

**CITY OF MONTAGUE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES NOVEMBER 7, 2024
6:30 P.M.
Council Chambers, 230 S. 13th Street, Montague, CA 96064**

PARTICIPATION: Participants can attend in person, online, and/or by telephone, as follows:

- In-person at: **Montague City Council Chambers, 230 S. 13th St.**
- Online via WebEx at: <https://cityofmontague-454.my.webex.com/meet/clerk>
- Meeting number (access code): 2630 874 0065
- Telephone at: 1-650-479-3208 When prompted, enter **Meeting ID:** 26308740065 **Passcode:** *89335983

AGENDA PACKET: Copies of all staff reports and documents subject to disclosure that relate to any item of business referred to on the agenda are available for public inspection 72 hours before each regularly scheduled meeting at the City Clerk's office at City Hall, located at 230 S. 13th Street, Montague, California, during normal business hours. Any writing that is subject to disclosure that relates to an agenda item for open session distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting will be available for public inspection at the City Clerk's office during normal business hours. Materials distributed to a majority of councilmembers less than 72 hours before a meeting will be available for public inspection on the City's website at www.cityofmontagueca.com.

SPEAKERS: Speakers, please stand at the podium and speak loudly so the entire room can hear you. The chairman will recognize you and ask that you state your name and mailing address so that the City Staff can follow up on any issues requiring City action, or provide you with information, if appropriate.

Please silence your cell phones. Thank you!

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA:

- I. CALL TO ORDER: @ 6:30 PM**
- II. ROLL CALL: Murakami, Vela, Dooley, and Jackson present.**
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** This time is set aside for the public to address the City Council on matters listed on the Consent Agenda, items not included on the Regular Agenda within the authority of the City Council, and Closed Session. If your comments concern an item noted under New Business or Old Business on the Regular Agenda, please address the City Council when that item is open for public comment. There is no other opportunity for public comment on items on the Consent Agenda or Closed Session. The City Council has the right to reasonably limit the duration of each speaker. Speakers may not cede their time. The City Council may ask questions but may take no action during the Public Comments portion of the meeting, except to direct staff to prepare a report, or to place an item on a future agenda.
Vernon Pearston 820 Old Montague Rd. States that citizens are upset because the lack of communication. It used to be that if citizens had a question they could come to the clerk and get on the agenda and talk with the council. Now citizens have to come to the meeting and talk in public comment but the council wont answer them. He also states it would be wise to get a sound system for the people in the back row that cannot hear what the council is saying.
Diane Torpin with Rotary of Montague requesting to be put on the December agenda to do an update on 2024 Montague Balloon Fair. She also states that Rotary has been working with this community for 75 years. Their sole purpose is to support this community. The Rotary is here to partner with the City of Montague even though she feels that this is not was is being seen. This was the 26th year for the Montague Balloon Fair. This event brought people from Shasta County and other states to support the city. The Rotary agreed to have a car show this year in the Balloon Fair because the council wanted it. 3 weeks before the event they were notified that it was not happening. Rotary was left high and dry to try and mitigate the problem. It was sent out to

Facebook, flyers, RV owners that a car show was happening. All of the clean up due to lack of communication was not put back on the city. Rotary would like to work with the city and the community but not taken advantage of.

Michael Crow 9th Street: Request to be on the agenda for financials of the Freedom Festival, and any attorney fees related to Fire Department for 3rd and 4th quarter.

Teresa Newton- Asking for the City Admin job description to be put on the agenda for next meeting.

V. AGENDA APPROVAL: Move the staff reports before the close session. Motion to reorder the agenda made by Vela, seconded by Dooley. All Ayes. Motion to approve agenda made by Vela, seconded by Jackson. All Ayes.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR: Discussion/possible action - All matters listed under the consent calendar are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion unless any member of the Council wishes to remove an item for discussion. The City Clerk recommends approval of the following consent calendar items:

1. Approval of City Council Meeting minutes

a) July 8, 2024

b) August 1, 2024

c) September 23, 2024

Consent calendar approved. Motion made by Jackson, seconded by Dooley. All Ayes.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. Sheriff's update for October 2024- Sargent Yates reporting. Written report included.

2. City Engineer's update for October 2024- no update.

3. Planning Commission's update for October 2024- Administrator Dunn presenting. 2 residence that have asked to put 6 foot fences on the side of their houses. Planning approved. Rico gave an update on the General Plan.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of adoption of Proclamation for the Importance of Early Literacy & Annual Read Across Siskiyou- Executive Director of First 5 presenting. She presents the book "The Big Dance" for the 25th annual read across Siskiyou. She would like to have council sign the proclamation. Council thanks her for everything she does for the kids. Approved. Motion made by Vela, seconded by Jackson. All Ayes.

2. Consideration of approval of Resolution 24-07: A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Montague Pertaining to the Authorization and Certification of the 2024-2025 Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) Form- Clerk Monday presenting. This Resolution is to accept the money that the county gives to us to pay for our Sheriff's contract. Approved. Motion made by Dooley, seconded by Vela. All Ayes.

3. Consideration of Resolution Updating the Circulation, Noise, and Open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan- City Planner Tinsman presenting. Reports that we have updated the General Plan to fit the needs and wants of the city off of the surveys that were submitted and the public comments. John McCartney comments that he had submitted information at the Planning Commission to update this plan. He thinks that the Planner has just taken the same information we have had for the last 20 years and changed some verbiage. Rico responds with John had some really great comments but the Planning Commission did not request any revisions off of those. Pro Tem Vela says that if the Planning Commission had gone over it and made changes then he thinks that it upholds the approval. Also, the council had not seen John's report so they can only talk about what they have seen. Councilmember Jackson asks when the things that are listed in the General Plan going to be completed. Rico reports that it is a discussion piece not anything that have to be completed. Jackson asks John what he would like to see in the General Plan. John says that he proposed a couple of pocket parks and paths that connect the parks. Rico then counters with the properties that he proposed were residential properties that he highly recommends not to say in the General Plan that you are going to put City things on other people's property. CEQA approved. Motion made by Vela, seconded by Dooley. All Ayes.

General Plan approved. Motion made by Jackson, seconded by Vela. All Ayes.

4. Discussion of Issues (Non-personnel) Regarding Montague Fire Department- Pro Tem Vela reporting. Says that there is no discussion on personnel issues. You may only speak about the fire department. Jake Deegan presenting. He asks if he can say names of individuals or about leadership in the fire department. Pro Tem Vela answers with, you can speak about apparatuses or anything that has affect upon the fire department but no individuals can be mentioned. Mayor Murakami says that he can answer some questions that were presented to him by letter. Locks on the fire department are code locks so when a firefighter leaves we change the locks so that they cannot get in. They could not change the codes because they don't have the master code. Tara Piken comments asking if she can comment since this is her letter. Mayor Murakami says she may present. Attorney Jared then interjects and says that this is not public comment. The agenda item is being presented. After the council is finished presenting, then they will move into public comment where they will save all questions till the end and then answer them all at once. Tara Pitken then asks the attorney if she can comment on her letter. Attorney Jared then says she may write down her question or the council can open public comment for this item and then everyone can comment. Then council will answer questions at the end. Tara Pitken comes to the podium and says that Chief Vela was not terminated he was put on administrative leave and you still changed the locks. It was stated before when a firefighter leaves the fire department changes the locks but Vela didn't leave. Mayor Murakami then says that these are personnel issues. Teresa Newton asks who purchased the locks that were changed. Jake Deegan presents. He addresses the mayor to say that I can think of at least of 4 volunteers that have left the department and the locks were never changed. They have been the same for the past 5 or 6 years. Mike Crow presenting. Says that no charges have been filed on Chief Vela. The department is not fun to hang out at anymore. The call times have dropped significantly. He is requesting the fire chief to be reinstated since no charges have been filed. He also requests that the assistant fire chief step down from his position and has no say in the vote. Teresa Newton says that it concerns her that the fire department is descaling and the citizens are paying for this service through taxes. The volunteers are not comfortable being at the fire department. Josh Johnson commented that the council should really consider the letter that was submitted to them that was about personnel. He states that what it in that letter effects everyone. Tara Pitken the volunteers looked through the bylaws and wrote a petition to try and make this place better and the council should respect the volunteers enough to listen to what they are trying to show them. They followed all of the rules and it was dismissed. The Mayor should be removed. Teresa Newton asks who paid for the locks and who installed them. Mayor Murakami answers with the Fire Department paid for them and he installed them. Pro Tem Vela says that these locks have individual codes so we can just delete the code of the volunteer that leaves. The audience says so were the previous locks. They are absolutely the same as the old ones. Someone asks if there is any approval process to change the locks. Mayor Murakami says no. It was asked how much the locks cost. Mayor answers \$100 apiece. Attorney Jared then asks if public comment is over. Teresa Newton then comments again. Attorney Jared says that you get one chance to have your three minutes to speak. He suggests that we give Newton 2 more minutes to speak. Newton asked to put the Fire Department budget, and the expenses for the locks on the next agenda as an agenda item. Then she amends her statement to say she would like to have the whole city budget from January 1st thru October 31st. Mindy Vela presents. Replacing locks should be the worst of our worries. Andrew Jared has charged our city over \$6,000 in August alone over the issues that have to do with the fire department. We should have an issue with a man from Pasadena running our meetings, and running our city. The Council does not have to listen to him. He gives recommendations, the council can think for themselves. Attorney Jared is making money off our struggles and he should be ashamed of himself. Motion to put the requested agenda items on the next agenda made by Jackson, seconded by Vela. Jackson, and Vela Aye, Murakami Nae, and Dooley Abstains. Motion passes.

