

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – March 25, 2024 -- 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.

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, Brian Baker, Traci Callaghan and Karen Perkins. Commissioner Mickey Gillette was absent. A quorum was present.

4. Amendments to the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Commissioner Perkins to add New Business Agenda Item 13.b, Fire Companies Radio System Upgrades that will be a continuing item on future agendas. Discussion: none. Voice vote: **6-0-0. Motion carried.**

5. Special Recognitions and Presentations.

Chief Blanchette reported on a medical emergency that occurred at Tyl Middle School on March 18, 2024, and the lifesaving effort demonstrated by a student. Jayce Adams assisted a student who began choking while eating lunch in the school cafeteria. He performed the Heimlich maneuver and provided several abdominal thrusts to the student. Jayce Adams, with the assistance of School Resource Officer Todd, were able to dislodge the obstruction to allow the student to resume normal breathing thus saving his life. Jayce Adams was commended for demonstrating exceptional lifesaving techniques and it was noted that his actions are in the highest tradition of the Town of Montville and the Montville Police Department. Chief Blanchette presented to Jayce Adams the Montville Police Department Commendation for Lifesaving. The Chief also presented Jayce with the Chief of Police Award, a challenge coin, the Chief of Police Award of Excellence for duty above and beyond. Officer Todd was also presented with the Chief of Police Award of Excellence. A standing ovation was given to Jayce Adams and Officer Todd and pictures were taken for commemoration on Facebook.

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 Public Safety departments for the month ending February 2024. It was noted that reports were not received from Mohegan or Chesterfield fire companies nor from the Building Department.

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2024.

Motion by Chairperson Murphy; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to approve the PSC Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2024. Discussion: Commissioner Baker noted corrections to the minutes as follows: Pg 2., Item 13a--1st paragraph, “NFPA” not NFDA; “SDBA” not SCDA; and the vote to approve the 2024-2025 Fire Company Budgets and CIPs as “5-0-0.” not 5-0-1, and Pg 8, last paragraph “rescue” truck. Vice-Chair Stewart noted a correction to Page 2, as cost of “rescue” truck, not ladder truck. **Motion** by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Baker to approve amendments to the Public Safety Commission February 26, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 6-0-0. **Motion carried.** Original Motion vote. Voice vote: 6-0-0. **Motion carried, as amended.**

8. Remarks from the Public. (Agenda items only—three-minute limit.) -- None

9. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Lt. Radford reported on Police Department statistics for the month ending February 29, 2024, as follows: There were 1059 Calls for Service and a total of 227 Citations were issued that included 32 Infractions, 6 Juvenile Summons, 14 Misdemeanors, and 175 Written Warnings. He also reported on the Animal Control monthly statistics for February 2024. See Agenda Item, 10b for those statistics. The Lieutenant was able to successfully apply for and receive a Distracted Driving High Visibility Enforcement Grant. The grant affords the Town of Montville \$24,461.07 toward Distracted Driving enforcement on Town roads for the month of April. Lt. Radford also reported on positive correspondence for Officer Todd’s lifesaving event by providing medical aid in a crisis situation for a Tyl Middle School student. Positive correspondence was also received for Officer Kuckel involving a vehicle engaged in pursuit by a Waterford police officer; Officer Cassidy who did not pursue but continued radio communication assisting the Waterford Police Department and Officer Lalumiere who was put in a position to set up stop sticks for the pursued vehicle in Waterford.

Fire Marshal Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending February 29, 2024, as follows: Inspections of businesses and apartments (21), Fire investigations (12), Incident responses/requested to the scene (37), Burn permits issued (2), Illegal Burn (2), Complaints (1). During the month of February, a total of five (5) hours were spent on Emergency Management obligations. Chairperson Murphy inquired about the incident responses and requests to the scene; Fire Marshal Barnes remarked the figure corresponds to responses during the day or a request to be at the scene. The Fire Marshal also reported that new hire Noah Dembrowski has now moved to the east side of Town and is doing well working with the

Mohegan crew. The other new hire, Josh Brogaw started last Monday and is doing well and receiving extensive training working at Chesterfield and Oakdale Fire Companies on the west side of Town. Vice-Chair Stewart inquired whether the two (2) new hires came from Colchester and about their experience. Fire Marshal Barnes responded that both have limited experience with the back of an ambulance and a pumper; and one (1) has no driver experience. Vice-Chair Stewart also inquired about the Millstone siren; the Fire Marshal noted Millstone has a different type of alerting than DEM and DHS and will be moving toward a system similar to Everbridge. He noted pushback from Fishers Island and some shoreline cities and spoke of an upcoming meeting where he will obtain more information on the same. Chairperson Murphy remarked on one (1) of the new hires who had the highest points at Colchester for two (2) years in a row, the second highest for riding ambulances and who is also a certified pump operator.

10. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)

Commissioner Perkins reported she has yet to receive the monthly statistical reports from the Chesterfield and Mohegan Fire stations but will forward them to the Commission once received. She also reported that the next meeting of the Volunteer Firefighters Relief Committee will be held on April 22 at 5:00 p.m.

