

CITY OF MONTAGUE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 2, 2025
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, Jackson, Dooley, and Vela 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 as well as other items not included on the Regular Agenda within the authority of the City Council. 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." (The Brown Act requires the public be given the opportunity to address the City Council before action is taken. If there is a Consent Agenda, there is no other opportunity for public comment on items on the Consent Agenda.) The City Council has the right to reasonably limit the duration of each speaker to three minutes. 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. Michael Crow presenting. Says that he has just got done with a 2000 mile road trip so he is frazzled. He is having Mindy Vela read a passage that he had written for tonight's meeting. The statement says; *"It has been months since the assistant fire chief has caused the fire chief to be put on administrative leave for undisclosed reasons, unknown allegations, implications of wrong doing in generalities, and personal slander yet no charges have been filed. The months this has been going on has created a hostile work environment at the fire department among the volunteers causing the number of volunteers responding to go down, or not respond at all. The assistant fire chief is also the mayor, and the president of the Montague fireman's association where he has admitted his dereliction of duties by providing no oversight of the financials he is responsible for. These are some of the conflicts of interest where he should recuse himself. The assistant chief lied at the last meeting saying that there have not been any calls that Montague Fire Department has not responded to and that the number of responders has not dropped off. We the responders know that this is untrue as does the dispatch center, and other fire chiefs that are talking about it. One of our elected officials told members of the fire department that since our chief was relieved of duties, he had a reported fire at his house that Montague never showed up to. As an example. I am requesting five agenda*



items be added to the next meeting. 1. General discussion of the status of how the fire department is operating without the fire chief present. This includes not having access to purchase/replace much needed personal protective safety equipment, not having access to computers, files or reports, the vote of no confidence among the fire fighters to the assistant chief, his lack of leadership, ineffectiveness on an emergency, and any other topic we'd like to discuss during this time. 2. The reinstatement of the fire chief to reestablish the continuity of operations that both the community and the firefighters deserve, resume our support activities that include reinforcement with personnel and equipment to our neighboring fire departments that also support us, to regain the trust of the public we serve, And get back to the level of service that we historically have been well known for. 3. The removal of the assistant fire chief either temporarily or permanently citing the hostile work environment he has created, his refusal to acknowledge of his conflicts of interest, his lack of leadership, his inability to effectively function on an incident ground, his refusal to communicate and actually become very secretive and standoffish to the volunteers of the fire department, in addition to hurting the city of Montague financially both by causing thousands of dollars in unnecessary attorney costs, and removing the Montague fire department from the ability to go on strike teams to not only help communities that are on fire and losing lives and homes, not contributing to City monies that help upkeep a budget that hasn't been updated with the fire department since the 1970s, and took away the ability for our volunteers to make some money on these strike teams for the hundreds of calls they go on every year for free. That takes food out of our family's mouths. 4. City council to vote on reinstating the fire chief immediately. 5. Removal of the assistant fire chief immediately “.

V. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Approved. Motion 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 for 11/7, and 11/19: Approved. Motion made by Jackson, seconded by Dooley. All Ayes.

VII. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

1. Sheriff's update for December 2024- No report. No representative.
2. City Engineer's update for December 2024- Administrator Dunn reporting. Finished handicap parking pad, and handrail at Diggle Field.
3. Planning Commission's update for December 2024- No meeting.

VIII. **OLD BUSINESS**

IX. **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Rotary of Montague update for 2024 Balloon Fair: Diane Torpin presenting. 2024 Balloon Fair was a huge success. 15 pilots showed up this year. They love coming here because it is a small group and they all know each other and have a great time. The Balloon Mister was amazing and had done a wonderful job. The night glow was a struggle because of the wind but the pilots worked really hard and pulled it off. 3 different news crews published about this event. 27,500 people looking at the Facebook pages. They also have a website and flyers to get the word out. To get a pilot here it costs about \$1,000 between \$300 stipend, food, and lodging. Which is a small price to pay for what these pilots spend in gas alone. Blue Star Gas donates all the propane, and Forest Service donates by bringing the Smokey Bear balloon. RVers went up by about 35% this year. Scott, Jay, and Brandon from the YMCA did all the parking this year. They loved the gate that Public Works



installed for safety. Even Yreka Transfer voiced his appreciation for the gate so he didn't have to go the back way. Thank you to everyone who keeps supporting this event. Yreka Food Bank are now helping Montague residents so they donated. Siskiyou Radio, Eric Erickson got all of the sound equipment and broadcasted the event all the time. Thank you to him. Top of the list is Montague Public Works and Pure Siskiyou. Many comments saying that this was the best parade they have had in years! Thank you to Mindy and Jessie for that. 5300 total visitors. 60% were from Siskiyou County, the other 40% was from outside the county. Will work on parking next year for the night glow. People were parked all the way down Highway 3. Want to also promote more businesses in Montague and get people to stay here. Montague Rotary purchased 10 tables to the Community Hall and Christmas lights. \$2500 goes toward scholarships for Montague kids. \$1000 went towards outside lights on the Community Hall. \$1000 went towards a cover on the pool. The connection of the people is a huge part of the event. So many people that only get together for this event. It draws people. 2025 dates are September 19th through 21st.

