

TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – May 29, 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 (6:05 p.m.), and Commissioners Brian Baker, William Bauer, Traci Callaghan, Mickey Gillette and Karen Perkins. A quorum was present.

4. Alterations to the Agenda -- None

5. Special Recognitions and Presentations.

Badge Pinning Ceremony: Firefighters Joshua Braga and Noah Dombroski

Fire Marshal Barnes, the Fire Marshal for the Town of Montville and the Career Staff Supervisor, recognized two (2) firefighters/EMTs of Local 3886, Joshua Braga and Noah Dombroski. Firefighter Noah started his career by joining the Cadets in South Windsor in 2019 and then joined Colchester Fire & EMS in 2020. While at Colchester, he obtained his Firefighter I Certification in 2020, his Firefighter II Certification in 2021 and his EMT Certification in 2024. In addition, he obtained his Q Endorsement to operate fire apparatus while also attending Basic Pump Operator Certification classes in order to build on his knowledge and skills in apparatus operation. Firefighter Dombroski is a 2nd generation firefighter following the path of his father who currently is Captain of Colchester Fire & EMS. With his recent hiring by the Town of Montville, he plans to make firefighting his career and to further his education by taking additional courses and certification classes within the Fire Service to build on his knowledge, skills and abilities. Captain Bobby Dombroski, Noah's father, pinned his son this evening. Firefighter Joshua Braga joined the Colchester Fire & EMS as a Junior Firefighter in 2018 and since turning 18 years of age has been continuously attending classes and trainings as well as looking up to senior firefighter personnel for guidance to qualify for the position of Firefighter/EMT. Firefighter Josh received his Firefighter I and EMT Certifications in 2022 and his Firefighter II Certification in 2023. His parents, Helen and Durante, pinned him this evening.

The Commission took a break at 6:05 p.m. to allow for pictures to be taken. The meeting resumed at 6:09 p.m.

6. Communications:

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

Chairperson Murphy read a letter of resignation he received from Chief Blanchette regarding Dispatcher Melissa who confirmed her intent to take a position at the East Lyme Police Department. Her last shift will be Friday, May 24 and the reason for her resignation was the 12-hour shifts she had been doing for three (3) years, but noted her interest in retaining a per diem position. The Chairperson also confirmed the receipt of statistical reports by the Commission from the Public Safety departments for the month ending May 2024. Vice-Chair Stewart reported that there was not a monthly report from the Building Official but noted that a quarterly report was emailed to the Commission.

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

- a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of April , 2024.

Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Bauer to approve the PSC Regular Meeting Minutes of April 22, 2024. Discussion: Commissioner Baker noted two (2) clerical errors on Pg. 7, “**NFPA**”, not NFDA and “**on,**” not om. Voice vote: **7-0-0, all in favor.**
Motion carried, as amended.

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

Chairperson Murphy asked three (3) times for remarks. Thomas McCarthy of 62 Beechwood Road, Oakdale remarked on Items 12a and 12c on the Agenda. As to the parameters for fire department data tracking that he believed was brought up last September, he did not understand the delay nor that recommendations have not been made as it is a matter of putting parameters into a computer to create data. Resident McCarthy also opposed the purchase of a new rescue truck for Chesterfield. Instead, he recommended the purchase of new battery operated hydraulic tools that can be put on the engine. He also disputed a comment by Commissioner Baker regarding mutual aid. Resident McCarthy remarked that mutual aid agreements are in place for backup/support starting with the closest unit that may be in East Lyme or Flanders to get to a scene with an engine, tools and manpower to do the job. But he also noted that spending money without manpower was not warranted stating that fires are put out by firefighters not by fire trucks.

9. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Lt. Radford congratulated the firefighters recognized this evening and then reported total statistics from the Distracted Driving Grant that had expired as it was for the month of April only. The speeding grant will expire in two (2) days. The Lieutenant reported that Police Officers conducted 452 stops over a period of 20 days and 249 hours. The multiple stops were about education and teaching rather than enforcement to get rid of distracted driving behavior. There were also 38 infractions for cell phone use of which four (4) had suspended licenses. Fifteen other various offenses were also found. Vice-Chair Stewart questioned whether any of

the stops were for repeat offenders; Lt. Radford remarked that he did not know but said he had the data to review it. The Lieutenant then reported the Animal Control monthly statistics for April 2024. See Agenda Item, 10b for those statistics. Chairperson Murphy questioned the increased number of animal bites; Lt. Radford reported there is an uptick and noted that Officer Rebelo has revamped and updated the stats and document reporting.