Montville Fire Company (February 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	14
EMS Calls	54
Fire Calls	1
Motor Vehicles Calls	9
Other Calls	9
Total Calls:	87

Mohegan Fire Company (February 2024) – No Report

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

Oakdale Fire Company (February 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	6
EMS Calls	35

Fire Calls	2
Motor Vehicles Calls	6
Other Calls	9
Total Calls:	58

Chesterfield Fire Company (February 2024) – No Report

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	
EMS Calls	
Fire Calls	
Motor Vehicle	
Other Calls	
Total Calls:	

b. Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)

The February 2024 Activity Reports for the Towns of Montville and Salem were submitted by ACO Bruce Rebelo as follows:

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (February 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	14	20
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	7	9
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	22	64
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	2	3
Total Enforcement Action:	2	4
Total Other Calls for Service:	59	122

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (February 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	1	2
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	3	12
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	1	1
Total Enforcement Action:	0	0
Total Other Calls for Service	0	0

c. Report from Police Department Liaison. (Gillette) – No 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												

Vice-Chair Stewart inquired of Mayor Bunnell whether Doug Coulter had returned: Mayor Bunnell reported he is back on a limited basis one (1) day a week parttime and can do another day if needed. As to the budget, the Mayor remarked that D. Coulter could get what we need.

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. – **No Action**

Chairperson Murphy remarked the agenda item awaits information from the fire chiefs; career staff is ready to go.

13. New Business.

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

Chairperson Murphy remarked that the Commission should have received information forwarded from the Finance Director concerning the 2024-2025 budget pertaining to firefighter salaries. He noted that this item was discussed at last month's Commission meeting. Mayor Bunnell reported the Finance Director was currently in attendance at a Finance meeting. **Motion** by Chairperson Murphy; seconded by Commissioner Brian to hire one (1) paid firefighter. Discussion: Vice-Chair Stewart noted that the numbers on the budget represent the salaries for three (3) firefighters at \$176,000, while the remainder is for deductions that is not provided to the Commission. For a true understanding, he directed the Commission to review the supplemental sheet of \$110,708 for one (1) paid firefighter that was presented to the Commission last month and reviewed again this evening by Chairperson Murphy, instead of the data from Finance. Commissioner Baker remarked that the turnout gear and portable radio should be included in the firefighter salary but noted other questions are not answered

such as the cost of overtime that is not included nor that time-and-a half is cheaper than hiring new. Mayor Bunnell remarked the judgement call refers to how you calculate real bodies and who is to carry the cost which the Town Council will have to decide. The Commission discussed whether to hire one (1) firefighter versus two or three. Commissioner Perkins remarked that if the Fire Marshal came to the Commission seeking three (3) firefighters than it should be moved forward. Commissioner Baker noted 16 firefighters should be staffed but there are currently 13, who are covering all shifts and the other three (3) positions with overtime. He suggested asking for one (1) more position as there is a better chance to get what the Commission wants. Fire Marshal Barnes remarked that he wanted to protect the lives in Town. Currently, firefighters are working three (3) shifts in a row and there are two (2) who are in training and not assigned to a shift. He proposed a request for one (1) firefighter and phase-in over six (6) months a second firefighter and the third following another six (6) month period. Commissioner Baker and Town Councilor Sabilia noted a phase-in would require a midyear appropriation. In addition, accommodations must be made for summertime and vacations as well as absences due to illness. Discussion continued with whether the Commission was prepared to petition Finance. Firefighters currently undergo training for eight (8) weeks if experienced. Chairperson Murphy noted that volunteers can step in to assist on shifts; Fire Marshal Barnes spoke for having a volunteer with 10 years of experience and pump operating experience that is not in the job description at present per Commissioner Baker. Commissioner Bauer questioned what the candidate pool looks like and how many met criteria; Fire Marshal Barnes remarked that the pool has varied every time noting one (1) left last June and another last August. As well, candidates were disqualified and recruiting is a hard task that required 19 weeks of training—the Fire Academy is now taking lateral transfers. Chairperson Murphy remarked on a problem with the hiring process—now candidates interview with the Commission and then meet with the Fire Marshal and Human Resources. He noted that the Fire Marshal is not a fire chief and the Town Charter says the Commission and the Mayor only are involved in the hiring process. Vice-Chair Stewart also noted that the pool for firefighters will be limited and has decreased. He noted that Electric Boat will be hiring 31 and it will be a tough process to draw people in and keep them. For recommended approval of the budget, the Vice-Chair suggested that it would be better to stagger the hires through the year since three (3) are approved for hire. Commissioner Baker noted overtime increased from \$51,100 to \$160,000 by the Finance Director and would be used for overtime for vacant shifts i.e., vacations according to Fire Marshal Barnes and may have included a pay increase per Mayor Bunnell. Per calculations, the firefighter base salary (\$58,767 x 3 firefighters) would decrease to \$176,300 and would decrease the overall budget for Fire Protection (\$1,386,300 -- \$58,767 x 2 or \$117,534) to \$1,268,766. The unknown factor is the \$160,000 for overtime calculated by the Finance Director. The overtime budget will increase by \$20,000 over last year's budget of \$140,000. **Motion** by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to adjust the 2024-2025 Fire Protection Budget to \$1,268,766 pending approval by the Finance Director. Discussion: None. **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Baker, Bauer, Callaghan, Murphy. *Opposed:* Commissioners Perkins and Stewart. **Vote: 4-2-0. Motion approved.** Original **Motion:** **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Bauer, Baker, Callaghan, Murphy, Stewart. *Opposed:* Commissioner Perkins. **Vote: 5-1-0. Motion approved.**

b. Fire Companies Radio System Upgrades.

