

At a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Middletown, RI held at the Middletown Town Hall, 350 East Main Road, Middletown, RI on Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 10:00 A.M.

Council President Robert J. Sylvia, Presiding

Vice President Paul M. Rodrigues, arrives at 10:02 a.m.

Councillor Henry F. Lombardi, Jr.

Councillor M. Theresa Santos

Councillor Dennis B. Turano

Councillor Antone C. Viveiros

Councillor Barbara A. VonVillas, Members Present

AMENDED – April 25, 2018

AMENDED – April 24, 2018

POSTED AND AMENDED– April 23, 2018

Wendy J.W. Marshall, Town Clerk

Town of Middletown

Town Hall – 350 East Main Road

Middletown, Rhode Island 02842

Dear Ms. Marshall:

Pursuant to the provisions of Article II, Section 203 of the Town Charter and in accordance with Sections 42-46-2., 42-46-4., 42-46-5., and 42-46-6., RIGL, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Town Council to formally consider, discuss and act upon the following items of business. All items on this agenda, may be considered, discussed and voted upon.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

- 1. Application for Special Event Permit from St. George's School for Reunion Weekend to be held on Saturday, May 5, 2018, Luncheon from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm and Dinner from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. (Event to be held on St. George's School Property)**
- 2. Appointment of two (2) members to the 275th Anniversary Committee.**
- 3. Communication of the Antone Viveiros, Chairman, Dennis Turano, Vice Chairman, Thomas Heaney, Member and Larry Connell, Member of the Tax Exploratory Subcommittee, re: Tax Exploration Subcommittee Final Proposal.**
- 4. At the request of Councillor Viveiros, Resolution of the Council, re: Requesting Legislators to engage legislative counsel to draft the required bills to amend the existing legislation regarding Middletown**

tax assessment methodology as desired by the Town.

5. At the request of Councillor Viveiros, Resolution of the Council, re: Requesting Legislators to engage legislative counsel to draft the required bills to amend the existing legislation regarding Middletown tax levy to be capped at 2%.

6. Review of Town of Middletown Proposed Budgets and Capital Improvement Plan - General Fund, Parks & Recreation Fund, Sewer Fund and Refuse & Recycling Fund for Fiscal Year 2018–2019 and matters related thereto.

Said meeting will be held at the Middletown Town Hall, 350 East Main Road, Middletown, Rhode Island 02842 on Saturday, April 28, 2018 at 10:00 A.M.

Robert J. Sylvia, President

Middletown Town Council

cc : Town Council Public Library Finance Director

Town Administrator Town Solicitor School Committee

This meeting location is accessible to the handicapped. Individuals requiring interpreter services for the hearing-impaired should notify the Town Clerk's Office at 847-0009 not less than 48 hours before this meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Council President Sylvia noted the Budget Public Hearing dates are May 23, 2018 and May 30, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

1. Application for Special Event Permit from St. George's School for Reunion Weekend to be held on Saturday, May 5, 2018, Luncheon from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm and Dinner from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. (Event to be held on St. George's School Property)

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to grant said Special Event Permit.

2. Appointment of two (2) members to the 275th Anniversary Committee.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to appoint Andrew Bacon and Gary Paquette to the 275th Anniversary Committee.

3. Communication of the Antone Viveiros, Chairman, Dennis Turano, Vice Chairman, Thomas Heaney, Member and Larry Connell, Member of the Tax Exploratory Subcommittee, re: Tax Exploration Subcommittee Final Proposal.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to receive said communication and schedule Final Proposal Presentation to the May 7, 2018, Regular Meeting of the Council.

4. At the request of Councillor Viveiros, Resolution of the Council, re: Requesting Legislators to engage legislative counsel to draft the required bills to amend the existing legislation regarding Middletown tax assessment methodology as desired by the Town.

Councillor VonVillas presented research information which she had conducted, entered here:

Councillor VonVillas noted concern that further study regarding the Tax Exploration's request is needed by an outside source, prior to taking action.

