

# 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.

## AMENDED SENIOR EXEMPTION

On April 15, 2019, the Middletown Town Council amended the requirements for the town's Senior Exemption program in order to provide more relief to eligible seniors.

1. The first age bracket was adjusted from 65-74 to 65-69. The second age bracket was reduced from 75+ to 70+. These changes will extend eligibility to seniors at an earlier age.
2. In addition, the income levels were adjusted so that the upper income level for eligibility was increased from \$35,640 to \$52,000.

Eligible seniors should submit an amended form no later than June 15, 2019. Seniors who believe that they might benefit from the amended exemptions should contact the Tax Assessor for clarification.

## TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP

On Saturday, April 27, 2019, the Middletown Town Council conducted an all-day workshop during which it met with all the municipal financial centers as well as the Middletown School Department.

Each department presented information related to its goals and budget proposal for FY2020. The discussions will be summarized below and in the May 4<sup>th</sup> newsletter.

## MIDDLETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The school department enrollment data reflected 2,146 students attending in the 2018-2019 school year: 592 students in grades 9-12 at Middletown High School, 694 students in grades 5-8 at Gaudet School, 145 grade 4 students in the Gaudet Learning Academy at Gaudet, 363 K-3 students at Forest Ave. Elementary School, and 350 PK-3 students at Aquidneck Elementary. (Forty students in grades K-12 are outplaced.)

In 2018-2019, 25.93% of the students are military-connected. Twenty-four full-time students attend Newport County Career & Technical Center (NACTC) at Rogers High School at a tuition rate of \$14,000 per student, and 11 students attend part-time at a tuition rate of \$7,000 per student (at a total cost of \$413,000.) Four students attend programs at Portsmouth High School at a tuition rate of \$14,000 for a cost of \$56,000. One student attends Kingston Hill Academy (Charter School) at a tuition rate of \$10,974.

Middletown Public Schools is proposing a budget of \$37,355,900 for FY2020. It is requesting a municipal appropriation of \$27,571,122, which is \$1,060,428 more than the FY19 municipal appropriation.

## MIDDLETOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Department data reflected fairly stable activities. In 2018, there were 30,569 calls for service; a total of 633 crimes against persons, property, or society; 84 DUI arrests; 669 total arrests; and 2,384 citations for various infractions. There were 2 fatal accidents in 2018 but no pedestrian fatalities in the last 9 years.

Police Chief Kewer described the additional duties assigned to each police officer as well as the current mandatory police training and the community service programs. The Chief drew attention to a number of outreach initiatives including the Citizens Police Academy and *Coffee with a Cop*, which he himself plans to implement going forward.

The 2019 data included an annual operating budget of \$783,848, an annual salary and benefits budget of \$4,471,338, and an annual capital budget of \$129,789.

There are currently 38 sworn officers and 4 civilians employed by the Middletown Police Department.

## MIDDLETOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Faerber reported that, in 2018, the Middletown Fire responded to 3,726 emergency calls which included 16 structural fires and 2,738 emergency medical calls. A review of the Fire Department history reflected an increase in total calls over the years, much of which was attributed to the aging of the population as well as the active tourist industry.

In 2018, Hazards Emergency Responses (261) included gas leaks, carbon monoxide emergencies, electrical wires down/arcings, flooding and fuel or chemical spills.

Fire Prevention activities included inspections related to smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, certificates of occupancy, fire alarm sprinkler systems, annual school inspections, and fireworks displays among others.

Training included CPR and EMT training and recertifications, NFPA certifications, and rope and water rescue among others. The Fire Department also engages in Regional Mutual Aid as well as Customer Service as related to boiler/electrical issues, water pumping, and other emergency services and such community support activities as the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Santa visits throughout the town.

Within the Capital Budget, the Fire Department is requesting replacement of a Pumper, 5 complete units of 12 Lead Cardiac Monitor-Defibrillators, 3 complete units of Automated CPR Devices, and 30 Firefighter Air Packs for self-contained breathing during firefighting.

One of the most interesting topics of discussion was the state requirement that, when the Fire Department responds to a medical emergency that involves a possible heart attack, it is required to administer CPR for 30 minutes prior to transport to a medical facility. This is a result of the state's assessment that immediate CPR is more likely to ensure survival.

## FOOTNOTE

Further description of municipal department budgets will appear in the May 4 newsletter.

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