Commissioner Baker commented on the Fire Marshal budget reported last month of \$65,000 for radios and since having asked the Fire Chiefs about their radio systems, upgrades, and their search for grants. He asked to have this item as a permanent one on the agenda to keep track of it. Additionally, he volunteered to act as a liaison for the Commission on a committee for the same and agreed to contact the fire chiefs and others. Chairperson Murphy noted that Commissioner Perkins should be invited to all meetings of the committee as she is the liaison to the fire departments. **Motion** by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Chairperson Murphy to create a subcommittee for fire companies radio system upgrades to review and report back to the Commission and have the agenda item be a reoccurring one. Discussion: Mayor Bunnell questioned who would be on the subcommittee. The subcommittee will include the fire chiefs, Commissioner Perkins and Commissioner Baker, the Fire Marshal, the Police Department. Commissioner Perkins suggested that dispatch be included; Commissioner Bauer concurred. Commissioner Perkins also remarked that a subcommittee was formed previously for this purpose. **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Perkins, Stewart, Bauer, Murphy, Callaghan and Baker. *Opposed:* None. **Vote: 6-0-0. Motion approved.**

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

Montville Firefighter Union President Tim Condon, 19 Olive Street, Waterford, CT, remarked on the firefighter candidate pool as not being great and fire service being in flux. Smaller communities will find it harder to maintain its fire department. Hiring and retaining firefighter is key. Chesterfield Fire Chief Keith Truex remarked that application should be made for the Safer Grant noting that quality firefighter candidates did not take the jobs as they were being brought in at an entry level which fire departments cannot do but the police departments can. The Chief also commented on his dislike for the current training schedule; specifically spending weeks on the east or west side of Town then being trained again. Fire Marshal Paul Barnes remarked the Safer Grant is for career firefighters and the Town is not recognized as having a fire department.

15. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell remarked on Agenda Item 12a indicating that once he receives proposals he will forward them on to the Commission for evaluation and recommendation. He also remarked on having received a letter from the Mohegan Tribe regarding the Animal Control facility and having three (3) other letters to be sent to Hartford. Letters will be sent to the five (5) State representatives and he has asked Representative Kevin Ryan to raise the funding request for the facility to \$2 million. The Mayor also met with the Gardner Lake Authority to discuss the horrors there that include speeders and jet skis and getting legislation to curb activities there. Mayor Bunnell also congratulated Officer Todd and Jayce Adams and thanked them for their lifesaving action. In two (2) weeks, the Town Council will have a presentation for Jayce Adams and Officers Todd, Kuckel, Cassidy and Lalumiere for the recent acts of safety and professionalism, a credit to Police Department standards. Further testing of the Montville Fire Company showed a high level of radon; Mohegan is being used at this time.

16. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia thanked everyone for the good points shared this evening regarding filling vacancies.

17. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Perkins remarked on the Fire Department Community Night on June 27, 2024, at the Farmers Market from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The Touch-a-Truck will be held with firefighters present for the event. She also remarked that the fire companies should move forward with their request for three (3) firefighters. Vice-Chair Stewart congratulated Jayce Adams and Officer Todd for their heroic actions and for receipt by the Police Department of the grant funds for Distracted Driving High Visibly Enforcement. He wished everyone a Happy Easter. Commissioner Baker remarked on the Grant received by the Police Department and the hard work to keep the Town safe. He also referenced a time period, three (3) years, in which to hire for the Safer Grant and stated if the Town wished to pursue the grant it must budget for the same. Commissioner Callaghan asked a question of the Mayor regarding Gardner Lake and whether it is a State lake; Mayor Bunnell remarked that the Police Department has a boat that is maintained and ready to go as needed. He added that Bozrah, Montville, and Salem are concerned with the tranquility there and the State depends upon DEEP officers to control activity at the lake although each town contributes to the Gardner Lake Authority to do shifts. Commissioner Callaghan congratulated Jayce Adams and Officer Todd and remarked that she understood Commissioner Perkins' issue regarding the hiring of three (3) firefighters. Chairperson Murphy congratulated everyone this evening who was recognized as doing an awesome job and remarked that everyone present has the right to voice an objection of what is right to the Town Council. The Chairperson also expressed his dislike for the firefighter new training schedule noting he wanted to see a written policy on the same and spoke to the need for proper documents for volunteers and career firefighters for litigious reasons. Chairperson Murphy also thanked the Recording Secretary for what she does.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Baker to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 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.**