Vice President Rodrigues, thanked Councillor VonVillas for her research, but noted he disagrees.

Councillor Santos explained that seniors maybe leaving the area because of the cost to upkeep their homes, noting that their income may not allow them to afford upkeep. Ms. Santos noted the need for building housing for seniors.

Councillor Turano thanked Councillor VonVillas and noted that seniors are only one group, young families another; the current tax program may have worked in the past. Mr. Turano explained that the committee tried to take the best information out there to make sure taxes will be equitable in the Town.

Councillor Lombardi thanked Councillor VonVillas, noting that the committee has been working on the tax issue for a long time and now the issue should go to the state to be vetted.

Councillor Viveiros noted the process followed to suggest this method of taxing. Mr. Viveiros explained that the committee tried to keep taxes fair and this method could be used statewide.

Councillor VonVillas explained that the cost to maintain a house is not the issue, it is regarding tax increases. Ms. VonVillas suggests an unbiased source review the proposal. Councillor VonVillas noted that she is opposed to moving the issue too quickly.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted to pass said resolution; Councillor VonVillas voted NO to said

motion.

5. At the request of Councillor Viveiros, Resolution of the Council, re: Requesting Legislators to engage legislative counsel to draft the required bills to amend the existing legislation regarding Middletown tax levy to be capped at 2%.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted to pass said resolution; Councillor VonVillas voted NO to said motion.

6. Review of Town of Middletown Proposed Budgets and Capital Improvement Plan - General Fund, Parks & Recreation Fund, Sewer Fund and Refuse & Recycling Fund for Fiscal Year 2018–2019 and matters related thereto.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to begin review of the Proposed Budgets and Capital Improvement Plan General Fund, Parks & Recreation Fund, Sewer Fund and Refuse & Recycling Fund for Fiscal Year 2018–2019.

Present were Town Administrator Shawn Brown, Finance Director Marc Tanguay, Deputy Finance Director Elaine Colarusso, Accounting Manager Barbara Fenlon, Deputy Town Clerk Karin Clancey and Town Solicitor Peter B. Regan.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown thanked the Finance Department for preparing the budget documentation.

Council President Sylvia noted the great job on the budget and hopes the process in years to come will be expedited.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown noted a change in the budget, a reduction by \$100,000. The Town tax rate is now residential \$15.42 and commercial \$20.44, which is a 2.7% increase. The Town is proposing 2% and the School is proposing 4%.

Vice President Rodrigues recused himself from acting on the Senior Citizens budget, due to a possible conflict of interest.

Senior Center Budget

Town Administrator Shawn Brown noted that the NEARI contract increase is 1% on July 1st and 1% on January 1st and Healthcare is 5%, which is shown in all budgets that NEARI employees effect.

Senior Citizens Director Arleen Kaull and Board Member Karen Johnson were present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Senior Budget –

Senior Citizens Director Arleen Kaull explained that the senior van is not in the proposed budget, noting the van will not cost the taxpayers.

Town Administrator Shawn Brown explained the cost to the taxpayers would be the employee to drive the van.

Discussion centered around window replacement at the senior center, monies for the windows allocated from the CDBG grant, the senior center needs additional space, if the Berkeley Peckham School is converted to Senior housing the Senior Director requests the gym be additional space for the senior center, a safety issue of a cable to be run underground to the sign out front of the senior center, the chimney at the senior center requires flashing, there are basic supplies and maintenance in the budget, the center returns monies not used in the budget, the seniors have many fundraisers to offset costs, the senior population in the town is growing, the employee for the van would be a union member being paid between \$12.00 and \$15.00 per hour, the windows were last replaced in 2005, there is no savings to switch from window air conditioners to central air, a need for a qualified driver trained in CPR and medical for the seniors, the heating fuel for the senior center is on budget this year and the gym at Berkley Peckham School can be used now if the heat in the building is turned on.

Vice President Rodrigues returned to the dais.

Planning Budget –

Town Planner Ronald Wolanski was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Town Planner Ronald Wolanski reviewed the Planning Department Core Programs.

Town Planner Ronald Wolanski reviewed the memorandum below, which he presented to the Town Council.

Discussion centered around salaries (step increases and contractual increases), prioritizing Planning Department work at the direction of the Town Council, the Atlantic Beach District and West Main Road/Coddington Highway area consulting services.

Building Department Budget –

Building Official Jack Kane was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Building Official Jack Kane noted staffing changes in the department, the Assistant Building Official has completed his certifications and budget increase is only due to contractual issues.

Discussion centered around online permitting, Mobile 311 tracking zoning compliance, temporary clerical support, short term rentals, state building permit fees, which may cause a decrease in Town revenue and new employees are not in the Pension Plan they are in the defined contribution plan.

Department of Public Works/Sewer/Refuse & Recycling/Town Engineer/Beach Budgets

Public Works Director Tom O'Loughlin, Town Engineer Warren Hall and Refuse & Recycling Coordinator Will Cronin were present to review the budgets and answer Council questions.

Discussion centered around the campground rates, sewer fees increasing and have a net decrease to the average family, paying debt service for the Newport water pollution plant, road repairs, Mobile 311, CIP requests, proceeding with the recommendations from the Beach Sub-Committee, utility work is tied into the red road projects, SCADA System, suggesting the DPW work on smaller projects in house, Wave Avenue pump station is the only pump station hard wired, no change in the DPW operating budget and the availability of mini trash bags.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to recess for 20 minutes.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to reconvene this meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Council President Sylvia noted the Budget Public Hearing dates are May 23, 2018 and May 30, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

Town Solicitor's Budget –

Town Solicitor Peter B. Regan was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Town Solicitor Peter B. Regan explained that the Solicitor supports Town Department Heads, Town Boards and oversees Town litigation, noting there is no increase in the budget.

Discussion centered around a small amount of litigation, no major changes are anticipated, there will be four contracts this year which may be handled informally and that there is no increase in the budget.

Town Solicitor Peter B. Regan left the meeting at 1:15 p.m.

School Department Budget –

Present, representing the School Department, were Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger, Assistant Superintendent Linda Savastano, Facilities Director Dave Fontes, School Committee Chair Kellie

DiPalma Simone, Vice Chair Theresa Spengler (arrives at 1:20 p.m.) and members Douglas Arnold, Liana Ferreira Fenton and William O'Connell.

School Committee Chair Kellie DiPalma Simone addressed the Council noting that this year is another challenging budget year, reductions have been made, eliminating positions and supplies, etc., explaining the major cost drivers in the budget are the salary increases.

School Superintendent Rosemarie Kraeger, addressed the Council, explaining it is another challenging year, keeping reductions away from classrooms. There is a reduction of state aid. Mrs. Kraeger noted the request for 4% is just to maintain the current services.

Facilities Director Dave Fontes noted that monies have been saved within the school facilities budget. The staff continues to complete in house projects, changing to LED lighting, change of security vendors, HVAC contract decreased, etc.

Discussion centered around renovations at Gaudet School, electricity costs, natural gas costs, safety walk with the Police and Fire Department through the schools, graduation rate, non-English speaking students, cost for Regional Special Education, per student costs, definition of homeless student/Middletown rate, technology budget, employee salaries/teacher contracts, group homes, guidance counselors, grant opportunities and Federal funding.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to recess this meeting at 3:05 p.m.

On motion of Councillor Lombardi, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to reconvene this meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Fire Department Budget –

Fire Chief Peter Faerber and Fire Marshal Robert McCall were present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Fire Chief Peter Faerber and Lieutenant Robert McCall presented a Power point presentation to the Council, which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Discussion centered around the number and types of emergency calls per year, there are no CIP requests in the proposed budget, key boxes for homes and businesses, grants, mutual aid, dispatchers and pensions.