Fire Marshal Report

Fire Marshal Barnes reported Fire Marshal Statistics for the month ending April 30, 2024, as follows: Inspections of businesses and apartments (49), Fire investigations (1), Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel Incident responses Q64 (13), Fire Marshal Barnes Requested to the Scene by firefighters Q54 (2), Burn permits issued (3), Illegal Burn (1), Sprinkler Acceptance Test (1) and Construction Project Inspection (3). During the month of April, a total of 24 hours were spent on Emergency Management obligations. The Fire Marshal reported on the coordination by him and career staff regarding the File of Life magnet designed to be placed on the refrigerator to provide critical medical information for an individual. The information includes the address and phone number of the individual, physician name; preferred hospital, emergency contacts, medical conditions and allergies, prescriptions, and medical insurance information, all for easy access. Approximately 100 of them were given to Kathy Peck and 80 will be given to those residing in senior housing when conducting inspections. Fire Marshal Barnes also noted that the information is beneficial for those who are incapacitated, have dementia or Alzheimer’s, or who are unconscious. He reported he still has a half case left and information on the same will be included on the Town website. Vice-Chair Stewart asked whether the File of Life was purchased via a grant and about the status of the upcoming drill; the Fire Marshal reported it was paid for out of his budget and that the drill is still set for June 4 noting he has spoken with individuals at Millstone. Fire Marshal Barnes also reported that the pre-drill rehearsal went well.

10. Committee and Liaison Reports:

a. Report from Fire Department Liaison. (Perkins)

Commissioner Perkins reported that she forwarded to the Commission the April 2024 monthly statistical reports as listed below from Oakdale and Chesterfield fire companies and two (2) reports from Montville. She is awaiting the report from Mohegan.

Montville Fire Company (March 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	15
EMS Calls	22
Fire Calls	4
Motor Vehicles Calls	1
Other Calls	22
Total Calls:	64

Montville Fire Company (April 2024)

Incidents:	Total
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Cancelled Calls	7
EMS Calls	20
Fire Calls	2
Motor Vehicles Calls	1
Other Calls	8
Total Calls:	38

Mohegan Fire Company (April 2024) – No Report

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

Oakdale Fire Company (April 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	16
EMS Calls	39
Fire Calls	0
Motor Vehicles Calls	6
Other Calls	12
Total Calls:	73

Chesterfield Fire Company (April 2024)

Incidents:	Total
Cancelled Calls	25
EMS Calls	28
Fire Calls	1
Motor Vehicle	4
Other Calls	17
Total Calls:	75

b. Report from Animal Control. (Callaghan)

The April 2024 Activity Reports for the Towns of Montville and Salem were submitted by Police Officer/ACO Bruce Rebelo and read into the record under Agenda Item 9 by Lt. Radford as follows:

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (April 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	6	33
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	3	17
# of Animals D.O.A.:	1	2
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	53	157
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	4	11
Total Enforcement Action:	1	8
Total Other Calls for Service:	55	223

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (April 2024)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	1	5
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	0	0
# of Animals D.O.A.:	0	0
# of Animals Euthanized:	0	0
Total Complaints Investigated:	3	23
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	1	3
Total Enforcement Action:	0	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 April 30, 2024, as follows:

Police Activity	Total
Total Calls for Service	1831
Citations:	
Infractions	138
Juvenile Summons	3
Misdemeanor	14
Written Warning	787
Total Citations	942

d. Report from Building Department Liaison. (Stewart)

2023-2024 Building Department Report												
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Permits Issued	123						93	86	92	116		
Pending Permits							80	89	103	92		

Inspections							96	117	109	116		
Active Blight	215							TBD	230	236		
Blight Abated To Date	519							TBD	519	524		