2. Purchase of Personal Computers from Right Click Technology Services for \$4,509.64- Pro Tem Vela presenting. With windows 10 coming to an end in 2025, we need to replace the older computers. Mike Crow asks where the computers will be going. Pro Tem Vela says that they will be going into City Hall. Clerk Monday confirms this motion is to put into the budget not to purchase the computers at this time. Vela responds with we should purchase three this year and the other two at end of life. Approved. Motion made by Vela, seconded by Jackson. All Ayes.
3. Consideration of approval of a pilot program to test employee Alternate Work Schedule- Administrator Dunn presenting. Employees would like to do a 10 hour day. He proposes a pilot program for the month of January to see how they like it and then they will sign an agreement for record keeping. Jackson asked if they can change their schedule in the middle of the pilot program. Dunn says that Public Works all have to have the same schedule but City Clerks Office does not. Clerk Monday asked if he wanted to change the end date of the pilot program to fit into a pay period. Dunn says we will change it when they make the actual agreement. Approved. Motion made by Dooley, seconded by Jackson. All Ayes.

X. COUNCIL AND STAFF REPORTS for December 2024

1. Fire Department- No Report.
2. Public Works/City Administrator- Administrator Dunn presenting. Christmas tree lighting was a success. With all the rain there was a lake behind Community Hall so they cleared out the covert and pumped out the rest of the water. A valve at the sewer ponds was bad so that took a couple days to replace. Multiple people are on vacation or sick. It has been tough. Just trying to keep doing day to day tasks to keep this place going.
3. Animal Control/ Code Enforcement- ACO Johnson presenting. Requests to be on his evaluation. Mayor Murakami doesn't believe that is how to address that issue and asks Attorney Jared to elaborate. Jared says he needs to look at the code section. He then recommends to get his report and close out section 10, then when section 11 is open we will address this issue. Mike Crow asks if the public can know what is in the report. Mayor Murakami then reads out the report. Josh Johnson then asks to be put on the next agenda for his position and wages.
4. City Clerk- Account Clerk is out and her next doctor appointment is January 13th. Hopefully she will be back then. Clerk Monday gives a verbal report. Clerk Monday says we need to get the City Administrator job description. Mayor Murakami comments these things take time and money. Jackson states we need to move forward on this. Administrator Dunn has been in this position for a long time and the Clerk having to make this statement is ridiculous. Citizens ask how there can be that position without a job description. Mayor Murakami answers with our code is very outdated.



5. Treasurer- Pro Tem Vela reporting. Looked over the budget and highlighted the issues that need to be resolved. Clerk Monday says she will pull reports for these line items and make some time to have a meeting with Administrator Dunn and Pro Tem Vela.
6. Library- Interim Manager Clark presenting. At the Christmas Bazaar they made \$58 from book sales. They are cleaning the rugs and reorganizing to make it more user friendly. They want to open one Saturday a month and in the evenings. They are getting together with the HUB and putting on a literacy fair in the Spring. The library is selling See's candy in the library for valentines day. They are moving forward with the notary services. Have connected with end of life specialist so they can work with seniors to get the paperwork they need and to know what is available to them. She is hoping that these changes will improve attendance. Jackson asks about the literacy fair and what that entails. Manager Clarks says they are having their first meeting next week so she will give more information next month. Jackson suggests a scholastic fair and they can involve all the schools. Manager Clark loves the idea.
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. Pro Tem Vela says he has spoken to the attorney about the job description to have it done by December. He also had another conversation with him and he says will get it done by February. He proposes to have the Job Description on the next agenda. He also proposes to have Resolution 17.1.1 to be put on the next agenda to change all council votes to simple majority. Motion made by Vela, seconded by Jackson. Vela, Jackson, and Dooley Aye. Murakami Abstains. Motions passes. Pro Tem Vela saying the pre-auditor is not upholding to his contract and it is holding up city business. Administrator Dunn will contact AGT and see if we can get a contract with them to replace Sargent CPA. Dooley asks if we will get a fee for cancelling the contract early. Administrator Dunn answers no. General Consensus for putting on termination of contract with Sargent CPA and hiring AGT. Administrator Dunn wants to set a date for interview for the vacant council seat. Interviews are set for February 3rd at 6. General Consensus. Mike Crow then asks for his agenda items that were read at the beginning of the meeting to be considered for the next agenda. Pro Tem Vela has Crow quickly read them again. Vela says only the first item presented can be on the agenda until the investigation is over. Motion to discuss Fire Depart conduct and business made by Vela, seconded by Jackson. Vela and Jackson Aye. Murakami and Dooley Nae. Motion is denied. ACO Johnson asked again if he can be in his evaluation. He states this is the second time his performance has been evaluated and he has not had the chance to speak on his own behalf but when the Assistant Fire Chief was evaluated he was allowed to be present. Jackson says he was not present for his evaluation. Assistant Fire Chief Murakami came in after his review. Mayor Murakami then states this is not a back and forth discussion. Attorney Jared says it is up to the council to let him into the discussion. Mayor Murakami states he does not think it is a good idea. Jackson says she would like to know what is going on first, then let him in once council has been informed. ACO Johnson says by the code that is listed on the agenda, he was suppose to be notified and given a choice to have an open session meeting. Mayor Murakami says that is a different code. Attorney Jared states when there is certain types of discipline those do need to be followed. However, this employee had his probation extended and under personnel rule 7.0 a probationary employee can be terminated at any time without appeal or hearing so those criteria do not apply. ACO Johnson would like to see in writing where his probation got extended.

XI. CLOSED BUSINESS: @7:43 PM



1. Public Employee Performance Evaluation (Gov. Code 54957(b)(1) (EMPLOYMENT, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION) Animal Control/ Code Enforcement Officer: **No action taken. Direction has been given to Administrator Dunn.**

XII. ADJOURN: