

Town of Montville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 11, 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 – *none*
5. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz, to add the following item to the Agenda under Item 16, New Business:

16(g) THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES to set the date of April 24, 2024, at 6:00 PM for a public hearing regarding the General Government proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/25 at Montville High School Auditorium and to set the date of April 25, 2024, at 6:00 PM for a public hearing regarding the Board of Education proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024/25 at Montville High School Auditorium. (Councilor May)

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
6. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve:
 - a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2024
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor.
7. Executive Session
 - a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing a candidate for the Public Safety Commission. Discussions to include members of the Town Council and Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Candidate Chase Marchand was interviewed for the Public Safety Commission. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:03 p.m. Chairman May resumed the meeting at 7:11 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session.
 - b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy and/or negotiations with respect to multiple collective bargaining units, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6), without prejudice to the Council's right to discuss the same in private, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(2). Discussions to include members of the Town Council, Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., and Town Attorney Kristi Kelly.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited Town Council Chambers for Executive Session at 7:13 p.m. Chairman May resumed the meeting at 7:55 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

Rebecca Maurice, 1567 Route 85, Oakdale, Owner, All-Bright Canines, spoke with respect to the Animal Control Facility and presented copies of a petition circulated in the Towns of

Montville and Salem. During last month's meeting, the Councilors recommended the public attend their meetings to show their support, write to their Town and State Legislators, and generate a petition – all of which they have either completed or are in the process of completing. She expressed her appreciation to the individuals and businesses who assisted in gathering 1,193 signatures from Montville and Salem residents. She provided a brief history of the efforts made by the Town since 2018 and urged the Town Council to stop exploring the possibility of joining with the New London Animal Control Facility and NECCOG (Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) – neither of which is in the Town's or animals' best interest. She felt that they should make plans to secure alternative avenues for funding should the Grant not be awarded for a new Facility. She volunteered their efforts to raise funds and requested they act quickly to establish a Facility that represents a community that cares for and values their animals. She asked that they be heroes for the animals and create their legacy as the Town Council that established an Animal Control Facility that makes the Town proud.

Ann Antley, 10 Hunters Run, Oakdale, felt that one need not be an avid animal lover, but a decent human being with a modicum of empathy for the animals who reside in a facility that is not accommodating for any living being. She questioned why the process is taking so long, adding that the issues that arose in Waterford should not happen in Montville. The Town, she felt, should secure funding, be it private or public.

Conservation Commission Chairman John Guetens, 127 Cottonwood Lane, spoke with respect to item 16(e) on the Agenda and referred to an amended Letter of Consideration to place the open space area of Horton Cove as part of the Conservation Center.

Flo Turner, 204 Route 163, Uncasville, requested a show of hands from those who are present this evening to express their support for a new Animal Control Facility. The majority of those present raised their hands.

Chairman May expressed his appreciation to the public for attending the meeting and expressing their support.

9. Communications

- a. Copy of the February 2024 Financial Reports from Finance Director Barbara Griffin
- b. Copy of the legal bills from Suisman-Shapiro for the month of January 2024
- c. Copy of the legal bills from Halloran & Sage for the month of January 2024
- d. Copy of a letter from Conservation Commission Chairperson John Guetens regarding Horton Cove
- e. Copy of a letter from Alfred J. Mandler regarding a possible violation of the Town Charter

Councilor Yuchniuk requested that Mr. Mandler's letter be read into the record and proceeded to recite the submitted letter, dated March 7, 2024. The letter included sections of the Town Charter regarding "employment and other compensatory restrictions of present and past members of the council" and stated Mr. Mandler's belief that the recent hiring of the former Mayor as the WPCA Administrator was in direct violation of the Town Charter; he requested that the matter be investigated.

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 that the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning & Zoning Commission are in compliance with their required training requirements, per C.G.S. §8-4c, as amended by PA 23-173. Training concerning the affordable and fair housing policies was included as part of the four (4) hours of required training. He recently attended an Electric Boat Briefing, which included Public Works, Planning & Zoning, and

CLA Engineers, Inc., to discuss the MS4 General Permit for the discharge of stormwater from small municipal separate storm sewer systems requirements and deadlines. He also met with Eversource to discuss the Hunts Brook Offshore Hub Project on Moxley Road and TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.) Chief Executive Officer Joshua Kelly. He attended the New London Lodge Elks Officers & Elks of the Year Dinner, Cub Scout Pack 67 Troop 93 Blue & Gold Banquet, and Montville Youth Services' Memory Quilt Dedication. He has interviewed several candidates for the Mayor's Assistant position and a candidate for the Assistant Building Official position. He is in the process of preparing an RFT (Request for Proposal) for a Development Consultant. A recently revived Staff Meeting was held. He announced the recent hiring of Land Use and Development Director Matthew Davis and Treasurer Patrick Wall. An OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) inspection was held last Friday and is continuing this week.