This data was emailed to the Commission by Building Official Doug Coulter on May 6, 2024 who thanked Vern Vesey for helping to keep track of the data. Vice-Chair Stewart reported on applications submitted for the Building Official position noting that Mayor Bunnell could better respond on the status. Mayor Bunnell reported that through the assistance of the COG an agreement was made to have them hire a trainee for the Building Official position. The training would be conducted in Town and the trainee would then take the Building Official test within 2-3 weeks. If the trainee passes the test, the Town will have the option to immediately hire the trainee and the Town and the COG would each pay a portion of the salary. Currently, there are 22 applicants and a qualified applicant once hired would initially be limited to residential inspection of single-family homes but with additional training and more experience then commercial inspection would be added and could possibly qualify an applicant as the Building Official depending upon their experience. Once the main contract regarding salaries is complete the hope is to attract additional applicants who are already certified.

11. Remarks from Fire Chiefs.

Chief Truex referred to comments made earlier about the formation of data for reporting by the fire companies. He remarked that who responds to calls and who goes to them does not capture volunteers’ time spent on training, fundraising, equipment maintenance, or standing by for calls i.e., raw data. Commissioner Perkins commented on a meeting that was held at the Public Safety Building when information was requested about the list of volunteers who were going on calls. She deemed that would be a starting point if you look at the call data for volunteers. The Chief questioned who wanted the information by stating it was the union that wants it. Commissioner Perkins clarified that a former Town Council liaison questioned a lot of the calls and fire marshal response to calls. Chief Truex remarked it is clear that the volunteers go to calls but that is not all of what they do and would not be reflected in just call data. Chairperson Murphy stated the Fire Chiefs have the program set and are spending their own money, a lot of it, as its taken some time to get the program written as all four (4) departments work differently. He used Oakdale as an example by explaining that it has a policy whereby you must return to the station in order to be credited for responding to a call and proposed that the Town pay for the data upgrade. Chief Truex reiterated that work is being done to gather the information for reporting but the aim is to present actual data, not half of the data. The Chief also remarked on a comment about replacement of the Chesterfield M-37. He reported that the M-37 has been around for more than 34 years beginning with a light duty and then transitioning to a medium duty. He added that the current truck will not fit more tools and needs to be replaced.

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 that this item be moved along to next month's meeting. Vice-Chair Stewart noted the item had already been addressed.

b. Fire Companies Radio System Upgrades. (Baker)

Commissioner Baker remarked that he asked Chief Messer who is heading up the project to be present to report on the status of the radio system upgrades. Chief Micah Messier of Oakdale Fire Company reported that the Fire Chiefs met the beginning of last year about transferring to the State radio system. Last July, meetings were held with the State who asked for four (4) MOUs and bylaws for each fire station. This documentation was submitted to the State and the Commissioner signed off on it approving the fire companies move to the State radio system. At a meeting with the State last week, the Chiefs submitted the radio frequencies they were requesting—fireground, TAC and Interoperability channels in addition to those for other Town agencies. The State also requested information on the types of radios under consideration to make sure they have the right features and options which was also submitted. So, presently the Fire Chiefs are waiting on feedback from the Town. The Town Council last year requested funds from LoSip for an early withdrawal of \$350,000; the Finance Director sent a letter but did not get a response back from the State. As we near July 1, another \$350,000 is being considered as the changeover is estimated to be a \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million dollar project to obtain the radio equipment needed depending on the brand. The \$750,000 would be halfway to the goal so that everyone has equipment needed to communicate and for the day shift. Chairperson Murphy asked how the second half of the funds would be obtained. Chief Messer remarked that the Town Council understood that this project is a Town commitment of \$350,000 a year until completion. He spoke of a grant that was totally botched by a grant writing company and was not submittable. The intent is to reapply to get funds back from a grant next year inclusive of all the career staff. Vice-Chair Stewart inquired about LoSip and its purpose. Mayor Bunnell reported that tomorrow night the mill rate and the budget will be set and that there is a plan in place and he is sure we will be all set. Chairperson Murphy expressed thanks for the Canteen to get a radio to be obtained through the Department of Homeland Security that will be a big help. Lt. Radford reported the radios for Dispatch will need an upgrade and is included in the Police Department CIP for next year but that funds will be needed and asked whether a Dispatch upgrade was included in the project. He also asked if funds were included to integrate Dispatch or if its upgrade would wait until next year. Chief Messer has spoken with Town Council Chairperson May about the upgrade and the ability to record four (4) channels and to do it sooner for the 800 channel to get Dispatch up to the current standard. Lt. Radford reported the cost as being \$70,000 basically half of what is actually needed.

