

TOWN HALL NEWSLETTER

Middlefield and Rockfall

Volume 1, Number 1

Quarter 1 - 2024

First Selectman's Message

WRITTEN BY BOB YAMARTINO

We are pleased to launch the inaugural issue of the Middlefield and Rockfall Newsletter.

During the "Middlefield's Future" meetings with town boards and commissions, strong interest was expressed in improving communication of town government happenings. One result is this newsletter, which we hope you will find informative and helpful in learning about what is going on in our town. We want to share some events of the past several months, as well as important upcoming initiatives and events.

More than 100 individuals are needed to fully operate our town – from town employees and elected officials, to board & commission members and the fire department, plus many other dedicated volunteers – all of whom put in countless hours of work each year.

In this issue, you will read about some of our many collective accomplishments and future plans from townhall, land use office, public works department, volunteer fire company, WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority), senior services, park and recreation, Levi Coe Library, Beseck Lake Environmental Committee and many other boards and commissions.

We have included useful tips on how to receive automatic text or email notifications from the town website. These messages will alert you as news is posted and include meeting announcements, agendas, minutes, and emergency notifications. For more timely updates on what is happening, please visit our town website: middlefieldct.org

Last year, we held the first in a series of joint meetings with all Boards and Commissions to discuss Middlefield's future. In addition, every household received an invitation to participate in a survey regarding Middlefield's future. Based on those discussions, and in conjunction with the results of the town-wide survey about our future, we continue to work on the issues most important to town and its residents: preserving our rural character, developing our local recreational opportunities, communicating with residents, and modifying our policies and ordinances. Key initiatives include: Development of an ordinance addressing blight, responsible management of conservation land, emergency egress for Beseck Lake neighborhood, multi-use trail along the old trolley bed.

A key component of making informed decisions moving forward is an understanding of changes in our town's demographics. If you would like to be informed of these demographic shifts and their effect on our town, please join us on April 2 at 7:00 in the Community Center auditorium for a public hearing / presentation by Goman and York.

Many folks have expressed interest in renewing Old Homes Days celebration. If you would like to volunteer to help, please reach out to Bob Yamartino's office at 860-349-7114 x0, or join us at 6:30pm on Thursday, April 4, at the Community Center.

As you read this newsletter, our hope is that you gain a sense of the incredible depth and breadth of the services, activities, programs and events offered by our wonderful town volunteers and staff. Thank you to those that have stepped up for reappointment: Housing Authority - Judy Smith, Mark D'Orvilliers; Inland Wetlands - Charlie Zieminski, Bob Veeley, Rob Poturniki; ZBA - Chris Champain, Michael Janis, Peter Neidhardt, Mike Olszewski; WPCA - Bob Monthei; P&Z - Jay Brown, Eric Eckblade, Nate Kirschner, Scott Wheeler; Conservation- Brian McDermott, Robin Heath; Park & Rec - Chris Hurlburt, Cindy Sanchez, and Amanda Caccamo. If you would like to get involved, please consider joining a Board or Commission. Currently, we have an urgent need for two Rockfall residents to join WPCA.

Cheers!

Bob





Robert C. Yamartino
First Selectman



James R. Irish
Selectman



Carol L. Bufithis
Selectwoman



Michael J. Skelps
Board of Finance

Meet Your Elected Officials!

Newly elected Middlefield Town Officials were sworn in to office at a ceremony on Sunday, November 19th, 2023 at the Middlefield Community Center. These elected officials are the successors of the Middlefield town government that was established over 150 years ago in 1866. All citizens were invited to attend and witness this civic event.

The administration of the Oath of Office was given by The Honorable Judge Joseph Marino to Tonya Hogan, Town Clerk.

Administration of Oath of Office was then given by Town Clerk Tonya Hogan to those newly elected.



Mary M. Wolak
Board of Finance



Susan McNamara
Board of Finance



Tonya Hogan
Town Clerk



Anne L. Olszewski
Tax Collector



Mary Ann Zieminski
Treasurer



Kathleen M. Kokoszka
Board of Assessment Appeals

and Your Recently Appointed Commissioners!

We are excited to welcome these newly appointed and highly capable individuals to our Boards and Commissions. We cannot wait to work with them and see the amazing contributions they will make to Middlefield. Thank You for stepping up!

... TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Kyle Overturf worked for DEEP as an Environmental Connecticut Police officer for 32 years. He was on the Atlantic State Marine Fishery Commission and is currently serving on the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners.

Brian Dumas grew up working on the family Dumas Christmas Tree farm in Durham. He is pursuing a degree in Environmental Science. He wants to help improve the access to and the use of the town's recreational areas.

... TO INLAND WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES AGENCY

Nancy Senick is a lifelong resident of Middlefield and an avid hiker. Recently retired, she had a 35 year career in IT, working with financial services. She ended her career at UCONN Health as the head of application development and business intelligence.

Rich Uznanski loves swamps and wetlands, which led to his thesis on the leopard frogs in Middlefield to complete a masters in science. He also has a PHD in Biology and to this day continues to have a keen interest in experiential and theoretical ecology.