IX. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of approval of the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025- Administrator Dunn presenting. Budget was sent to the pre-auditor to make the amendments. This is what he had sent back. Pro Tem Vela says he has gone through it and it looks correct. Clerk Monday says there is a resolution that is supposed to be adopted along with the budget but was not ready for this meeting. It will have to be presented at a later date. Approved. Motion made by Vela, seconded by Dooley. All Ayes.

1. Fire Department- Murakami presenting. August- 53 calls, 19 City, 7 District, and 7 mutual aid. September- 18 calls 9 City, 3 District, 3 Mutual Aid. October- 26 calls, 6 City, 11 District, and 9 mutual aid. Mayor Murakami signed off of the Fire Inspection for Montague and Delphic new buildings. Type 6 is almost ready to pick up. Mayor hand delivered the radios and it should be painted and we should be getting a call to pick it up any day. Had issue with the invoicing on one of the strike team fires but it is resolved now. It was off \$26,000 so he recommends the city should adopt to wait until CalFire signs off of the paperwork before the city is invoices because you have to pay within 2 weeks of receival by federal and state payroll standards. That is why the city fire department budget in over a quarter of a million dollars. Micah Nicols commenting. He was told the fire budget was supposed to hold a certain amount of money to pay the firefighters and the council had voted to spend that money elsewhere and that is why it is not in the budget. Mike Crow asks what happens when people don't get around to invoicing? The Mayor says reiterates that when the invoice gets sent to the City Clerks Office that is the end of the pay period and they must be paid by the end of the next. Mindy Vela asks how waiting for the CalFire signature is going to change this? Why was everything going just fine before and now it is an issue? Mayor says because we have never had this amount of money. Just the fire that had the issue was \$225,264.05. Josh Johnson says that we have had bigger amounts paid to the firefighters. Mayor says then we had more money in the fire account. Micah Nichols then asks who sets the fire budget and who has permission to spend it. Mayor answers the Fire Chief for both answers. Micah Nicols, Mike Crow, and Mayor Murakami go back and fourth about payments, receipts budget, and so forth.
2. Public Works/City Administrator: Administrator Dunn presenting. The 18th at noon we will be hanging the Christmas lights on the tree
3. Animal Control/ Code Enforcement: Johnson presenting. Nothing to report.
4. City Clerk: Clerk Monday reporting. Jackson asks what would the clerk suggest to fix morale and financial strain withing the city? Clerk Monday says that there is a lot that is being put on our plate and that we are all in a very stressful situation. The clerk would like to like to meet with council to address issues and brainstorm some ideas to fix the overall work load that has been put on everyone. Clerk suggests trying to find finances to get another person to help lighten the load. Mayor Murakami says he agrees. Pro Tem Vela asks if there is any dates in mind. Clerk answers with anytime that works for council she will donate her time so it is no cost to the city. Jackson asks if any other staff would like to attend. Administrator Dunn and Clerk Monday will attend. Date set for 19th at 6:00 PM. Administrator Dunn says that all workshops are open meetings. Council decides to have a workshop.
5. Treasurer: Sick, could not attend the meeting.
6. Library: No report. Interim Manager had surgery and has been out. Volunteers are still keeping the library open.
7. Commissioner/ Council Statements and Requests: Members of the council may now make brief announcements, reports, or request staff to report to the council on any matter at a subsequent meeting. Jackson reports that she cannot report about Colliers Rest Area because it is closed due to the Klamath River Dam removal. Dooley thanks the library for sending the meeting minutes from their meeting so she could go over them. Thanks to Public Works for keeping the city going. As Fire Commissioner she thanks the men and women who have served on the Fire Department. All members of this Department are valued but the action that have been taking place are not acceptable. These actions are pulling this city apart. The city council and staff have been ridiculed and harassed. Any personnel issues are not to be discussed outside of close session meetings. Vela had made that perfectly clear at the last council meeting. What we have not heard from the public is how can we help with this issue. Helpful questions in a respectable manner or any local government insight would be appreciated. Please don't be a part of the problem. Mayor Murakami asks to move the Christmas Bazaar to December 1st or November 30th. Clerk Monday has 12 to 13 vendors already signed up. Teresa Newton says that why cause more commotion just leave the date where it is. Dooley asks if it would help if she called the vendors. Council decided to keep it the same day. Clerk Monday asks for council to run the Christmas Bazaar. Says to talk about it in

the workshop. Vela reports for the air pollution control board meeting was recorded because of technical issues.

XI. CLOSED SESSION: @ 8:02 PM

1. (Gov. Code 54957(b)(1) (EMPLOYMENT, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION) Montague Fire Assistant Fire Chief:

Open Session: @10:02 PM No final action taken. Direction was given to the City Attorney.

XII. ADJOURN: @10:03 PM

Motion made by Jackson, seconded by Vela. All Ayes.