c. Discussion of condition/replacement of the Chesterfield M37 Rescue Truck. (Stewart)

Vice-Chair Stewart remarked that \$625,000 was included in the CIP for the truck and this amount was approved by the Commission. Chief Truex reported that a medium duty rescue truck has a cost of \$1 million to \$1.2 million dollars and is a lot larger than the current engine. He also reported having spoken with U.S. Fire Apparatus about a F50 light duty. The company does custom build with 400,000 lbs left to exceed the truck GVM, the weight licensed to carry and tow. Its cost is specked at \$800,000. The next option reviewed was a medium duty with

all equipment at a cost of \$580,000 well under the CIP amount. The Fire Chiefs met this morning to look at other truck options; a light duty was considered but the equipment will not fit. Review was also done on a lease cost that is \$140,000 a year depending on the number of years on the lease. Chairperson Murphy clarified that Chesterfield has a medium duty not a heavy duty truck. Chief Truex spoke of doing his due diligence by looking at other truck brands; Chairperson Murphy was not in favor of that option as a lot of trucks he understands protect the district where they are used. He also remarked that Montville and Oakdale have paid for their rescue truck and its equipment. Chief Truex acknowledged paying \$480,000 for an ambulance (although the price last year was under \$300,000) and said it will take two (2) years to build. Mayor Bunnell acknowledged listening to the conversation when this topic last came up and acknowledged that a new Chesterfield rescue truck is needed as it sends a bad message for potential development stating that the key to survival is development. Chairperson Murphy asked about the cost for the rescue truck; Chief Truex stated the vendor will hold the bid and chassis right now and guaranteed delivery by September 2024 but arguing about it is a waste of time as it still must go out to bid. Mayor Bunnell noted that the M37 was to be part of CIP but the Town Council is going with an option of a lease to use. Commissioner Perkins asked whether the future of the department will see manned, paid staff on duty for 24 hours; Mayor Bunnell remarked if the Town can afford it. Commissioner Baker asked whether the other Fire Chiefs agreed with the purchase of the M37 for Chesterfield: Chief Truex responded that no one disagreed with the purchase and they spoke of options for a light or medium duty truck to include the equipment that goes with it and a mini pumper that does not have full rescue capability but will provide water. Another concern is the M15 that is a few years away from replacement and the cost for it. Commissioner Perkins asked how many times the M37 went out in the last month; four (4) times in response to MDAs according to the Chief. The Chief added that Oakdale has rescue tools, not a truck. Chief Truex commented on a Ford F550, a light duty, at a max weight of 400,000 lbs and stated more pounds would deem the truck to be overweight but said a light truck would hold most of the tools needed. The Chief said that the ambulance that was in the parking lot earlier was a Ford F550. Further, Montville and Mohegan have heavy rescue trucks; Oakdale has rescue tools on their engine but does not have a rescue truck and the Chief described the protocol for what happens when a MDA occurs in the Oakdale/Chesterfield areas when a rescue is needed. Commissioner Perkins asked if he has vehicles that the Town owns—Chief Truex listed an M31 engine, M32 tanker, M37 rescue and M33 brush truck—and the Commissioner asked if an assessment of inventory should be done. There are 15-16 pieces of fire apparatus that are Town-owned per Chief Truex, a response to Commissioner Baker who then referenced the fire apparatus owned by the Town per his research. Commissioner Baker also reported on the Insurance Services Organization that rates apparatus, response time, etc. with strict guidelines on a 1-10 scale and spoke of inherent disadvantage to the Town of arbitrarily selling and/or removing equipment. The negative effect would be an increased insurance rate for commercial and residential properties, a deterrent to growth and expansion. Commissioner Baker also spoke of having attended a recent Finance Committee meeting to insure that funds are in place for the M37 per the approval of the CIP, an obligation of the Commission per Chairperson Murphy. Commissioner Baker also contacted US Fire that sent lease/purchase agreements from the company they do business with. The lease agreement is closed end—at the end of lease term the Town would own the apparatus. The Chairperson reiterated that a motion by the Commission is to confirm