Daria Vander Veer is recently retired from Yale's office of registrar. She was a previous member of Inland Wetlands serving 3 terms, ending in the mid-2000s.

... TO ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Stephen Adams, a state corrections officer and graduate of University of Rhode Island, is the father of 3 young children and wishes to keep the small town feel yet build the town its strengths.

Town Website Offers Automatic Notifications

Do you want to **stay connected** with the town? Get involved and informed by signing up for text and/or email notifications using the new town website! By using the notification system, you will be able to see the latest news and announcements from multiple Middlefield Boards and Commissions! There is no fee for joining. The website enables users to customize their notification preferences, making it easily accessible and personalized. Follow these directions to sign up and stay informed:

1. Go to www.middlefieldct.org;
2. Create an account by clicking button labeled, "Website Sign-In" on top right-hand corner;
3. Use mouse/trackpad to hover over the "How Do I..." tab;
4. Look under, "Sign up for" and click "Notifications";
5. Select/click on either the icon for (email) or cell phone (text message).



Check out our website by scanning this QR code using the camera feature of your phone!

AVAILABLE NOTIFICATIONS:

- **Agendas**
 - Board of Finance
 - Board of Selectman
 - Charter Revision Commission
 - Conservation Commission
 - Durham Middlefield Interlocal Agreement Advisory Board
 - Economic Development
 - Firehouse Building Committee
 - Housing Authority
 - Inland Wetlands
 - Lake Beseck Environment Committee
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Water Pollution Control Authority
 - Zoning Board of Appeals
- **Alerts**
 - Beseck Beach Openings/Closings
 - Budget Announcements
 - Emergency Alerts
- **Road Conditions & Closures**
- **Solicitors**
- **Warming/Cooling Center Openings**
- **Bid Postings**
 - Fire Dept. Bid Opportunities
 - Park and Rec Bid Opportunities
- **Calendar**
 - Main Calendar
 - Park and Rec
 - Town Meetings
- **News Flash**
 - Animal Control
 - Assessor
 - First Selectman
 - Public Safety
 - Registrar of Voters
 - Senior/Social Services
 - Tax Collector
 - Town Clerk
 - Transfer Station
 - Holiday Hours
 - Water Pollution Control Authority

Assessor's Identifies Tax Relief for Low Income Elderly/Disabled

Qualifying low income elderly and totally disabled homeowners may be eligible for Real Estate property tax relief. The 2023 income limit is \$53,400 for a married couple and \$43,800 for a single person. The application period for the Elderly and Totally Disabled Homeowners Program begins February 1, 2024 and ends May 15, 2024. If you have previously applied, you need to reapply every two years from the time your original application was submitted. Please contact the Middlefield Assessor's Office with any questions or to apply if you are eligible.

CONTACT THE ASSESSOR

Please visit Pam Deziel at the Assessor's Office for more information on programs. You may access materials through our website by scanning the QR code below. The website also has interactive GIS (Geographic Information System) maps to view additional property information.

Email:
pdeziel@middlefieldct.org

Phone Number:
860-349-7111



Low Income Veterans May Also Qualify for Tax Relief



Are You Eligible for a Veteran's Tax Benefit?

Qualifying veteran's who have filed their DD214 with the town clerk may receive a veterans exemption.

Qualifying low income veterans may be eligible for the Additional Veterans Exemption. The 2023 income limit is \$53,400 for a married couple and \$43,800 for a single person. The application period for the Additional Veteran's Exemption is open:

February 1, 2024 - October 1, 2024

The Town of Middlefield also offers a Local Option Additional Veteran's Exemption for qualifying veterans. The 2023 income limit is \$71,400 for a married couple and \$61,800 for a single person. The application period for the local Additional Veteran's Exemption is open:

February 1, 2024 - October 1, 2024

Please contact the Middlefield Assessor's Office to apply.

Assessor (cont) - Renter's Rebate Program

Low income elderly and totally disabled renters may be eligible for the Renter's Rebate Program. The 2023 income limit is \$53,400 for a married couple and \$43,800 for a single person. Proof of income received in 2023 and rent and utilities paid in 2023 are required. The application period is April 1 to October 1, 2024. Additional information is available on the town's website. Please contact the Middlefield Assessor's Office to apply.

Land Use Office: Controlling and Supporting Town Development

What does the Land Use Dept. Do?

This office assists in guiding the growth, preservation, and development of the community. The office and staff utilize the Zoning Regulations, Wetland Regulations, and Plan of Conservation and Development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The Land Use Department Staff coordinates with the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission. If you have questions, please visit the Land Use and Building Depts, located at the Community Center, upper level.

All About the Planning and Zoning Commission:

The Middlefield Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) is responsible for reviewing and acting on land use applications for municipal, commercial and residential development. The Commission proactively undertakes proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations to keep with development trends or Statute changes. It also considers changes to the Zoning Map to provide greater consistency with the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD). The Commission is responsible for the updating of the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 years.

Inland Wetlands Permit - Why is it important

As all municipal wetland agencies, the Middlefield IWWA implements the State's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act. The Commission's regulations and criteria for decision making are based exclusively on the Act itself. These criteria direct the commission to consider the short and long term effects of the proposed activities on wetlands and to seek alternatives that minimize impact while allowing property owners use of their land.