Finance Budget –

Finance Director Marc Tanguay was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Finance Director Marc Tanguay viewed the following:

Discussion centered around payroll.

Tax Assessor and Tax Collection Budget-

Tax Assessor George Durgin was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Tax Assessor George Durgin reviewed the following:

Discussion centered around potential claims from the revaluation, military exemptions, veteran's exemptions, communication with the military and itemized tax bills.

Town Administrator Budget-

Town Administrator Shawn Brown noted there is no drastic change in his proposed budget. Mr. Brown explained that the office has spent a lot of time with residents concerned with development, software projects and board and committees.

Support Services Budget-

Town Administrator Shawn Brown noted that there are only increases in the electric and gas line items in this proposed budget.

Town Clerk Budget-

Town Clerk Wendy J.W. Marshall was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Town Clerk Wendy J. W. Marshall noted that the Town Clerk's Office provides the following services:

- o Boards and Committees**
- o Canvassing/Elections**
- o Cemetery Maintenance**
- o Keeper of Town Permanent Records and Other duties**
- o Land Evidence/Records Archival**
- o Licensing**
- o Municipal Court**
- o Probate Services**
- o Town Council**
- o Vital Records**

Discussion centered around the part time position becoming full time, an increase in advertising costs, increase in the Town Code to allow for a section for Town Boards/Committee charges and the upcoming Elections costs.

Police Budget-

Police Chief Anthony Pesare, Deputy Chief Ferenc Karoly, Lieutenant Jason Ryan and Administrative Assistant Lisa Sisson were present to

review the budget and answer Council questions.

Police Chief Anthony Pesare addressed the Council, reviewing page 201, entered here:

Chief Pesare also mentioned statistical information regarding the department, which is in the 2017 Annual Report of the Middletown Police Department.

Discussion centered around the request for a van, mental health training (which is an unfunded mandate), gun control within the Town and training of the beach staff.

IT Department Budget-

IT Director Matthew Wainwright was present to review the budget and address Council questions.

IT Director Matthew Wainwright addressed the Council reviewing the following

Mr. Wainwright reviewed the following CIP request:

Discussion centered around searching for an intern to assist the department, licensing software increase, running fiber optic cable to the beach, updating IT storage, copier replacement, WIFI at the

campground and the amount of the total budget request.

Middletown Prevention Coalition Budget-

MPC Coordinator Lori Verderosa and MPC Chair Tom Lyons were present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

MPC Coordinator Lori Verderosa reviewed the following:

MPC Chair Tom Lyons reviewed the following handout, entered here:

Nathaniel Baldwin, MHS Senior, addressed the Council thanking them for support and noted the importance of Islanders Committed, which has assisted in him making healthier lifestyle choices.

Andrew Yang, MHS Senior, addressed the Council thanking them for the funding and explaining the importance of the Islanders Committed Club, which has assisted him in preparing for college.

Councillor Santos recused herself from acting on the Historical Society Civic Appropriation request, due to a possible conflict of interest.

Civic Appropriations Budget-

Finance Director Marc Tanguay noted that the budget proposal is level funded; however, some requests were for additional funding.

Town Council Budget-

Town Clerk Wendy J.W. Marshall was present to review the budget and answer Council questions.

Town Clerk Wendy J.W. Marshall noted that the increases in the budget are due to the cost of the inauguration, cost of the 275th Town Anniversary, the membership dues to the RI League of Cities and Towns and based on the current year's spending.

On motion of Vice President Rodrigues, duly seconded, it was voted unanimously to adjourn said meeting at 6:01 P.M.

Wendy J.W. Marshall, CMC

Council Clerk

**Supporting documentation is available at
<http://clerkshq.com/default.ashx?clientsite=Middletown-ri>**