

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – January 22, 2024 -- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to order.

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

All stood and pledged the flag.

3. Roll Call.

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

4. Amendments to the Agenda – None

Vice-Chair Stewart asked whether the CIP is included in the discussion of Item 13a; Chairperson Murphy confirmed that it is.

5. Special Recognitions and Presentations.-- None

6. Communications:

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

Chairperson 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 was not a Building Department report.

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

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

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

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

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

9. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

The Police Department statistics for month ending December 31, 2023 are as follows: There were 1150 Calls for Service and a total of 297 Citations were issued that included 38 Infractions, 2 Juvenile Summons, 7 Misdemeanors, and 250 Written Warnings.

In his report to the Commission, Chief Blanchette reported that in an effort to be more transparent and keep the public informed about police department activities, the Department is

reinstating the monthly calls for service on the Town of Montville web page, as suggested by Mayor Bunnell after assuming office. As of February 2024, and each month thereafter, the public will be able to see all of the department calls for service for the previous month. Privileged information will be redacted prior to being placed on the website. Chief Blanchette also reported on the Department having responded to numerous calls for selective speed enforcement with a very aggressive initiative. In a three-day period, Montville Officers stopped 88 vehicles for traffic-related incidents and many were released with a warning, a means to educate the public, but subsequent offenses will likely be met with other more aggressive enforcement action. The Chief also noted the WFSB Channel 3 News on the Montville Police Traffic Enforcement on Friday, January 19 that showcased the Town and its police officers. He also addressed posted complaints on the Montville Community Forum on Facebook and asked that anyone who has complaints concerning speeding or any other police related issue to please call the Police Department. Chief Blanchette reported that the posts do not automatically prompt a police response. As to the negative comments regarding the loss of Town revenue from the motor vehicle warnings, the Chief clarified that revenue from mail-in infractions and misdemeanor summons go into the State of Connecticut General Fund and not to the Town of Montville.

Fire Marshal Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending December 31, 2023, as follows: Inspections of businesses and apartments (25), Fire investigations (2), Incident responses/requested to the scene (5), Burn permits issued (3), Construction Project Inspection (2) and Sprinkler Inspection (2). During the month of December, a total of 16 hours were spent on Emergency Management obligations. The Fire Marshal also reported the cumulative activity totals for the year 2023: 3065, Total Fire/EMS calls; 23 Fire Investigations; 72 Burn Permits; and 656 Business/Apartment Inspections.

In his report to the Commission this evening, Chief Blanchette remarked that classes are being scheduled in the next few weeks to get dispatch trained on the Everbridge system. EMS Coordinator Barnes will remain the point of contact for the system but timely notifications are being sought for information that may need to be disseminated and a 24-hour a day dispatch is clearly the logical choice. Once training is offered, the Chief will notify the fire chiefs and department heads so they can attend training if they wish. Chief Blanchette also reported on the recent graduation of K-9 Sig from the CT State Police Patrol Dog School who is now patrolling with Officer Witts. Notification was received in November that K-9 Barrett will be added to the Memorial Wall in Washington, DC which is significant as only Police K-9s who are killed in the line of duty are given this honor. Because K-9 Barrett was listed as such the Department became eligible for a \$15,000 grant through the Stanton Foundation for a new K-9. A testing process is underway for another patrol K-9 at no cost to the Town and the Department has a spot in the Patrol Dog school in the fall of 2024. The additional K-9 will facilitate having patrol dogs on the busy shifts while still having Officer Fazzino's Narcotic Detection K-9 Gage available for drug investigations. Chief Blanchette also reported that in 2019, the Governor enacted the Police Accountability legislation in response to several high-profile national incidents. One of the mandates of this legislation was for all police

departments in the state to become “accredited.” Accreditation is a process based on standards reflective of best practices in law enforcement. Accreditation standards cover roles and responsibilities; relationships with other agencies; organization, management, administration; law enforcement operations, operational support, traffic law enforcement; detainee and court-related services; and technical services. Montville PD has tentatively received Tier I State accreditation status which will be finalized in March. In the next three years, we will need to start compiling proofs of compliance for each standard. Officer Lindsey Michaels has been assigned as our Accreditation Manager and works diligently with the Police Officer Standards and Training Council to ensure we are where we need to be. Accreditation for the Town of Montville shows that our police department is demonstrating a commitment to professional excellence in policy and practice.

10. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (*Perkins*)

Commissioner Perkins reported on the Firefighter Relief Fund meeting held earlier this evening. Stipends were awarded as follows: Mohegan seven (7) stipends; Chesterfield two (2) stipends and two (2) tax abatements; Montville seven (7) stipends; and Oakdale six (6) stipends and nine (9) tax abatements. She also reported on receipt of the monthly statistical reports for the fire companies that were emailed to the Commission as shown below. Mohegan company has had problems producing their report; it anticipates having one available for next month’s meeting. The Commissioner also noted that the budgets and CIPs were received from the fire companies, as well as the Fire Marshal.

Montville Fire Company (November 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	16
EMS Calls	88
Fire Calls	0
Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	6
Other Calls	17
Total Calls:	127

Montville Fire Company (December 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	21
EMS Calls	90
Fire Calls	3
Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	7
Other Calls	32
Total Calls:	153

Mohegan Fire Company (December 2023) – No Report

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

Oakdale Fire Company (December 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	24
EMS Calls	52
Fire Calls	2
Motor Vehicles Accident Calls	7
Other Calls	24
Total Calls:	109

Chesterfield Fire Company (December 2023)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	23
EMS Calls	14
Fire Calls	2
Motor Vehicle	2
Other Calls	46
Total Calls:	87

b. Report from Animal Control. (*Callaghan*)

In earlier report to the Commission this evening, Chief Blanchette reported ACO Swanson left her position on January 11, 2024, and took new employment. He congratulated her on her new job and years of service with the Town of Montville. Arrangements have been made to cover her absence within the Police Department so there will be no interruption of services to the Town.

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (December 2023) No Report

	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded		
# of Animals Sold as Pets		
# of Animals D.O.A.		
# of Animals Euthanized		
Total Complaints Investigated		

Total Animal Bites Investigated		
Total Infractions/Summons		

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (December 2023) No Report

	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded		
# of Animals Sold as Pets		
# of Animals D.O.A.		
# of Animals Euthanized		
Total Complaints Investigated		
Total Animal Bites Investigated		
Total Infractions/Summons		

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												

11. Remarks from Fire Chiefs. -- None

12. 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.

Chairperson Murphy reported this item would remain on the agenda and moved to next month's meeting as it is still being worked on by Fire Chiefs Messier and Turner and a company they are working with.

13. New Business.

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to approve the FY 2024-2025 Public Safety Budgets.

Chairperson Murphy inquired of the Commission about holding a special meeting to discuss the 2024-2025 budgets and CIPs with the Fire Chiefs and Finance present to respond to Commission questions. **Motion** by Commissioner Bauer; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to hold a Commission Special Meeting to review and approve the 2024-2025 Public Safety Budgets and CIPs. Discussion: Chairperson Murphy remarked the fire companies did not make a request for more funds in their budgets. Vice-Chair Stewart remarked the budgets the Fire Chiefs presented are not operational; instead, they represent what the Town will give them. Commissioner Perkins did not understand why the Commission had to approve the budgets if the fire companies would only be given 3% stating she understood the costs to run them. Chairperson Murphy proposed having the special meeting within two (2) weeks. *In favor:* Commissioners Perkins, Stewart, Bauer, Murphy, and Callaghan. *Opposed:* Commissioner Gillette. **Vote: 5-0-1. Motion approved.**