A wetlands permit is generally required for activities in or within 100 feet of a wetland or watercourse. An activity further than 100 feet away may also be regulated if it is likely to impact a wetland or watercourse. The town wetlands map provides a very general location of wetlands and watercourses, but does not depict all wetlands and should be used only as a guide. Any one considering activities on their property should contact the Middlefield Wetland Agent to determine if a permit is required.

Regulated activities include, but are not limited to, cutting trees or clearing the understory, grubbing, grading, paving, excavation, filling, depositing or removing of material, discharging storm water, and all septic work within 100 feet of a wetlands or watercourse requires a Wetlands permit. Decisions regarding exempt activities can only be made by the Middlefield Inlands Wetlands Commission. The permit application can be found online on the Town of Middlefield website.

Zoning Board of Appeals:

Under Connecticut law, any municipality having a Zoning Commission must also have a Zoning Board of Appeals. The authority of the Board is set forth in General Statutes 8-5 et seq., and the Middlefield Zoning Regulations contain corresponding provisions. The essential purpose of a zoning board of appeals is to provide elasticity to otherwise rigid zoning enactments, so as to prevent arbitrary or unconstitutional application thereof. In short, if strict enforcement of a particular zoning regulation results in harsh application to a property owner, the Zoning Board of Appeals is the forum to seek redress.

Welcome Bill DeMatteo - New Building Official

The Building Department has a new Building Official, Bill DeMatteo, who started working here in November of 2023! Bill would like to remind any resident who is doing any type of work to their home and who may have any questions, to reach out to him or Nancy Davidson, the administrative assistant at 860-349-7123 to see if a permit is required.

Interested in a Building Permit?

Building permits are essential for any home or commercial improvement projects. The Building Dept. can answer any questions regarding renovations to your home, additions, mechanical work including heating equipment such as wood stoves, chimney liners, furnaces, boilers, etc. Some other things that would require a permit prior to work are electrical service upgrades, generators and solar work. If you are interested and in need of a permit, there are online applications available through the Middlefield website, or, if you are having difficulties, please reach out to us by phone.

BUILDING DEPT. FAQs

Why do I need a building permit?

The purpose for a permit is to ensure that the proposed work will be reviewed and inspected, to assure work is done safely and per the current Connecticut State Building Code.

How do I contact the Building Department?

Email: wdematteo@middlefieldct.org

Phone Number: 860-349-7123

Address: 405 Main Street (Community Center)

Where can I access the online building permits?

Scan this QR code to view the online building permit application!



Public Works:

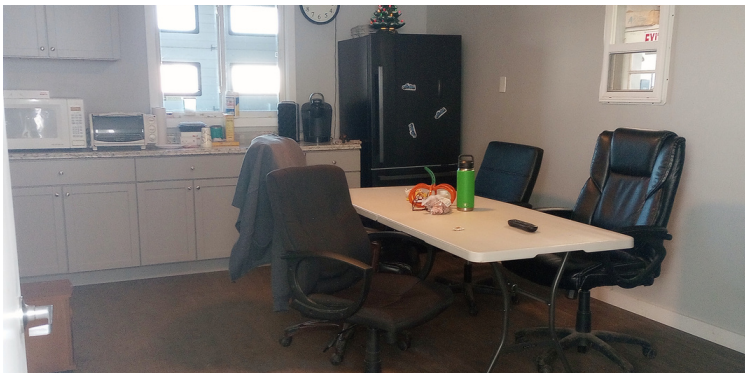
New Members Join Public Works:

Public Works gained two new members, Ken Rushford and Joe Winiarski who started this past December. Public Works is delighted to have them, and look forward to working together and meet Middlefield's needs. In the picture below, from left to right are Mike Olszewski, Ken Rushford, Mark Overstreet and Joe Winiarski. Not pictured are Jason Wickham and Eric Ness.



Public Works Lunch Room Improvements:

The Public Works Department has completed an upgrade for town facilities, creating a nice clean lunchroom environment for town personnel. The lunchroom is now a great place to enjoy lunch and decompress during breaks. Along with the lunchroom, the town garage space was reorganized and is now more efficient to use. All renovations were completed in-house contributing to substantial savings for the town.



Dump Truck Has a New Life:

Public Works completed a successful conversion of a 2000 dump truck to a general purpose service and maintenance vehicle. The crew replaced the rear body with a lift gate giving new life to the vehicle. This cost around \$2500 and all labor was done in-house. Well done!



Get Ready for BRUSH PICKUP

The Public Works Department is tentatively scheduling the annual spring brush pick up to start on Monday, April 15th. The exact date will be announced in late March or early April.

All brush must be at curbside before the start date to ensure pickup; only one pass will be made on each street. Since this service is provided to residents throughout town, we must limit each household to one truckload of brush.

In getting your brush pile ready, it needs to be:

- Placed at the curb.
- Place the cut end facing the street.
- Stacked it in a pile, 6' wide by 5' high.
- Branches cannot exceed 8' in length, or 4" in diameter.
- It must be 10' away from any obstacles, such as telephone poles, mail boxes, fences, vehicles, power boxes, etc. (Otherwise, the equipment cannot maneuver to pick up the pile. It is also a safety issue for the crew.)
- NO stumps, processed wood, lumber, or construction material are allowed.
- NO brush from newly cut trees or lot clearing are allowed.

This service is for normal clean up and yard maintenance. Piles not conforming to these requirements will not be picked up.

If you have questions, please contact Jay Wickham, Supervisor of Public Works, at 860-349-7118 or jwickham@middlefieldct.org, from 7:00AM to 3:30PM.

Economic Development Committee

EDC Continues Local Businesses Outreach:

Bob Yamartino, Dave Driver from Goman & York and Jen Huddleston, EDC Chairperson, continue to meet with some of the largest tax payer, providing an opportunity for open dialogue. This helps the First Selectman and EDC to understand businesses challenges and how the town can contribute to their success. At this point we have met with Zygo Business Unity Manager, Jennifer Hellberg; Rogers Manufacturing Corp. CEO, Derek Shoemaker; John Lyman from Lyman Orchards; Sean Hayes, manager of Powder Ridge; and the entire management team of Victory Church.

EDC Reestablishes Priorities for the New Year

The EDC is comprised of 5 volunteers (John Giammateo, Darin Overton, Ruth Vizard, Sean Hayes, and Jen Huddleston). Our priorities lie in maintaining Middlefield's rural character and increasing the tax base to keep living affordable while funding necessary services.

(Continued on Page 6)

EDC Priorities (From Page 5)

We have teamed up with the consulting firm, Goman & York who helps us stay at the forefront of data analytics, grant funding opportunities, community engagement, and professional advice. We have already marketed all available commercial properties regionally and nationally.

Our local business community is the foundation of our town's economic success. Using cell phone data, our partners at Goman & York have analyzed the numbers of visitors to town and where they are visiting from. By understanding our town's visitor's behaviors, we can encourage them to patronize our locally owned businesses. Local businesses success helps us attract other businesses, thereby increasing our tax base and strengthening the fabric of our town.

You're Invited! Town Demographics Study Presentation:

Don Poland from Goman & York conducted an in-depth study of the Rt. 66 corridor, as well as Middlefield as a whole. He presented his data to the Economic Development Commission, as well as Planning and Zoning. We all would like to invite residents of Middlefield to come hear his presentation on April 2nd so that we are all better informed about impacts of workforce housing, more kids in school, and other areas of concern. The better informed we are, the better decisions we make.

Middlefield Way-Finder Signs!

Our commission members are actively looking to improve the experience of town visitors by installing helpful and attractive signs indicating which way to heavily visited areas of attraction. These will be placed on town-owned roads, and possibly state owned routes outside of town.

EDC Helps Route 66 Corridor Businesses Boom:

Since Rt. 66 is already an area of commercial development in Middletown & Middlefield, our commission aims to boost tax revenue along our section of this corridor by facilitating business development and success. Access to sewer and water is key to such a dense area. We have met with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce Revitalization Commission to request funding for a study of this corridor and the impact of adding sewer and water.

Coming Soon: Stay Updated with the EDC Through Middlefield's Improved Website!

We aim to offer clearer communications with residents, town government, as well as potential businesses or tenants that may be looking to locate in Middlefield.

Looking for a Multiuse Trail to Durham?

Would you like to be able to jog, walk or ride a bike to Durham without having to be on a busy and dangerous road? We're currently offering spaces on a task force to explore options for the best possible route from Peckham Park to Durham. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jen Huddleston at edc@middlefieldct.org.

Middlefield Volunteer Fire Co.

2023 Recapped

2023 was another active year for your volunteer firefighters. There is a lot that goes into this organization to ensure we provide the highest level of service possible to our town.



While these are documented statistics and counts, there are hundreds to thousands of additional man hours our members put in that contribute to our mission. From various purchasing committees, fundraisers, administrative functions, and more, these numbers are a snapshot of the dedication shown by our members.

We have to thank our elected town officials, town board members, and most of all our residents we serve. Your support fuels our passion and having a community that backs our volunteers is key to our success.

We are extremely proud of these numbers and can't thank our membership enough for their ongoing effort and commitment!

New Fire Service Course Offered at Coginchaug:

The Middlefield and Durham Volunteer Fire Companies have partnered with Coginchaug Regional High School to offer an "Introduction to Fire Service" course. The course is designed to familiarize students with all aspects of firefighting. Students will learn the basics of fire department operations, fire science, fire protection systems, building construction, and vehicle extrication through projects, activities, interactive lessons, and field trips. The class will be taught by experienced firefighters and guest certified fire instructors utilizing the most current firefighting research, guidelines and standards.

3rd Annual Santa Express Event:

2023 was our third year of bringing Santa to visit around town, delivering gifts to the children of Middlefield and Rockfall, and this year was our busiest year yet visiting close to 100 homes. The smiles and laughs that were shared are what the holiday season is all about and really makes us appreciate our small town community that much more!



NEW Firehouse Proposal

Members of the town wide Firehouse Building Committee have spent countless hours, working diligently to find a project that can be presented to the town that meets the operational needs of the fire company while keeping our taxpayer's fiscal impact in mind. In 2022, we were awarded a federal grant to be used for the firehouse project that would provide over \$2 million dollars in funding for construction of an emergency operations center (EOC) to be included in the building. The design phase of this project began following COVID and on the tail end of a massive increase in labor and material costs. The committee is in the process of securing a bridging architect use the current design and create a specification document for a design / build RFP and to help pursue grants for the project. Stay tuned as we hope to hold public information sessions over the spring.

In the meantime, we invite you to review information on the current firehouse, including steps that have been taken to identify mechanical, structural, and functional needs of our volunteer company firehouse. We are looking forward to a formal presentation of the project with our findings in the coming months.

Check out the presentation by
scanning this QR code:



Fire Dept. Update Equipment:

In 2024, we'll be bringing numerous new fire apparatus to update our aging fleet.

- Engine 2 is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2024. It is currently being built by a local fire apparatus manufacturer, Gowans Knight, located in Watertown, CT. This will replace the current engine which is over 21 years old. This will enhance safety of our members and increase the operational capabilities to be able to do more with less manpower. This apparatus was funded through the town's capital non-recurring fund, which budgets smaller amounts of money every year to save for the full replacement cost.
- The replacement for Brush 6 is also under construction, being built by Unruh Fire, located in Kansas. This will replace the current brush truck; a repurposed 1973 military truck. The new truck has additional safety features far above the current truck, as well as all wheel drive capabilities and additional fire suppression equipment. The majority of funding (about \$215,000) was provided through FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (AFG).

Our volunteers spent many hours preparing for and applying for this grant and other grants, and we are proud to say we were one of the very few departments awarded funding for apparatus that year. Delivery is expected in the next couple of months.

Are You Interested in Being a Middlefield Fire Volunteer?

Looking for a new years resolution that will keep you active, challenge you, and allow you to give back to your community?

Help us continue the almost 90 year tradition of volunteer fire service in Middlefield.

Reach out to us and learn more about how you can get involved!



Interested in joining MVFC?
Scan the QR code to register!

Senior and Social Services:

A Triumphant Holiday Season for Senior & Social Services!

The holiday season was active for the Middlefield Senior & Social Services Department as we helped to support 25 family's as well as the residents of Sargarloaf Terrace through our Thanksgiving & Christmas program. This program has been supported by generous donations from the Durham/Middlefield Girl Scouts who put together over 50 gift bags that are donated. Additionally, each individual or family also receives a gift card from the Middlefield Community Services Council.

In Need of Energy Assistance?

The State of CT Energy Assistance Program is in full swing, residents who meet the financial criteria are encouraged to contact the office at 860-349-7121 to make an appointment.

Successful 4th Year of "Adopt a Family"

This year through the generous support of donors the Middlefield Senior & Social Services Department was able to make 9 families with children holiday's a bit brighter.

Families were able to indicate if they wished to participate and were anonymous to the sponsor. The program, in it's 4th year has had a positive impact on both those who are giving and receiving.

ONGOING EVENTS: IN CASE YOU MISSED THEM!

- **Foot Care Clinic**
 - Provided by RN
 - Invaluable service available to all
- **Blood Pressure Clinic**
 - Provided by Health District
 - Occurs Monthly
- **Senior Lunch Program**
 - Hosted Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
 - Open to all ages 60+
 - Lunches provided by The Estuary



Park and Recreation sponsors

Penguin Plunge

We came. We saw. We concurred the first ever Beseck lake Penguin Plunge! On January 6th, we hosted over 150 community members at our town beach to watch 40 people dive into the lake, just hours before our first major snow fall. This event was in collaboration with Park and Rec and the Coginchaug Benchwarmers Booster Club. We had so many people take the plunge and raise over \$1,100 for this terrific organization! We would not have seen this type of crowd without the benchwarmer's President Henry John Bugai Jr's persistence. Thank you again to all the benchwarmers, the Middlefield Volunteer Fire Company for sending stand by EMTS (just in case), Girl Scouts for passing out warm beverages to the crowd, and to Commission members Amanda Caccamo, Brian McDermott, and Chris Hurlbert for their constant support at this event. (Picture credit: Jen Shulten)



TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY:

On December 10th, our town celebrated the holiday season by lighting up the Town's Christmas Tree on the town green. While the rain that evening did not allow us to celebrate outside, our brilliant Volunteer Fire Dept, invited



Santa and Mrs. Claus to celebrate the event inside. When the time came to light the tree, the fire department let Santa and young residents Sophia and Nicholas Dubey light the tree from one of our fire trucks. Sophia and Nicholas blew the truck's sirens which helped Santa magically light up the tree. During the event we listened to Christmas songs led by Tim Fisher and the CRHS Band, had some great food and warm beverages provided by our town's Volunteer Fire Department, and shared our Christmas wishes with Santa. Thank you to the Park and Rec Commission and to Resident Brian McDermott and his son Patrick for helping decorate the tree.

COMING UP:

Peckham Park Egg Hunt!

On Saturday, March 23rd the Lion's Club will be hosting their annual Egg Hunt at Peckham Park. This is open to ages 0-12. The hunt will begin at 1:00PM sharp.

Looking for Additional Board and Commission Members

Middlefield's Volunteer Board and Commission members help local government make the important decisions that will determine our quality of life. If you're interested in contributing your service and talent to our community, please consider applying to serve as a local board or commission member!

One of the tasks of the Board of Selectmen is to monitor the current status of all boards, commissions and committees and appoint new members when vacancies arise. Each board or commission has it's own number of members and number of year to their terms. Once a person has served three terms, a maximum per town charter, they are "termed out" and must be replaced. Resignations also require replacement. This is an ongoing process. The town is always seeking residents willing to volunteer and fill open positions.

Current vacancies The Board of Selectmen are looking to fill are on the following commissions:

- Inland Wetlands and Watercourses
- Water Pollution Control Authority (Rockfall resident utilizing the sewer system)
- Zoning Board of Appeals.

The appointment process includes an interview of interested candidates with Board of Selectman and the commission chairman in executive session. Appointments are generally made for successful candidates at the following Board of Selectmen meeting.

If you're interested in contributing your talents to serve our community, please consider applying to volunteer and serve as a member. Send a letter of interest via email to Judi Rand, Executive Assistant to the First Selectman, at jrand@middlefieldct.org ore reach out to any of your Selectmen.

Information about all boards and commissions can be found at www.middlefieldct.org/192/Board-Commissions.

Levi Coe Library

Quarterly Update:

The library has been busy this past quarter with tons of activities to keep residents busy! October was filled with scarecrow creations and a children's storytime, hosted by the Middlefield Volunteer Fire Co. The library offered a "Boba and Bingo" activity in November where kids were able to play bingo and make their own boba tea. To get into the holiday spirit, December had some special holiday-themed programs for children. Some included Gingerbread Villages, Marshmallow Snowmen, Popsicle Parade, and Taste Test Tuesday! Overall, the library enjoys hosting these community events and hopes you and your family will join us soon in our upcoming programs!

New Services Offered:

The Levi Coe library offers a wide selection of activities for residents. Did you know that you can check out yard games, stamping kits, cake pans, puzzles, and museum passes? Levi Coe also has a Heartstone Labyrinth perfect for walking meditation along with the Shakespeare Garden located in the back of the library. Please check out these wonderful resources and take part in as many as you'd like!

Health District

Introducing the South Central Health District!

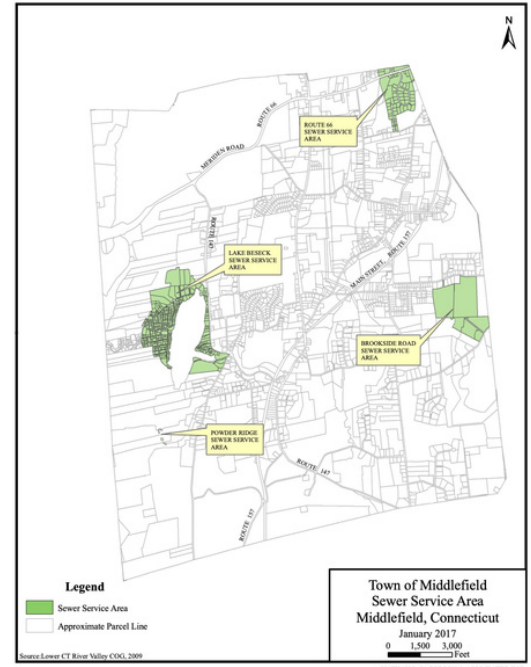
Greetings from the South Central Health District! The district proudly supports the towns of Middlefield, Southington, and Plainville. As of October 1st, 2023, the health district changed their name from the Plainville-Southington Regional Health District to the South Central Health District. We did this to create a name that is inclusive of all of our member towns. We have added a Public Health Nurse and Community Health Program Director to the staff to further serve our communities with prevention based programming. Vaccination clinics and blood pressure clinics have been extremely successful at the Middlefield Community Center and will continue. We have continued to inspect the local restaurants and salons as well as supported homeowners with inspections of all septic and well related issues and installations. We have initiated a scanning project that will ultimately make Middlefield septic, well, and complaint files paperless. Once completed, all files will be accessible through our website as well as the town website. Our new website will be launched soon at [South Central Health District \(schd-ct.org\)](https://southcentralhealthdistrict.org) and will provide access to our forms, calendar of events, contacts, and links. Please follow us on social media for up-to-date information and happenings! We have Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X.

Water Pollution Control Authority

WPCA Awarded Wastewater Improvement Grant:

The Town of Middlefield, Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is responsible for the operation of the sewer collection systems within the Lake Beseck sewer service area, the greater Harvest Wood/Rt 66 sewer service area, and the Brookside Drive/Zygo sewer service area.

The WPCA was awarded a grant of \$500,000.00 by the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), administered by the State of Connecticut. This grant is earmarked for wastewater infrastructure improvements.



(The term "wastewater" and the more common everyday term "sewage" both refer to the water containing waste material that is discharged from residences, commercial establishments and industries.)

