on the progress of the Facility.

Councilor Southard also thanked everyone for attending and speaking at this evening's meeting and stated the importance of the Animal Control Facility. On behalf of herself and the Parks & Recreation Commission, she thanked the Councilors for approving the allocation of funds for the Pavilion.

Councilor Jaskiewicz also thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the Councilors for providing information regarding the Animal Control Facility. He suggested the possibility of forming a Committee to reviews and investigate their options.

Mayor Bunnell reported that he has received letters of support from all five (5) of their elected delegates to the Bonding Commission for the Grant for the Animal Control Facility. He has also reached out to their Federal delegation for any possible funding opportunities. He stated that he would work continuously and tirelessly to resolve the matter. He is also working to resolve their issues with the speaker system.

Chairman May requested that, in addition to upgrading the audio system, they also investigate the possibility of providing a live video broadcast.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Sabilia, seconded by Councilor Lathrop. to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, 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