TOWN OF MONTVILLE -- PUBLIC SAFETY COMISSION
Regular Meeting – July 27, 2026 -- 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers – Montville 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 6:01 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 Tracy Callaghan, Mickey Gillette, Stephen Lougee and Karen Perkins. Absent was Commissioner William Bauer. A quorum was present.

4. Alterations to the Agenda
Motion by Vice-Chair Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Lougee to move up Agenda Item 14, Report from Mayor to Item 4. Discussion: Chairperson Murphy remarked that the request was made by Mayor Bunnell as he has another meeting to go to. **Voice vote: 6-0-0. Motion Approved**.

4a. Report from Mayor *(moved up from Agenda Item 14)*
Mayor Bunnell reported having accepted the resignation of Fire Marshal John Meigel and that the position has been posted and will be for three (3) weeks. Deputy Fire Marshal Travis Roberts has assumed the responsibility with a lot going on and submitted his first report that the Mayor is happy with. The Deputy Marshal is putting his best foot forward given everything that is going on. The Mayor has also asked that Agenda Item 11.a remain on the agenda as he is confident of the information from the Fire Chiefs, is happy with the data received and for a new system that all can use. As to Agenda Item 12.a, he does not support it cost-wise to spend money at this time.

5. Communications:
Copies of monthly statistics reports from Fire Departments, Fire Marshal, Police Department, Animal Control and Building Official.

Chairperson Murphy reported that the statistical reports for the month ending June 30, 2026 were received from each department. Vice-Chair Stewart noted that Montville Fire Company has been a little backlogged but that it is good to see reports from them.

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

a. The Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2026.

b. The Regular Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2026 (Informational).

Motion by Commissioner Gillette, seconded by Commissioner Lougee to approve the Commission Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2026 and June 22, 2026 (Informational). Discussion: none. **Voice vote: 6-0-0**, **all in favor**. **Motion Approved.**

7. Remarks from the Public. (Agenda items only).

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

8. Remarks from Department Heads.

Police Department Report

Chief Blanchette reported on the National Night Out that will be held in conjunction with the four (4) fire companies and will include fireworks and free food. He reported that Jack Perkins started at the Academy in Norwich on July 10th, was appointed as the class leader and is doing well. Officer Kirsten Todd will be leaving the force at the end of July and moving south with her family. Officer Lindsey Michaels will be resigning at the end of August for a position with the CT State Police. The hiring process has begun for replacements and Commissioner Gillette was thanked by the Chief for his presence during interviews. Responding to a question regarding the number of applicants, Chief Blanchette reported that out of the last group of six (6) applicants four (4) applicants showed up for interviews as supported by Commissioner Gillette. The physical agility test will occur next week.

Fire Marshal Report

A fire activities report* was submitted by Deputy Fire Marshal Roberts for the month ending June 30, 2026 as follows:

Fire Marshal's Office Activities	June 2026
Inspections of Businesses and Apartments DPM—59; FM—39	**98**
Reinspection of Businesses and Apartments	**67**
Fire Investigations: DFM—2 (I395 Vehicle Fire and Deck Fire; FM—2 (Tilcon Fire/Generator Fire)	**1**
Burn Permits Issued	**23**
Emergency Management Obligations	**72 hours**
Burn Permits Issued	**5**

*The contents of the Fire Activities Report is inclusive of the data in the chart and in the narrative of the report that is summarized as follows: (1) Deputy Fire Marshal ("DPM") Roberts apologized for his inability to attend the meeting this evening; (2) The resignation of the Fire Marshal ("FM") and Emergency Management Director ("EMD") that occurred on Friday, July 17, 2026 and the DPM having assumed those responsibilities as the interim department head; (3) The primary focus of the DPM to maintain continuity of operations, ensuring day-to-day functions of the FM and EMD continue without interruption; (4) The DPM has assumed the remaining caseload of the Fire Marshal that includes one (1) open fire investigation and 22 open inspection and reinspection cases that he will work on over the coming weeks as well as maintain regular operations and responsibilities; and (5) The DPM will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have at a later time.

