

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.

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. Last week's newsletter reported on the Middletown School Department, which represents 63% of the FY 2020 Budget, and Public Safety (Police and Fire), which represents 12% of the FY 2020 Budget.

The following represents discussions of other departments.

ENTERPRISE FUNDS – SEWER, PARKS/RECREATION, REFUSE

Sewer Fund:

The Sewer Fund manages finances related to the construction, maintenance, operation, and repair of the Town's wastewater collection system to ensure proper collection and disposal of sewage. The Town is billed by Newport, which supplies related services; this data is used to calculate the residents' sewer maintenance fee.

FY20 major issues to be addressed include management of the Town-line Sewer Main Upgrade and the Upper Easton's Point Sewer Main Liner Project.

Capital Improvement Projects are related to improvements at the Paradise and Wave Ave. Pump Stations and the One Mile Corner area.

Parks & Recreation:

This fund manages the finances and operation of the Town's beaches, campground, parks/recreational areas and other related activities such as concessions, mooring and rental fees.

The Parks & Recreation Fund revenues come from the seasonal parking fees at the Town's beaches and campground.

Refuse & Recycling:

This fund manages the finances associated with the management of the Pay AS You Throw (PAYT) refuse and recycling program and other curbside collection activities. Although not mandatory, more than 4,000 properties participate in the system that covers operational costs, replacement costs (for totes), etc.

TAX ASSESSOR/COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

This department is charged with 1) ensuring that all ratable property is uniformly assessed as mandated by state law and local ordinances, 2) ensuring that all taxes and sewer use fees are collected, also as mandated, and 3) providing knowledgeable assistance to taxpayers and professionals.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT personnel manage 600 devices in all Town departments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays. All government systems are IT systems, and IT teams are charged with high quality and innovative technical services to all the Town departments ranging from Administrative Management to Police and Fire to Network Security among many others.

The department's use of lean IT governance models helps the Town use information technology to work smarter, improve productivity, reduce cost, and increase accessibility.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Building and Zoning services include 1) permits inspection, 2) zoning enforcement, 3) industrial waste pretreatment, i.e., grease interceptor inspections, 4) short-term rental inspections, and 5) investigation of citizen complaints with appropriate enforcement action.

The most important initiative for FY20 is the implementation of new state building codes that will go into effect on Aug. 1, 2019.

SENIOR CENTER

The most important accomplishment at the Senior Center this year was the completion of a Needs Assessment.

The most important goal related to Middletown seniors in FY20 is to develop and implement a plan for Senior Housing.

MIDDLETOWN PREVENTION COALITION

The most important mission of the Middletown Prevention Coalition is to coordinate efforts to reduce substance use and abuse while promoting health and wellness.

Particular concerns are the recent spikes in trends of usage exemplified by a spike in 7th grade (2018) prevalence of use, which has surpassed 8th grade prevalence of use for cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs as well as for prevalence of use of prescription drugs for all grades 9-12.

FINANCE/HUMAN RESOURCES

The Finance Department provides proactive financial and human resource management in the areas of 1) accounting, 2) purchasing, and 3) personnel relations.

Its budget is 2% lower than in FY19, with 91% related to management personnel and 9% for operations.

FOOTNOTE

Next week's issue will discuss the remaining Town cost centers.
Editorial essays may appear occasionally at the following website: <http://middletownleads.blogspot.com/>