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

Chairperson Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. Montville Firefighter Union President Tim Condon remarked the funds received by the fire companies represents one-third of the revenue stream needed. If they suffer, the Town will not know the actual costs to operate the fire companies. He also remarked that CIPs are done by other Towns for their fire companies; that is not done here in Town. T. Condon remarked further it would be helpful to know the actual operational costs to continue with the same level of services. The costs for services is extremely cheap until something happens to skew them. As to data, fire companies incur costs to obtain it and said it would be helpful to receive guidance from the Commission as to the data it wants. Resident Brian Baker of 560 Chesterfield Road was a fire chief years ago and knows about fire apparatus and remarked on new EPA standards for fire apparatus engines, changed model numbers, and a 2-year wait period for a truck. Also mentioned were changes to the drive chain, the price increase that will have to be absorbed and the severe supply chain issues .

15. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell remarked he was continuing to look at options for the Animal Control Facility and thus he is asking for a needs assessment for the actual cost to bring the project to fruition. He has met with the Lieutenant Governor concerning funding and support up to and including a recent community investment fund to which a decision will be made in March. A decision will also be made on the same by the Governor in May. One (1) of three (3) firefighter applicants formerly interviewed by the Commission was interviewed today and another applicant from a previous group will be interviewed tomorrow evening. As to the Building Department, there are still no applicants for the two (2) vacancies; the Town has made use of the COG and an outside contractor. Mayor Bunnell congratulated the Police Department on its Tier I status, a tremendous accomplishment. As to the stop sign mentioned earlier by Commissioner Callaghan, the Mayor remarked the State will not allow stop signs, which they regulate, at that location stating it had been tried before. The visibility of the police was praised and the good job being done by Chief Blanchette. Commissioner Perkins commented on the proposal for a regional Animal Control Facility and the subcommittee for the same a few years

ago. Mayor Bunnell deemed the cost for the Facility will not be placed on the backs of the citizens unless with a referendum with options on the table. Addressing the question by Commissioner Perkins as to whether the committee wasted its time, the Mayor asked where the money was going to come from since there were no options for grants or spending at price tag of \$2.1 - \$2.2 million. Chairperson Murphy concurred that a formal plan at that time had not been set forth with a price tag; he also considered if including the Town of Bozrah is acceptable for regionalization status. Commissioner Callaghan inquired if the Animal Control Facility would remain at its current size or be made larger; Mayor Bunnell remarked an architect would review it. The Mayor also clarified the status of the firefighter interviews for Commissioner Perkins.

16. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia remarked that there are a lot of new people on the Town Council and that they will be reviewing everything and appreciated the feedback from the Commission.

17. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Perkins remarked on the submission of budgets of \$99,500 from the fire chiefs but proposed that the fire chiefs come to the Commission meeting and comment on their actual need as stated earlier by Commissioner Callaghan. Chairperson Murphy concurred with remarks made by T. Condon and B. Baker that the firefighters should come to Commission meetings to expound on what they actually pay to run the fire companies noting that the books are audited and the figures are available. He placed blame on the fire chiefs for going along with the percentage increase annually; instead, he proposed they present their true budget, actual expenditures to run the fire companies. The Chairperson noted that the public would be surprised at the costs associated with operating the fire companies. He also remarked on a conversation with the Oakdale Fire Chief who will be putting in an order for just the body of a new ambulance needed in two (2) years. The cost is estimated to be \$452,000 not including the stretcher and other devices. The cost for a new ladder fire truck is estimated to be \$2.5 - \$3 million dollars. Chairperson Murphy also noted that since there are no paid firefighters on site at the Oakdale company during the evenings and the fire companies own their buildings, a new fire alarm system at a cost of \$10,000 - \$15,000 will be added to the building. The Town will not be asked to pay for the alarm system; instead, funds from billing for ambulance services will be used for the cost. Lastly, the Chairperson praised Chief Blanchette regarding the accreditations and Lt. Radford for getting things done in the Department.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 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.**