9 Committee and Liaison Reports:

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

Commissioner Perkins read into the record Montville Fire Activity statistics for the month ending June 30, 2026 and the statistics from the second 2026 quarterly meeting of the Montville Volunteer Firefighter Relief Committee that met earlier this evening as follows:

Montville Fire Activity—June 2026		
Total Calls:	**291**	
Fire Calls:	**58**	**3 were assists out of town**
Ambulance Calls:	**233**	**3 were assists out of town**
Lift Assists for Ambulance Calls:	**18**	

Montville Volunteer Firefighters Relief Committee – July 27, 2026		
Fire Companies	**Stipends**	**Tax Abatements**
Montville	**Did not submit report**	
Mohegan	**4**	**0**
Chesterfield	**2**	**2**
Oakdale	**7**	**6**

Montville Fire Company (January 2026)

Incidents:	**Total**
Medical Calls: (60%)	**42**
Public Service Calls: (31.4%)	**22**
Hazardous Situation Calls: (5.7%)	**4**
No Emergency Calls: (2.9%)	**2**
Total Calls:	**70**

Montville Fire Company (February 2026)

Incidents:	Total
Medical Calls: (62.8%)	49
Public Service Calls: (17.9%)	14
Hazardous Situation Calls: (11.5%)	9
No Emergency Calls: (3.8%)	3
Fire Calls: (3.8%)	3
Total Calls:	78

Montville Fire Company (March 2026)

Incidents:	Total
Medical Calls: (63.6%)	42
Public Service Calls: (19.7%)	13
Hazardous Situation Calls: (6.1%)	4
No Emergency Calls: (4.5%)	3
Fire Calls: (6.1%)	4
Total Calls:	66

Montville Fire Company (April 2026)

Incidents:	Total
Medical Calls: (66.7%)	48
Public Service Calls: (23.6%)	17
Hazardous Situation Calls: (5.6%)	4
Fire Calls: (4.2%)	3
Total Calls:	72

Mohegan Fire Company (June 2026)

Incidents/Calls:	In District	CO1	CO3	CO4	Mutual Aid
EMS	56	44	0	3	0
Lift Assist	4	5	0	0	0
Fire Alarm	4	1	1	4	0

MVA	**3**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**0**
Structure Fire	**1**	**1**	**0**	**3**	**0**
Utility Emergency	**3**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**
CO Emergency	**1**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**
HAZMAT	**4**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Service Call	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Station Coverage	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1 Gales Ferry, no response**
Outside Fire	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Smoke Investigation	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total Calls: 153	**79**	**61**	**1**	**11**	**1**

No Volunteers on calls in districts: 65
Ambulance Transports with no paid staff: 0
Ambulance Transports by other Departments in District: 7
Ambulance Transports from other districts 39

Oakdale Fire Company (June 2026)

Incidents:	**Total**
Medical Calls: (71.8%)	**79**
Public Service Calls: (11.8%)	**13**
Hazardous Situation Calls: (5.5%)	**6**
No Emergency Calls: (8.2%)	**9**
Fire Calls: (2.7%)	**3**
Total Calls:	**110**

Chesterfield Fire Company (June 2026)

Incidents:	**Total**
No Emergency Calls: (38.7%	**12**
Medical Calls: (32.3%)	**10**
Hazardous Situation Calls: (13.8%)	**9**
Hazardous Situation Calls: (4.6%)	**3**
Medical Calls: (55.4%)	**36**

Total Calls: (100%)	**65**
Mutual Aid:	
Mutual Aid Received	**5**
Mutual Aid Given	**5**
Total Mutual Aid Types:	**10**

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

The June 2026 statistics for Animal Control Activity Reports for the Towns of Montville, Colchester, Salem, Bozrah and Mohegan Tribe were submitted by Police Officer/ACO Bruce Rebelo. Commissioner Callaghan read these reports into the record as follows:

Town of Montville Animal Control Report (June 2026)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	**7**	**113**
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	**2**	**16**
# of Animals D.O.A.:	**0**	**5**
# of Animals Euthanized:	**0**	**4**
Total Complaints Investigated	**58**	**711**
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	**4**	**33**
Total Enforcement Action:	**1**	**9**
Total Other Calls for Service:	**45**	**608**

Town of Colchester Animal Control Report (June 2026)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	**1**	**34**
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	**0**	**11**
# of Animals D.O.A.:	**0**	**3**
# of Animals Euthanized:	**0**	**1**
Total Complaints Investigated:	**12**	**147**
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	**1**	**14**
Total Enforcement Action:	**0**	**0**
Total Other Calls for Service	**0**	**0**