The WPCA is primarily focused on the rehabilitation of its two high-capacity wastewater pump stations. The first is the Brookside Drive pump station. This station is approximately 45 years old and it is in generally poor condition. This station pumps all the wastewater generated by the Zygo facility to Middletown's sewer piping system for treatment at their water pollution control facility. The second is the Mattabeseck Road pump station. All the wastewater collected from within the Lake Beseck service area is pumped to this station by way of a network of underground pipes and grinder pumps. The station then pumps the collected wastewater to Meriden's sewer piping system for treatment at their water pollution control facility.

The WPCA's secondary focus is the replacement of grinder pumps as they reach the end of their life span. These grinder pumps are within the Lake Beseck service area are owned by the WPCA. Therefore, the WPCA is responsible for any repair/replacement costs.

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The oversight of these wastewater systems in order to reduce operating costs is the main function of the WPCA. With this grant, the need to raise rates have been deferred for users of the systems.

Interested in Volunteering for WPCA?

The WPCA meets for an hour about six to eight times a year at the community center and has a total of six members, appointed as follows:

- Two members residing in the Lake Beseck sewer service area.
- Two members residing in the Greater Harvest Wood/Rt 66 sewer service area.
- Two residents residing outside the above noted sewer service areas.

Currently, the WPCA is seeking volunteers to fill two vacancies from the Greater Harvest Wood/Rt 66 sewer service area.

Please consider donating some of your time for the benefit of the Middlefield community by contacting Greg Makuch at gmakuch@middlefieldct.org

DMYFS

What Do We Do?

Youth Service Bureaus play an important role in Connecticut as primary local prevention agencies, promoting positive youth and family development through collaboration with local community members. Durham-Middlefield Youth Family Services (DMYFS) collaborates with residents, town officials, the RSD13 school district, and various organizations to offer resources and programs to empower families for a healthy community.

Within DMYFS, the Durham Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition (DMLWC) operates as the local prevention council. The goal of DMLWC is to diminish the impact of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs in our towns through community action, education, support, and collaboration. Together, DMYFS and DMLWC offer diverse programs and a safe, non-judgmental space for youth and families to learn and grow together.

Our offices are in the Middlefield community center where we often hold several of our popular programs such as our monthly early childhood playgroups, youth STEM programs (supported by a Connecticut Valley Education Foundation grant), and First Aid/CPR/babysitting classes for teens. We are committed to bringing meaningful programming and support to all who reside in Durham and Middlefield.

Look for our Facebook posts and community fliers to find out what programs are coming next and visit www.dmyfs.org for more information.



DMYFS Youth Council Takes Lead:

At Coginchaug High School and Strong Middle School, the DMLWC’s youth council, an inclusive club called EDGE (Excellent Decisions Guiding Everyday), centers on substance use prevention and wellness. It is a safe space for kids to learn about substance use prevention and support each other while sharing the information with peers. DMYFS also arranges trained therapy dogs to visit with Coginchaug High School students several times a year. These visits with trained therapy dogs can boost a student’s mood, help them regulate feelings, and relieve stress. One of our future goals is to bring more prevention and wellness initiatives to the school community.



DMYFS Programs are a Hit!

Several events that have gained considerable positive feedback from the community were our Summer Messy Mania STEM program and our Homemade Holidays gift-making day. Both programs were a hit with the kids that attended and the teens that volunteered to help. We love to offer ways in which teens can volunteer (earning them those much needed volunteer service hours) while assisting the younger kids in our community. The kids weren’t the only ones who appreciated them, many parents sent us thank-you messages to relay their excitement for both of these programs.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

In addition to the online training, an in person training will be held on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 12PM-1:30PM** in the lower kitchen of the Middlefield Community Center.

Alliance for Prevention & Wellness
A program of BHcare

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Suicide Prevention Training

TRAINING HIGHLIGHT:
In this training you will learn how to:
Recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis, offer hope, and get help to save a life.

WINTER/SPRING 2024 SCHEDULE
All trainings are held from 11AM-12:30PM via Zoom

Feb 14, 2024
Mar 13, 2024
Apr 10, 2024
May 8, 2024

REGISTER HERE

Contact Taylor Gainey at tgainey@bhcare.org to schedule an alternate training for your organization.

Please contact DMYFS at 860-349-0258, or dmyfs.org.

Beseck Lake Environment Committee:

Invasive Aquatic Plants Removed from Beseck Lake:

The Beseck Lake Environment Committee is an ad-hoc committee formed with the particular purpose of supporting the Middlefield Board of Selectmen on issues related to the environment of Beseck Lake. The Committee is committed to keeping the lake healthy and useable by our community for recreational uses, as well as, protecting the lake as a natural resource.

Recently, the Environment Committee has worked on two major issues that have a negative effect on the lake and its use: invasive aquatic plants and algal blooms. These past three years we have worked to eradicate the invasive aquatic plant called Eurasian Watermilfoil. For many years, the Watermilfoil has overgrown the lake each summer. The process included obtaining a permit from the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), selecting a lake management team to provide the treatment, applying for a DEEP grant for control of Aquatic Invasive Species (which we were awarded), and the process of notification/education prior to the treatment. The treatment was successful and everyone saw immediate improvement when out on their boats, kayaking or swimming in the Lake. We look forward to the plant survey that will be conducted this summer to confirm the eradication of the invasive Watermilfoil.