Finance Director Barbara Griffin welcomed and introduced their new Treasurer, who was in attendance. She provided a brief update on the status of the Town's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds, which must be allocated by December 31. Those Departments that received funding have been given a deadline of June 30 to either expend the funds or provide an explanation as to why they have not yet been expended and provide a timeline. She reported that the Auditors have submitted a request for an additional extension to March 31 to complete the Audit; she expects to receive a draft in the coming days. Though difficult to assess, she estimated that the Fund Balance is approximately \$10 million or 14% of the Fiscal Year Budget expenditures. The Mayor is currently reviewing the proposed FY2024/25 Budget and the Finance Committee will begin reviewing the proposed budgets with the Departments.

Audit Delay and Presentation (Councilors Caron and Jaskiewicz) – The Audit delay is due to her starting her position part way into the Audit and the recent turnover in staffing. The Auditors will provide a formal Audit presentation to the Town Council.

Montville Chief of Police Wilfred Blanchette, III, spoke with respect to item 16(f) on the Agenda regarding the Regional Special Response Team. The Resolution will add to the Town's already robust mutual aid agreements with 19 (nineteen) surrounding agencies and increase the Town's ability to take advantage of additional grant opportunities.

Norwich, New London, Mohegan Tribe (Chairman May) – The Towns of Norwich and New London and the Mohegan Tribe have chosen not to participate at this time, but may follow suit in the future.

12. Reports from Standing Committees

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

b. Finance

Chairman May reported that the Finance Committee is actively reviewing the budget and is awaiting the receipt of the Mayor's proposed budget.

c. Public Works/Solid Waste Disposal

Councilor Caron reported that, while the Public Works Director was unable to attend the meeting, he provided a written update for the Committee. Items discussed included roadside cleanup, the status of the Old Town Hall/new Social Services building, the Senior Center's new refrigerator/freezer and enlargement of its concrete padding, the lack of bids received for the Pavilion project and next steps, streetlights, fees, and paving issues.

13. Reports from Special Committees and Liaison Councilors

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

The Social Services Department distributed approximately 3,500 meals to those in need and is seeking additional contributions for its food bank. Because municipalities are not considered a 501(c)3 organization, Connecticut Foodshare is no longer providing food items. The Department's Director is seeking grant funding to assist the Town's seniors, veterans, and those in need.

The Senior Center hosted a very successful Valentine's Day event. Additional events and programs are being planned to serve the approximately 2,100 members.

- b. Councilor Jaskiewicz: Board of Education (BOE), Planning & Zoning Commission
Councilor Southard, who attended the recent BOE meeting in lieu of Councilor Jaskiewicz, who was ill, reported that the Superintendent presented the proposed FY2024/25 BOE budget and offered several options and scenarios. The budget will be available online. The BOE is holding budget workshops. Chairman May, who attended one of the budget workshops, stated that the BOE is transitioning the operational expenses from the ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) Funds to their operational budget. He encouraged the public to attend their meetings.

Planning & Zoning Commission – While the Commission did not hold a meeting, the Department is very busy. Councilor Jaskiewicz welcomed the new Director.

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

Water Pollution Control Authority – The Water Tower project, which commenced in the fall, ceased for the winter season. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for this Wednesday, March 13.

- d. Councilor Sabilia: Conservation Commission, Public Safety Commission, Youth Services Bureau and Advisory Board

The Conservation Commission extended its appreciation to the Public Works Department for installing signage prohibiting motorized bikes and vehicles on its trails. The newly formed Garden Club will be meeting at Raymond Hill Library on March 28 and the Commission will be hosting a Cleanup Day on Sunday, March 24, at 11:00 a.m. at the Conservation Center.

The Public Safety Commission reviewed its proposed FY2024/25 budget, with input from all of its entities. As a result of the testing results of the radon levels of the Montville Fire Company's basement, the career staff is being stationed at the Mohegan Fire Company. Montville Police Lt. David Radford, II, applied for and received a \$63,000.00 High-Risk Rural Roads Speed Enforcement Grant, which was used to purchase four (4) radars.

Youth Service Bureau – As reported by the Mayor, the Bureau hosted a Reveal Ceremony for the Opioid Remembrance Quilt. The Bureau hosted its annual Wear Purple Day event at Montville High School to promote healthy relationships; Safe Futures was also in attendance. Nationally renowned speaker and former NBA Star Chris Herren will be speaking about his experiences with addiction and journey to recovery at Montville High School and Tyl Middle School on March 27, as part of their continued effort to raise awareness and provide education and access to resources for opioid addiction treatment. The Youth Action Council was awarded a \$10,000.00 State Opioid Response Grant; the funds will be used to support and raise awareness in the community, including hosting awareness campaigns, collecting survey data, and providing training sessions. The 13-year-old Juvenile Review Board boasts a 94% diversion rate of youth from the Juvenile Justice System. They continue to actively participate in matters at the legislature for funding, diversion work, and the recent Dalio Education Report, which identified a pattern of youth disconnectedness. Due to the many behavioral challenges this year, the after-school program has been tailored to

mitigate and address the issues through innovative programming, better-trained staff, and added mental health support. The Uncas Health Mobile Van continues to be at Town Hall every Wednesday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.; the Van offers free health services, including testing, vaccinations, and education and resources.

- e. Councilor Southard: Farmers Market Committee, Library Committee, Parks & Recreation Commission

The Farmers Market Committee accepted applications and has lined up the musicians for their upcoming Farmers Markets, which will be held on Tuesday evenings from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., from June 18 to September 24.

Library Committee – While the programming was light for the winter months, approximately 165 participants attended the Baby Time and 138 participants attended the Pre-school Story time. The Library was awarded a \$10,000.00 American Library Association Grant to help the neurodiverse population and those with learning disabilities. The Grant will be used to fund updates to the library to make it more accessible for children with special needs, including a sensory corner, hosting sensory story times, and acquiring additional books. Community input will be requested. Upcoming programs include a Connecticut and the Underground Railroad presentation and Puzzle Swap Day. Everyone was encouraged to visit their Facebook page for a listing of their many programs and events.

Parks & Recreation Commission – *no meeting*

14. Appointments and Resignations

- a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to accept the resignation of Caitlyn Casper from the Farmers Market Committee, effective immediately.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- b. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Jeffrey Carver to the Conservation Commission with a term to expire on April 9, 2026.
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 Charles O’Bday, III, to the Inland Wetlands Commission, with a term to expire on April 9, 2028.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- d. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Ronald Stone, Jr., to the Parks & Recreation Commission, with a term to expire on April 13, 2028.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- e. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Robert Roshto to the Inland Wetlands Commission, with a term to expire on April 14, 2028.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- f. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint William Carlos, Jr. to the Youth Advisory Board, with a term to expire on April 14, 2026.
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- g. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Brianne Messer to the Youth Advisory Board, with a term to expire on April 14, 2026.
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

- h. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Deborah Suarez as a Tenant Representative to the Housing Authority, with a term expire on April 30, 2029. Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Sabilia. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.
- i. To Consider and Act on a Motion to re-appoint Nathan Hermann to the Niantic River Watershed Committee, with a term expire on February 12, 2028. Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 7-0, all in favor. Motion carried.

15. Unfinished Business

- a. To Consider and Act on a motion to discuss the progress of the Animal Shelter Project. (Councilor Yuchniuk)

Mayor Bunnell reported that he met with the Town of Bozrah regarding the possibility of sharing their Animal Control Services. He is awaiting the receipt of a Letter of Mutual Support from the Towns of Salem, Bozrah, and the Mohegan Tribe for their Community Investment Fund Grant Application. A modified Needs Assessment Analysis is being conducted for the existing Facility. He also began researching the process of sending the item to a referendum, if necessary. He escorted Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz on a tour of the Facility; she agreed with the importance of the matter. He assured the public that daily efforts are being made to move forward and resolve the issue, including researching funding opportunities, involving the legislators, and determining the costs.

Chairman May stated that the Councilors continue to speak with their state legislators, adding that he met with State Representative Holly Cheeseman who assured him that the item will be included in the State Bond. He emphasized the importance of public support and requested that the residents do the same. Mayor Bunnell concurred, thanking those responsible for organizing the petition, which is a measurement of their support and a useful tool to raise awareness on the matter. He also thanked the businesses for their endorsement. Councilor Caron and Jaskiewicz recommended the petition be sent to the legislators. Councilor Southard reported that she has spoken with Senator Cathy Osten, who has received many calls, e-mails, and letters. She encouraged the public to contact her and the Governor if they have not already done so. Councilor Yuchniuk commented on the longtime issue and stated that the town should be seeking alternative avenues. With that in mind, he has been attempting to determine the Town's current Fund Balance. Due to the delayed Audit, the most current number is \$10 million from June 2022.

Motion made by Councilor Yuchniuk, seconded by Councilor Lathrop, to allocate an amount not to exceed \$2 million from Contingency (Line Item 10480-52164) to fund the Animal Control Facility Building. Discussion: Chairman May stated that there was \$12 million in the Contingency line item and \$3.5 million was allocated by the previous Town Council. It is the Town's Policy that the Fund Balance does not fall below 14% unless an emergency arises. Mayor Bunnell agreed, stating that a low Fund Balance would negatively affect the Town's credit rating and decrease funding opportunities. He also felt that the item should go to a referendum to allocate those funds. Councilor Sabilia felt that they should wait to see if they are awarded the grant before allocating funds from their Fund Balance, citing the added support from Bozrah, Salem, and the community. While the community has expressed their support by signing the petition, it was noted that the petition was not certified by the Town Clerk's office. Councilor Caron added the possibility of Bonding the project and agreed that the item should go to a referendum. **Councilor Lathrop withdrew his second.**

Motion made by Councilor Lathrop, seconded by Councilor Sabilia, to table the item to the Town Council's June Regular Meeting. Discussion: Councilor Lathrop

stated that the results of the Grant will be known in May and the Town Council will reconvene in June to discuss the matter and the alternative option(s), if necessary. He stated that it is their responsibility to ensure that the Town is fiscally sound and try to keep the mil rate down. Roll Call vote, 6-1. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, and May. Voting in Opposition: Councilor Yuchniuk. Motion carried.

16. New Business

- a. **Resolution #2024-12. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to refund taxes due to overpayments and corrections in the amount of \$18,949.90 (eighteen thousand nine hundred forty-nine dollars and ninety cents) as requested by the Tax Collector. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. 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.
- b. **Resolution #2024-13. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to accept the fiscal year 2024-2025 Montville Water Pollution Control Authority proposed sewer budget in the amount of \$6,835,015.00 (six million eight hundred thirty-five thousand fifteen dollars). (Councilor Lathrop)
Motion made by Councilor Caron, seconded by Councilor Jaskiewicz. Discussion: WPCA Administrator Ronald McDaniel stated that there is no increase in the sewer rates. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.
- c. **Resolution #2024-14. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to adopt the fiscal year 2024-2025 Town of Montville Water Pollution Control Authority proposed water budget in the amount of \$1,995,075.00 (one million nine hundred ninety-five thousand and seventy-five dollars). (Councilor Lathrop)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: WPCA Administrator Ronald McDaniel stated that 10.7% of the administrative budget for the sewer budget was allocated to that of the water budget. There are no rate increases being proposed at this time. However, a Rate Study is in progress. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.
- d. **Resolution #2024-15. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to accept the road widening strips as approved as part of the subdivision application number 23SUB3 for 145 Moxley Road (Parcel ID: 009-022-000), Uncasville, CT. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Chairman May stated that the item is a standard request from the Planning & Zoning Commission to provide an easement(s) to facilitate the Town's future needs. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.
- e. **Resolution #2024-16. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** that the Conservation Commission be, and hereby is, authorized to exercise its authority under Section C405 of the Town Charter to oversee and administer the general condition, repair and maintenance of the trails constructed by the Boy Scouts within the Town's open space lands and natural resources at Stony Brook and Horton Cove. Such oversight and administration shall be done in accord with the Conservation Commission's rules and regulations. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell stated that an e-mail was received from the Parks & Recreation

Commission Chair stating that the Commission felt that the control of the walking trail should be under their jurisdiction. Chairman May reported that he has since discussed the matter with the Parks & Recreation Commission Chair and Town Attorney, who were agreeable to the proposal. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.

- f. **Resolution #2024-17. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to authorize Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr., to enter into an agreement with the Towns of Ledyard, East Lyme, Waterford, and the City of Groton for the Southeastern Connecticut Special Response Team. (Mayor Bunnell)
Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell stated that the Resolution involves similar language to the previously approved Tactical Interlocal Agreement and will also provide an opportunity for the Cities of New London and Norwich and the Mohegan Tribe to join the agreement in the future. Roll Call vote, 7-0, all in favor. Voting in Favor: Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Lathrop, Sabilia, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Voting in Opposition: None.
- g. **Resolution #2024-18. THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE HEREBY RESOLVES** to set the date of April 24, 2024, at 6:00 PM for a public hearing regarding the General Government proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/25 at Montville High School Auditorium and to set the date of April 25, 2024, at 6:00 PM for a public hearing regarding the Board of Education proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024/25 at Montville High School Auditorium. (Councilor May)
Motion made by Councilor Caron, 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.

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

Frank Miceli, 693 Route 82, Oakdale, stated that a definite plan should be devised and a Referendum should be scheduled in the interim should the Grant for the Animal Control Facility not be awarded.

Dahlia Pena-Thomas, Salem, announced that Senator Martha Marx is hosting a Town Hall Meeting tomorrow evening and recommended they contact her office to receive an invitation and/or leave a voicemail and voice their concerns.

Adam Elkins, 31 Bridge Street, Oakdale, stated that he voted for the Democratic Mayor and Town Councilors and the outcome of the issue regarding the Animal Control Facility will affect his future vote(s). He vowed to pay close attention to its progress and recommended they heed the recommendations put forth by Ms. Maurice, who is an expert on such matters.

Bruce Duchesneau, 45 Sharp Hill Road, Uncasville, found the Councilors' responses regarding the Town's financials disturbing, stating his dismay with the proposal to utilize taxpayers' funds for major expenditures without the townspeople's vote. He reminded them of the first words of the Constitution, "We the People...", and their obligation to listen to the people and the importance of large expenditures, including grant funds, voted upon by the Town's taxpayers. He is saddened by the lack of action from the past Mayors and Town Councilors, placing them in this position. He also commented on the Town's use of its ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds, some of which, he felt, might be considered questionable, and requested a copy of the allocation of those funds.

BOE Chairman Wills Pike reported that, per the Town Charter, the BOE plans to submit its budget on March 22, 100 days before the deadline. Their final budget discussion will be held during their regular meeting on March 19. Their budget, he added, is lean with no fat.

He expressed his appreciation for the Councilors' comments and for attending their meetings.

18. Remarks from the Councilors and the Mayor

Councilor Yuchniuk urged the public to not be discouraged by their efforts. He recommended they gather additional signatures for their petition in the interim and vowed not to give up and ensured that the item will remain on the Agenda until it is resolved. He felt that a Public Hearing, rather than a referendum, could be held, noting that the people have already spoken.

Councilor Lathrop expressed his appreciation to the public for attending this evening's meeting, citing their energy, love, and passion. He looks forward to arriving at a resolution that is feasible for the Town and its taxpayers.

Councilor Sabilia echoed Councilor Lathrop's comments, emphasizing their wish to also resolve the issue in a smart and well-thought-out manner.

Mayor Bunnell apologized to newly-hired Treasurer Wall for not recognizing and properly introducing him to the public. He commended the Public Works and Fire and Police Departments for their efforts during the last snowstorm. He also commended the paid and volunteer Firefighters for their recent save on Maple Avenue. He noted the improved microphones on the dais and apologized for not having a sufficient amount of microphones for all of the members; he is currently working on securing funding to televise the Town meetings. He stated the importance of following the process and correctly addressing the Animal Control Facility, as was done with the Public Safety Building. During their door-to-door campaigning efforts, it was voiced that the residents did not want to pay for the funding of a \$2 to \$3 million Facility. He respects their opinion and has the same goal in mind, but aims to reach the goal without adding to the taxpayers' financial burdens.

Councilor Southard thanked the public for attending this evening's meeting and encouraged them to continue their efforts however futile it might seem at times. She concurred that a plan should be in place in case the Grant is not awarded.

Councilor Jaskiewicz thanked the public for their hard work and will further investigate the timeframe for a referendum, which, he felt, should be carefully planned so as not to risk its failure. He also recommended that the petition be certified by the Town Clerk.

Councilor Caron agreed with the need to establish an Animal Control Facility in the Town of Montville and felt that the Town should take out a Bond to fund the project. Should a referendum be held, he encouraged the public to campaign for the vote as the Councilors would be unable to do so.

Chairman May also thanked the public for the petition, for attending this evening's meeting, and for the importance of their presence and support. He reiterated the Mayor and Town Council's support for a new Facility; the primary issue is the funding for the project. He explained their duty to the taxpayers to be fiscally responsible. He encouraged everyone to contact their legislators.

19. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz, seconded by Councilor Caron. to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 6-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

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