

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – April 22, 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 Brian Baker, Traci Callaghan, Mickey Gillette and Karen Perkins. Commissioner William Bauer was absent. A quorum was present.

4. Alterations to the Agenda

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Baker to add New Business Agenda Item 13.b, Discussion of condition of M37. Discussion: Vice-Chair Stewart asked that it be a recurring item on the agenda. **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Perkins, Stewart, Murphy, Baker, Callaghan, and Gillette. *Opposed:* None. **6-0-0. Motion approved.**

Election of Officers:

1. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Appoint the Public Safety Commission Chairperson.

Motion by Commissioner Baker; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to nominate Gary Murphy as the Public Safety Commission Chairperson. Discussion: none. Voice vote: **6-0-0. Motion carried.**

2. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Appoint the Public Safety Commission Vice-Chair.

Motion by Chairperson Murphy; seconded by Commissioner Baker to nominate Steven Stewart as Public Safety Commissioner Vice-Chair. Discussion: none. Voice vote: **6-0-0. Motion carried.**

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 Public Safety departments for the month ending March 2024. Vice-Chair Stewart noted that there was not a report from the Building Official but reported he had gotten an email from the CCOG representative about working to automate the report. The Vice-Chair also noted that only two (2) fire departments submitted monthly reports.

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

- a.** The Regular Meeting Minutes of March 25, 2024.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to approve the PSC Regular Meeting Minutes of March 25, 2024. Discussion: Vice-Chair Stewart noted corrections to the minutes and Commissioner Baker amended his second of the motion. Revisions were noted as follows: Pg 2., Item 7, 5th line—change of acronym of "SCDA" not SCBA and Pg. 15, Item 10d—below the table the Building Official's name should be "Dave Jansen" not Doug Coulter. Voice vote: **6-0-0. Motion carried, as amended.**

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

Lt. Radford reported on Police Department statistics for the month ending March 31, 2024, as follows: There were 1456 Calls for Service and a total of 630 Citations were issued that included 82 Infractions, 15 Misdemeanors, and 533 Written Warnings. He reported the Animal Control monthly statistics for March 2024. See Agenda Item, 10b for those statistics. The Lieutenant reported on a meeting he and Mayor Bunnell attended last week with the Gardner Lake Authority. The Montville Police Department was awarded the patrol boat contract at the lake for this summer and will work in collaboration with the CT State Police to help bring order back to the area. He also read into the record a letter from the PD to the citizens of Montville who require law enforcement services and directed to contact the Police Department directly. This letter will be posted on the Montville PD website and indicates several ways to contact the PD—by phone, email, the anonymous tip line, filling out a comment or complaint form on the Town website, or by stopping into the PD lobby to make voice to concerns in person. Lt Radford recognized officers who received Performance Observation Reports--Officer Dan Witts and K-9 Officer Sig for assisting the East Lyme PD with apprehending a fleeing suspect and Officer Brian Kelly who assisted a State Trooper on Route 395 fighting with a suspect. Chairperson Murphy asked Lt. Radford about ACO calls to Salem and time spent investigating complaints; Lt. Radford remarked that it depended on the situation and the time as Salem is a half hour away. The Chairperson was looking at what tasks Officer Rebelo does a lot and remarked on the figures on the report; Lt. Radford remarked a lot of time the ACO is documenting cases and obtaining more information so he is usually very busy. Vice-Chair Stewart inquired about the condition of the Montville Police Department (MPD) patrol boat. The Lieutenant reported the boat was serviced last

fall before storage, has minor issues but nothing to prevent it from going in the water, and it is approximately 15-20 years old.

Fire Marshal Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending March 31, 2024, as follows: Inspections of businesses and apartments (20), Fire investigations (3), Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel Incident responses—EMS, Hazmat, C0, Brush fire Q64 (25), Fire Marshal Requested to the Scene by firefighters Q54 (4), Deputy Fire Marshal Requested to the Scene by firefighters Q64 (2), Burn permits issued (2), Illegal Burn (1), and Sprinkler Assessment Test (1). During the month of March, a total of nine (9) hours were spent on Emergency Management obligations. Vice-Chair Stewart inquired about the status of the two (2) new, career hires; Fire Marshal Barnes reported that one (1) is on the D shift. The Vice-Chair also asked if the firefighter is qualified on all apparatus; the Fire Marshal remarked the firefighter is not qualified on all apparatus but is qualified on the ambulance and all multi-seat vehicles aside from one (1).

10. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)

Commissioner Perkins reported that she forwarded to the Commission the March 2024 monthly statistical reports from Oakdale and Chesterfield fire companies. The Mohegan and Montville companies are having computer issues but the Commissioner will forward their reports to the Commission once received. She also reported that the Volunteer Firefighters’ Relief Committee meet earlier this evening and stipends and tax abatements were reported as follows:

Fire Companies	Stipends	Tax Abatements
Montville*		
Mohegan	5	0
Chesterfield	4	2
Oakdale	6	6

*Montville Fire Company had computer issues and will submit the information next quarter.

Montville Fire Company (March 2024) – No Report

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

Mohegan Fire Company (March 2024) – No Report

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

Oakdale Fire Company (March 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	18
EMS Calls	35
Fire Calls	3
Motor Vehicles Calls	5
Other Calls	21
Total Calls:	82

Chesterfield Fire Company (January 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	20
EMS Calls	27
Fire Calls	1
Motor Vehicle	1
Other Calls	18
Total Calls:	67

Chesterfield Fire Company (February 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	17
EMS Calls	28
Fire Calls	1
Motor Vehicle	8
Other Calls	22
Total Calls:	76

Chesterfield Fire Company (March 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	12
EMS Calls	24

Fire Calls	4
Motor Vehicle	3
Other Calls	29
Total Calls:	72

b. Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)

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

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (March 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	7	27
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	5	14
# of Animals D.O.A.:	1	1
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	40	104
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	4	7
Total Enforcement Action:	3	7
Total Other Calls for Service:	46	168

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (March 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	2	4
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	8	20
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	1	2
Total Enforcement Action:	1	1
Total Other Calls for Service	0	0

c. Report from Police Department Liaison. (Gillette)

Commissioner Gillette reported the Police Department statistics for the month ending March 31, 2024, as follows: There were 1456 Calls for Service and a total of 630 Citations were issued that included 82 Infractions, 15 Misdemeanors, and 533 Written Warnings. The high rate of written warnings was attributed to grants received by the Department i.e., the High Risk Rural Roads Radar Speed Enforcement Grant, the Distracted Driving High Visibility Enforcement Grant, and the DUI Grant. All three (3) grants are working together to safeguard Town roads.

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 reported he is still waiting for the monthly report from the Building Department.

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 remarked he had nothing new to report. Mayor Bunnell remarked that he is still waiting on choices and reviewed today the ESO to see what it does and will speak with Fire Marshal office about it. The Mayor is also waiting for feedback from the fire departments on the reporting system program.

13. New Business.

- a. Fire Companies Radio System Upgrades.

Commissioner Baker remarked that he had spoken with Chief Messier concerning this item and he had sent him a list of things going and questions on the same. He would rather have the Chief present to speak so he requested that the item be tabled for further discussion and review at the next Commission meeting so the Chief can attend.

- b. Discussion of condition of the M37.

Vice-Chair Stewart noted that the condition of the M37 was brought up at the PSC February meeting. The Chesterfield rescue truck is on the CIP for the upcoming year but information about the condition of the truck at the present time is needed. Chesterfield Fire Chief Truex reported the truck is 27 years old that puts it outside of NFPA specifications and it has 17,769 miles on it. It also has some areas with very minor body issues that are starting and an engine wiring concern that an expert noted at the last safety inspection. The engine work is not needed at this time but will cause problems and need work soon. The Chief sees no need to do work on the truck if it is going to be replaced and discouraged waiting until the truck

breaks down before replacing it. He added that the truck is old but is in decent condition but the rescue equipment on it is 20-25 years old and emphasized that the truck needs to be replaced. Procurement of a rescue truck is currently 2 ½ - 3 years and an engine is 3-plus years. Consideration was given to various replacements, a straight rescue truck and a rescue pumper but nothing will fit into the price range with the funds now allocated. Costs have risen over the last couple of years and continue to increase. Last year, there was a demo unit rescue that would have come in as a heavy rescue truck fully loaded but the Town did not want to replace two (2) pieces of equipment at once. Chief Truex responded to Chairperson Murphy that the cost of a replacement rescue body is \$800,000-plus. He also noted that there was also a demo unit only truck that had only been taken to trade shows and had 4,000 miles on it but the Town opted not to purchase it. The Chief reported that the cost for a rescue/pumper style truck had a replacement cost last year of \$1 million or a little more, but the price can be lowered depending upon specifications. There are some trucks that are undersized with less service water capacity and equipment. Chief Truex acknowledged that he wants to have a truck with full capabilities. Per a question by Chairperson Murphy, the Chief responded he is looking for a medium duty, not heavy duty rescue truck and the cost would be \$800,000-plus without equipment. The Town has three (3) trucks—Chesterfield has a medium duty truck and works with Oakdale to cover Routes 85 and part of Route 82; Mohegan and Montville cover Route 395. The Chief remarked that the number of trucks that provide coverage depends upon the condition of the scene, per a question posed by Commissioner Perkins. He referenced such a situation that occurred two (2) meetings ago when he was out of town and the Commission had asked questions. The day following the meeting the M17 and the M27 were both out of service for various maintenance reasons and the M-37 was the only one available all that week. Commissioner Perkins remarked that more volunteers were needed; Chief Truex remarked that if you are in a wreck do you want to wait and commented on two (2) volunteers who are working to become EMT-qualified. The Chief also noted that taking a rescue truck from the east side of Town to use on the west side is not an option per the coverage of the trucks that he previously mentioned.

Commissioner Baker remarked on the traffic counts on Route 85 and its relevance to the discussion given that merging with Route 11 to Route 395 will never come to fruition. Nor are utilizing the rescues from East Lyme and Waterford posing the question why should they pay for our problem. The Commissioner further noted you cannot forecast costs for the rescues two (2) years forward as they may increase due to the cost of raw materials, equipment, in addition to supply chain issues with delivery 1/12 – 2 years out. If bids are sought today, it would be one year and 16 months before the order will be built and the costs can only be estimated. Commissioner Baker also reported that the EPA is coming out with new diesel engines standards and Cummins that manufactures diesel engines for fire and emergency vehicles will stop production of its L9 series motors and move to its X motor that will cost \$70,000 - \$110,000 per unit. The Commissioner also made note that if a bid is accepted now and an engine is not available contract terms would require the purchaser to pay for the increased cost for the new engine a result of NFDA and EPA standards. Commissioner Perkins inquired if there were extra vehicles that could be sold and the funds used to purchase new vehicles. Chief Truex remarked he had no extras. Vice-Chair Stewart declared this item would remain on the agenda until it goes out to bid.

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

Resident Kimberly Dole, of 19 Sharp Hill Road remarked she is the assistant director of the TVCCA Little Learners, one of two early learner programs. She reported on a family event held at Tyl Middle School on April 4th where 300 parents and 200 children were present. She thanked the Montville PD for the attendance of the School Resource Officer at the event. The SRO interacted with the children that helped to build a safety net and acted as a confidence booster for the children while in the presence of police officers. The Agency really appreciated the PD support.

15. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell congratulated Officer Witts and K-9 Officer Sig noting that he was part of the crew who hired Officer Witts. He is deserving of credit and appreciation by the Town. He also congratulated Officer Kelly who aided a State Trooper and spoke from his experience that the State Trooper will be forever indebted to him. As to the Animal Control Facility, the Mayor is trying to gain funding from the State Comptroller, the State Attorney General, and a member of the Bonding Commission. He is trying to make the project more attractive by sharing services—a draft was sent to Bozrah today and one is being drafted for the Mohegan Tribe. If no funding is received, the project will go to referendum in November to oppose or support the initiative. Mayor Bunnell reported that Officer Rebelo deals with the calls for service and keeps the existing kennel clean and sanitary as well as doing repairs. The cost to bring the Animal Control Facility to an existing standard with the first choice being to build new would require contracting with a consulting firm but would also have to go to public hearings.

As to the 2024-2025 Town budget, Mayor Bunnell prepared a summary of it and the Capital Plan for consideration by the Town Council which he read into the record. His summary calls for a 2.24% increase to the overall budget of \$70,718,345. He noted that every department request was reduced to some degree and spoke of ARPA funds that offset budget expenses in previous years that now have to be funded outright which he referenced. The Mayor's budget calls for the addition of one (1) firefighter, not three (3) as requested and a police officer that will be offset by the PD taking on the roll of Animal Control Officer. Other positions include a Public Works Road Foreman, a Program Developer to help senior citizens, and the return of a part-time floater at the Town Hall. He is proposing the use of \$500,000 from the unallocated fund balance to offset the increases. The Capital Improvements proposed for this year totals \$1,771,601; \$797,075 for the Board of Education, and \$974,526 for General Government. These figures represent an 183% increase due cuts last year. Mayor Bunnell expressed appreciation to the Town staff for submitting realistic requests and offered to assist the Town Council to move forward positively.

16. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia echoed the comments of Mayor Bunnell regarding Officer Witts, K-9 Officer Sig and Officer Kelly, all great news that they were able to help out during those scenarios. He thanked the Police Department for their work on the roads keeping the Town

safe and also remarked that the Town Council was still working on their part of the budget stating a lot choices need to be made but they will get through it.

17. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Gillette thanked the PD for their written warning, citations and traffic stops, a 300% boost and the result of the three (3) grants it obtained. He expressed his appreciation for their work. Commissioner Baker remarked on a conversation at the last budget Finance Committee meeting where turnout gear was brought to his attention. There is a difference in cost of the gear supplied for volunteers in addition to its being of inferior quality. Although Commissioner Baker is unsure why, he noted that the issue should have been brought to the Commission, not the Town Council. He stated that the Commission in his opinion would be happy to listen and address the concern. The Commissioner also echoed the comments of Commissioner Gillette regarding the PD and spoke of the outstanding job they do that is well appreciated. He also thanked the Public Safety team, the Fire and Police, expressing his appreciation for doing what they do saving lives and property. Commissioner Perkins remarked that she wanted the hire of three (3) firefighters but one (1) was considered by the Mayor. She hopes the one (1) hire will be approved but stated she will continue the fight. Vice-Chair Stewart congratulated Officers Witts and Kelly, a good example of mutual aid. He also remarked it was nice to see that the Gardner Lake Patrol will be on the lake noting the PD patrol boat is a few years away from replacement. The Vice-Chair remarked on getting the numbers to go up for stipends stating the ordinance allows for \$50,000 for stipends and tax abatement. He also reported that the Fire Department does town-wide training in the summer months—the movement of water and pumpers—a mutual aid event with other departments. The next one will be held on June 2 with more information to come. Chairperson Murphy praised Officer Witts and Officer Kelly for an outstanding job. He also reported that the Oakdale Fire Department & Ambulance donated a defibrillator to the Community Center as they had problems getting one. Lastly, he reported on the rescue of a child lost in the woods and the child’s family visit to the Oakdale station to thank everyone involved.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Perkins to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 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.**