Town of Salem Animal Control Report (June 2026)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	**1**	**7**
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals D.O.A.:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals Euthanized:	**0**	**0**
Total Complaints Investigated	**6**	**58**
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	**0**	**4**
Total Enforcement Action:	**0**	**0**
Total Other Calls for Service:	**0**	**0**

Town of Bozrah Animal Control Report (June 2026))

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals D.O.A.:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals Euthanized:	**0**	**0**
Total Complaints Investigated	**2**	**28**
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	**0**	**0**
Total Enforcement Action:	**0**	**0**
Total Other Calls for Service:	**0**	**0**

Mohegan Tribe Animal Control Report (June 2026)

Activity	Month	YTD FY
# of Animals Impounded:	**0**	**3**
# of Animals Sold as Pets:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals D.O.A.:	**0**	**0**
# of Animals Euthanized:	**0**	**0**
Total Complaints Investigated	**0**	**4**
Total Animal Bites Investigated:	**0**	**0**
Total Enforcement Action:	**0**	**0**
Total Other Calls for Service:	**0**	**0**

c. Report from Police Department Liaison. *(Gillette)*

Commissioner Gillette read into the record the Police Department statistics for the month ending June 30, 2026, as follows:

Police Department Activity – June 2026	Total
Total Calls for Service	**1039**
Citations:	
Infractions :	**23**
Juvenile Summons:	**03**
Misdemeanors:	**04**
Written Warnings:	**171**
Total Citations:	**201**
***Total Motor Vehicle Stops:**	**225**

d. Report from Building Department Liaison. *(Stewart)*

The Building Department statistics for June 2026 were read into the record by Vice-Chair Stewart, as follows:

2025-2026 Building Department Report												
	July	**Aug**	**Sept**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**June**
Permits Issued	**118**	**80**	**102**	**161**	**99**	**108**	**74**	**78**	**109**	**119**	**159**	**139**
Pending Permits	**71**	**90**	**62**	**22**	**38**	**9**	**12**	**89**	**90**	**72**	**60**	**147**
Inspections	**151**	**123**	**143**	**167**	**142**	**181**	**106**	**103**	**104**	**182**	**164**	**146**
Active Blight	**298**	**302**	**305**	**308**	**303**	**306**	**311**	**316**	**318**	**325**	**319**	**326**
Blight Abated To Date	**573**	**575**	**590**	**594**	**596**	**601**	**604**	**608**	**609**	**612**	**614**	**618**
Blight--Pending	**11**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**2**	**6**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**6**	**8**	**6**
Blighted Property Liens												

Chairperson Murphy remarked that some areas have been picked up noting three (3) places where he lives have been cleared up.

10. Remarks from Fire Chiefs.

Montville Fire Chief Suarez resubmitted a letter to the Commission that he forwarded to the Town Council and the Mayor in October 2024. Copies of the letter were distributed to the Commission. He would like the content of the letter to be placed on a meeting agenda for discussion. Chief Suarez remarked that the Mohegan Firehouse is struggling for volunteers as some have left. He is interested in discussion and input on this topic. Chesterfield Fire Chief

Dave Nelson remarked about having to ask to hire paid staff for Company 3, Chesterfield, something that he did not think he would have to do. He reported having 46 on the roster but acknowledged that having to take calls is slim particularly during the day from 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. EMTs are also needed during the day as most are working. The Fire Chief noted that taxpayers on the left side of Town also need paid staff noting that it takes 19 minutes to respond from Mohegan to Glendale. He will be meeting with Commissioner Liaison Perkins and Commissioner Lougee on Thursday, July 25th to discuss these issues. He also noted that there is no paid staff at Montville Fire Company 1 either; only at Mohegan Company 2 and Oakdale Company 4. Discussion of Fire Chief Nelson, Fire Chief Suarez and the Commission included the following:

