

# MIDDLETOWN LEADS

## WHAT IS MIDDLETOWN LEADS?

*Middletown Leads* is a weekly newsletter intended to connect the Middletown community by providing information about the civic undertakings of the Town.

## BUDGET SEASON

The Middletown Town Council will begin its discussions of the FY20 Budget on Monday, April 15, 2019 with the proposed Budget for the Middletown Public Library.

Like the School Department, which develops its own budget under the auspices of the Middletown School Committee, the Middletown Public Library develops its budget under the direction of the Library Board of Trustees.

While these organizations are separate entities in relation to administration and management, they are still subject to the financial authority of the Town which means that, while their department budgets are developed and proposed for adoption within the organizations, the Town Council oversees and makes final decisions on appropriations as it does with the other departments.

## MEMORIES OF THE OLD MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

How many of you remember when the Middletown Public Library was just a small building located near the corner of West Main Road and Oliphant Lane?

Children in grades 1-5 attended Oliphant School; some classes were conducted in Little Oliphant, the small building on the corner.

The library was next door, so teachers could take children on mini-field trips to get books in an actual library.

## IT'S NO LONGER JUST ABOUT BOOKS

Public libraries are no longer just repositories of books. The Middletown Public Library has become a center of activity and a multi-faceted resource for the entire community with 24-hour a day and 7-day a week services on its web site.

The library provides a connection to all the state libraries where one can even arrange access, through library loan, to get a book or materials that are unavailable locally.

The library provides computers on-site as well as Wi-Fi service that allows card-holders to stream videos or music and conduct multiple transactions at their convenience in the library, at home, or even in the parking lot! Patrons can place a book on hold, renew a book, access e-readers, or even print from home, auto, the office, etc.

It also conducts multiple activities such as the Chess Club for people of all ages and the Community Garden. In addition, there are the programs available for even the youngest patrons in the Children's Room. This is just a small sampling of the opportunities to be enjoyed at the Middletown Public Library.

It is worth noting that program attendance has increased substantially over the years – from an average of 2,333 (from FY08 to FY12) to an average of 6,134 (from FY13 to FY18).

The Middletown Public Library counts 10,195 cardholders with 6,353 being Middletown residents. The total circulation in FY18 was 138,528.

## TAXPAYER COSTS

While costs are rising faster than income, the Middletown Public Library has been able to do more with minimal increases.

The proposed increase for personnel in the FY20 budget is 0.97%. The proposed increase for Materials & Programs is 4.29%.

The proposed costs for Building Maintenance and Administration actually decreased by 2.05%. The proposed Operations Budget shows a 0.80% increase.

## STATE AID TO LIBRARIES

The state of RI State Library Grant in Aid provides funding to the libraries. In FY17, the state provided \$147,598; in FY18 state aid was \$145,593; and in FY19 state aid was \$145,601. The Governor's proposed state aid for FY20 is \$141,336.

A specified portion of the Grant-in-Aid funds provides support for mandated services related to personnel and books. The state places requirements on the libraries themselves so that the funds are used as directed. In FY17, the designated amount was \$26,598. In FY18, the amount was \$29,441 rising to \$30,000 in FY19, which is similarly anticipated in FY20.

## THE FRIENDS

A great support to the Middletown Public Library is The Friends of the Library, an organization of volunteers who maintain a bookstore where they sell donated books to raise funds that are contributed to the library. The Friends would welcome anyone who might be interested in joining in their efforts.

## FOOTNOTE

Editorial essays may appear occasionally in the following: <http://middletownleads.blogspot.com/>