BLEC Partners with Park and Rec to Contain Algal Blooms:

Another battle the lake is dealing with is algal blooms, such as blue-green algae, which contain cyanobacteria. Talking to folks that lived on the lake as kids, they say that it cannot be that bad because it never hurt them after swimming in it over the years! But we understand better now the potential toxic effects of the algal blooms and the problem is increasing as we experience contaminated water runoff into the lake and warming conditions.

The Environment Committee has supported the Middlefield Park and Recreation Department in their program to test the waters weekly at the Town beach. The test is for a cyanobacteria called Microcystin. If the levels are too high, then the beach will be closed until the Macrocytic levels go down. Over the past three years, the Environment Committee has expanded our water surveys to include testing for cyanobacteria and the types of algae (cyanobacteria species) present in the water.

In 2024, the Environment Committee is beginning a project to prevent and control algal booms on the lake. In May, our lake management supplier will begin a program to install EutroSORB filters at (4) lake inlets where the water flows into the lake. These filters help with the removal of excess nutrients in the lake.

Specifically, the filters bind and lock phosphorous to reduce the flow of phosphorous into the lake. This is the beginning of a preventative program for cyanobacterial/algal control. In addition to the preventative program, the Environment Committee is also pursuing treatment methods to remove any blue-green algae that breaks out on the water. To support the preventive and treatment projects, the Environment Committee applied for another DEEP Grant this past week and hopes to be awarded a grant.

The Middlefield Board of Selectman strongly supports our current projects to protect an important town resource. The Beseck Lake Environment Committee will continue to work towards keeping the lake healthy and useable for our community.



Registrar Election News:

Early voting will be in effect from Monday, March 26th through Saturday, March 30th for the Presidential Preference Primary. This will take place at the Community Center from 10 AM - 6 PM on all days.

Same-day voting for the Presidential Preference Primary will take place April 2nd at the Middlefield Community Center from 6 AM - 8 PM. If you have any questions, please contact the Middlefield Registrar of Voters by phone at 860-349-7119.





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**LOCAL POSTAL
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Robert Yamartino - *First Selectman*
Judi Rand - *Executive Assistant*
Al Rusilowicz - *Finance Director*
Tyna Kollar - *Accounts Payable*
Mary Ann Zieminski - *Treasurer*
Pam Deziel - *Assessor*
Anne Olszewski - *Tax Collector*
Tonya Hogan - *Town Clerk*
Kim Garvis - *Assist. Town Clerk*
Jay Wickham - *Public Works*
Bruce Villwock - *Tree Warden*
David Chowaniec - *Dog Warden*

TOWN HALL

393 Jackson Hill Road
P.O. Box 179
Middlefield, CT 06455

Bill DeMatteo - *Building Inspector*
Nancy Davidson - *Land Use Department*
Randy Bernotas - *Inland Wetlands Agent*
Robin Newton - *Town Planner*
Hannah Malcolm - *Park & Recreation*
Anne Malcolm - *Registrar of Voters (D)*
Janine Skelps - *Registrar of Voters (R)*
Rob Potunicki - *Emergency Management, WPCA*
Susan D'Orvilliers - *Senior & Social Services*
TFC Caleb Stevens - *Resident State Trooper*
TPR Molly Vaughan - *Resident State Trooper*
Heather Castiglia -
Durham-Middlefield Youth Family Services

MIDDLEFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER

405 Main Street
Middlefield, CT 06455

Peter Tyc - *Chief*
Steven Tyc - *Deputy Chief*
Jeffrey DiCostanzo - *Assistant Chief*

MIDDLEFIELD VOLUNTEER FIRE CO

406 Jackson Hill Road
Middlefield, CT 06455
860-349-7124 / www.middlefieldfirect.org

Town of Middlefield
860-349-7114
www.middlefieldct.org

IMPORTANT TOWN DATES

March 7	PUBLIC HEARING First Selectman's 2024-2025 Town Budget Presentation to the Board of Finance
March 19	PUBLIC HEARING and TOWN MEETING Adoption of Land Use Application Ordinance Revision
March 29-30	MIDDLEFIELD FIRE Easter Flower Sale
April 2	PUBLIC HEARING Market Analysis/Town Demographics
April 18	PUBLIC HEARING Board of Finance's Presentation of 2024-2025 Town Budget to the Public
May 13	TOWN MEETING Elector Approval of 2024-2025 Town Budget Election of DMIAAB and BOE Finance Members
May 24	MIDDLEFIELD FIRE Middlefield Fire Golf Tournament

UPCOMING VOTING DATES

March 26-30 10A – 6P	PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY Early Voting - Middlefield Community Center
April 2 6A – 8P	PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY Voting - Middlefield Community Center
May 7 6A – 8P	RSD13 BUDGET REFERENDUM Voting - Middlefield Community Center