- The number of calls that leaves the westside of Town open;
- Monthly reports to the Mayor that includes call response times;
- The need for EMTs and paid staff at Chesterfield during the day—flyers have been distributed for each;
- There is no support due to cost factors--the new budget 2-mill tax increase;
- That discussion is had with the Town Council by the Commission would be deemed a recommendation;
- The price of gear, refurbishment of apparatus, the $5,000 cost to train one person;
- Working together regarding neutral ground;
- The request for data concerning Agenda Item 11.a and backup of the idea for new people;
- A development on Route 32 that is supposed to integrate more people;
- Corresponding with the Mayor;
- Request for information from the Finance Department on the total cost for a firefighter including benefits as of 2026;
- The cost for operating a fire company, income and expenses;
- The $2,500 cost for turnout equipment, Class A or Class B;
- The Chairperson to obtain cost for a new firefighter including benefits from Finance;
- Most fire companies only need seven (7) calls to qualify for the stipend program that is determined according to a percentage that are representative of the "real" numbers;
- Mohegan, Oakdale and Montville Fire Companies are in a more industrial area and have more volunteers;
- The Town Council is aware of the costs for a paid firefighter as it has obtained data on the same;
- The associated costs to run an ambulance.

11. <u>Unfinished Business.</u>

a. To Consider and Act on a Motion to Approve a Policy to systemize and retain firefighter data to observe trends and effectiveness.

This agenda item was discussed by the Commission under Item 10, Remarks from Fire Chiefs.

b. Update to the Fire Companies' radio system.

At the request of Vice-Chair Stewart, Fire Chief Nelson reported the radio system is still on track. Fire Chief Messer is communicating directly with the supplier regarding the issue with the radios. Once that has concluded, newer radios ($9,000 each) will be used in place of the others that were problematic as communication is key. Fire Chief Messer is also in touch with State personnel who work on the radios. Although there is currently $350,000 earmarked for the radios the actual cost may range from $800,000 to $3 million. Discussion was had concerning mobile use versus portable use. Portables are used for those in an active fire situations as they are needed. Important staff members will receive the radios first.

12 New Business.

a. To Consider and Act on a Motion concerning the new Fire Marshal patch.

Commissioner Perkins reported that the Fire Marshal was directed to go back to the drawing board on this item. It was questioned whether the item should be removed from the agenda; Vice-Chair Stewart proposed taking the matter to the acting fire chief for review and consideration.

14. Remarks from the Public *three-minute limit*.

Michael Moran of 117 Seabury Road, Lebanon and a Town paid firefighter thanked Fire Chief Suarez and Fire Chief Nelson for their attendance at the meeting this evening. Meetings are still being had concerning data; he noted that East Lyme had to come to Town last week for two (2) ambulance calls. He has had conversation with Firefighter Union President Congdon regarding the data and having consistent numbers.

15. Remarks from the Mayor.

This item was moved up on the agenda to Item 6a.

16. Remarks from Town Council Liaison.

Town Councilor Baker was reported as being on vacation.

17. Remarks from Commissioners.

Commissioner Lougee remarked on the Town having had four Fire Marshals in six (6) years and having heard about another from out-of-town, his meetings with the fire companies, and having a hard conversation between the Commission and the Town Council with information to plot out needs. The Commissioner thanked Fire Chief Nelson and Fire Chief Suarez for coming to the Commission this evening with honesty about volunteers, which is a numbers game. Commissioner Perkins also thanked the Fire Chiefs who were present this evening and their encouragement to get the numbers and about the lack of volunteers. She also reported on the Montville Veterans Fundraiser to be held at the Senior Center parking lot on Friday, July 31st from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Present will be a band, food, events for kids, all to raise funds for veterans. Commissioner Stewart reported on National Night Out that will be held on August 4th, hopefully the first of many. He also spoke about the first of many votes and/or

steps that need to be taken about the development near Mohegan School that will hopefully bring more tax money into the Town so some of these things can be taken care of. Thereafter, he asked everyone to be safe. Chairperson Murphy remarked on the need for recruitment for the fire companies noting that retention sucks. He noted that there are not enough signs nor information in newspapers about the need. The Chairperson commented that Mohegan Fire Company has plenty of people; people that are needed here. He also noted that materials can be obtained for free and there are more things to go after for the four (4) fire companies working collaboratively to obtain more members. Chairperson Murphy remarked that he was a fire chief for 34 years and there was always a problem concerning volunteers. He concluded that the Town Council is not in a hiring mood, as independent of all the rumors and posts on social media, whatever they do they get blasted.

18. <u>Adjournment</u>.
Motion by Commissioner Perkins; seconded by Vice-Chair Stewart to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 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.