the purchase of the M37 for meeting tomorrow night. Commissioner Perkins asked why discussion continued tonight if this motion if the Commission already approved by the CIP for this item. Discussed was a plan for a cheaper option for replacement of the M37 and specifications for it and whether it is the job of the Commission to speck a truck for the fire department that has not been done before. The Mayor stated the Town Council was looking for the Commission to reaffirm its support. **Motion** by Vice-Chair Stewart; seconded by Commissioner Perkins to support the Capital Improvement Plan item for replacement of the Chesterfield M37 rescue truck discussed by the Fire Chiefs with the point of contact being Chief Truex to determine what type of vehicle is needed. Discussion: none. **Roll Call vote:** *In favor:* Commissioners Stewart, Bauer and Baker. *Opposed:* Commissioners Perkins, Murphy, Callaghan, Gillette. **Vote: 3-4-0. Motion failed.** Chairperson Murphy will be attending the Town Council meeting tomorrow night and will report on it.

13. New Business. -- None

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

Deputy Fire Marshal Meigel reported on having received \$50 don worth of batteries for smoke detectors from Stop & Shop that will be used when going to condos and homes will assist in the . Also received was a \$360 grant from Connecticut Fair Plan that will be used to purchase distance lasers to measure distances for fire hydrants and fire distinguishers to make sure they are in range and up to code. The grant is currently on hold as it must go to Finance for approval and put into an account so the funds can be spent.

15. Remarks from the Mayor.

Mayor Bunnell congratulated the new firefighter hires and noted that he was in attendance at their interviews and was impressed with the way they handled themselves at the interview and felt they show great promise for the Town. As to the Animal Control facility, he reported that water tests are still being conducted and the results for two (2) were deemed negative showing no signs of TOC, an organic compound, nor ETPH, petroleum. The water at the Facility shows no signs of water contamination for the animals sheltered there contrary to public comments that are inflammatory and derogative. The results for a basic potability test are pending. The Mayor also noted that the Facility has improved greatly per the selection by Chief Blanchette of the new ACO, Officer Rebelo, who has done a great job cleaning it. The Facility is now habitable and humane with the intent of requesting the State to come back to reinspect it. Although the Facility is suiting its purpose at present, Mayor Bunnell reiterated the need to be mindful that it needs to be replaced as the Town must comply with State mandated regulations. There are two (2) data collection programs being considered for the fire companies, PSAP and ESO. Once the chiefs give the go ahead, the programs will be brought to the Commission for decision and approval. The Gardener Lake boating has started and the Town PD is doing its best to make the patrol boat available. The Town of Salem is doing its best to insure visible police presence to control the partying and the chaotic atmosphere. Lastly, Mayor Bunnell reported having just completed the OSHA inspection--\$15,000 in fines was reduced to \$8,500 and the overall results were not bad. Per a question from Commissioner Perkins as to what was inspected, the Mayor reported that buildings, training records, files and mostly equipment were inspected. The Animal Control facility passed the inspection with a noted tripping hazard

and the asbestos hazard there will require a new air quality test. In addition to the Animal Control Facility, the Public Safety Building, the WPCA pumping station and treatment plant, lifts, ladders and Public Works were inspected.

16. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Sabilia was absent from the meeting.

17. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Baker thanked the Public Safety personnel for the jobs that they do and remarked to them to keep up the good work. Commissioner Perkins congratulated the newly pinned firefighters and thanked the Police and Fire Departments. Chairperson Murphy remarked that the presence of OSHA is to help workers. He also remarked that he was not opposed to replacement of the Chesterfield M-37 Rescue Truck, only the cost for it.

18. Adjournment.

Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Commissioner Baker to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 7-0-0, all in favor. **Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Gloria J. Gathers
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville

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OF MONTVILLE WEBSITE**