



Town of Middletown ♦ 7875 Church Street ♦ Middletown, VA ♦ (540) 869-2226 ♦ Volume 12, Issue 2 ♦ March 15, 2021

From the Mayor

Charles H. Harbaugh, IV

Hello Middletown! I hope your year is off to a good start. We have begun the 2021-22 budget preparations. The finance committee will hold a committee meeting on April 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Please plan to attend and get involved with your community and be in the know. The ordinance committee is currently going through the town code and reviewing for necessary amendments and changes where needed. The ordinance committee will hold a meeting on March 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the council chambers following the Governor's current guidelines. Masks are required to attend. Please enter through the council chambers in the rear of the building. Remember citizen comments are always welcomed at the monthly Town Council meetings. If you have concerns or something you would like to share, we would love to hear from you at the next council meeting.

It is with great sadness to share the loss of former Mayor Mark Brown. Mark had a true passion for the community. He served the town in various positions from 2009-2016. Anyone who knew Mark knew his love for Middletown and the time he spent to make this a great place to live. He was determined to make positive changes during his tenure and never swayed his commitment and involvement in making Middletown a better place. Rest in Peace.

Please plan to attend the town's annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday April 3, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. in the town park. Please remember to bring a basket for your child to collect easter eggs throughout the park and a camera. The Easter Bunny will visit and be glad to take pictures with each and every child in attendance. Please remember we will adhere to the Governor's current guidelines for the safety of all those in attendance including the Easter Bunny. Please remember to be courteous to others and keep a safe distance. I hope to see you there. God Bless!

From the Police Chief

Gary Benedict Jr.

Courtesy reminder citizens, Virginia Law effective January 1, 2021. Phone Down. It's the Law. A person who violates 46.2-818.2 is subject to a fine of \$125 for the first offense and \$250 for the second and subsequent offenses. In the event that you are pulled over for holding a handheld personal communications device, act in the same manner you would for any traffic stop. You will not be asked to hand over your device. Keep in mind that what you are doing with the device is irrelevant, it is the act of HOLDING the device while driving that is illegal.

If you have police matters please do not call the Town office staff. This creates confusion, possible miscommunications and takes up unnecessary time in having an officer respond to the complaint. For all non-emergency police issues please contact the Middletown Police Department directly Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 540-868-0535. Only leave a voice message at the Middletown Police Department if the return call is for administrative or information only.

All non-life-threatening matters which require an officer please contact Frederick County non-emergency dispatch at 540-662-6162. If you have an emergency please call 911. All calls for service must first go through Frederick County dispatch. Frederick County dispatch will contact the officer/deputy on duty who will be handling the complaint. This will ensure that all calls are handled properly and in an efficient & timely manner.

From the Town Manager/Treasurer

Rebecca Layman

Reminder when you buy, trade, sell or dispose of a vehicle you must notify Frederick County (540) 665-5681 extension 1. The Town of Middletown receives all billing information from Frederick County therefore they must have the correct information on file for you in order for the Town of Middletown to bill you correctly.

DMV stops have been issued. If you have not paid your personal property taxes please drop your payment off at the Town office before heading to DMV. Once paid we can remove the stop. There is an additional fee of \$40 to remove the stop. The stop will not be removed until the entire balance is paid in full. If paying by check the amount must clear your bank before the stop can be removed.

Please remember to retain your tax bill(s) and receipt of payment(s) from the town for your tax filing purposes. There will be a fee of \$3.50 for each account requested. Due to the large number of requests, we receive each year we have had to impose this fee to cover administrative cost. Thank you for doing your part of being a great record keeper. Our small quaint town is growing at a rapid pace but staff has not and we hope to keep it this way for as long as we can to keep expenses down for you, the tax paying citizen who could potentially be impacted.

From the Clerk

Christina Smith

Citizens the town now offers online payments for your water & sewer bill and personal property & real estate taxes. You will need to have your bill with you in order to complete the personal information requested to find your account. Once there you can register your account and set up the many features that make paying your bills easy such as automatic and recurring payments, text and email reminders, paperless statements, etc. Please go to www.middletownva.gov and check it out. You may also pay over the phone, available 24 hours a day by calling (855)844-0226. If you need assistance registering your account please feel free to contact the office.

Once we can shake this cold weather and yard sale season begins please make sure you get a yard sale permit with the exception of the Route 11 Yard Crawl which is scheduled to take place on Saturday August 14, 2021. You do not need a permit the day of the Yard Crawl. If you post signs, they must be **free standing** and not attached to any utility poles or roadway signs. Signage must be removed immediately following your yard sale.

Homeowners with spring around the corner and outdoor clean up to begin, please remember if you are having contracted work done at your home such as landscaping, roofing, plumbing, electrical, additions, fencing and decks, etc., please make sure the contractor(s) has a valid Town of Middletown business license. This helps ensure you are dealing with a legitimate business and if recourse needs to be taken, we have information on file for the business that we can provide you. No one should be soliciting business door to door in the town without a valid Town of Middletown business license.

Please remember to update your contact information with the town office. Telephone numbers are very important to the staff in case we need to contact you in the event of an emergency or to discuss your account. Email is also a way we can communicate with you regarding account matters or issues at your property. Please feel free to email me with your updated information and email address which I will add to your account for future reference should we need it to contact you. clerk@middletownva.gov We still have a good bit of contact information that needs to be updated. I came across several accounts just recently with bad contact information.

The town continues to waive all penalties and cut-off/on fees due to the pandemic. As always, all utility payments are due by the due date indicated or by the cut-off date. If the bill is not paid in full by the cut-off date, service will be disconnected for non-payment. If you have any question please contact the office. (540) 869-2226 ext. 1

For information regarding the Town of Middletown please visit the town's website www.middletownva.gov

From the Zoning Administrator

As a reminder, permits must be secured through the Town office prior to any work. All renovations to buildings need a zoning permit. All accessory buildings such as sheds and/or outside storage containers also need a zoning permit. When in doubt please contact the town office.

Town Code section 14-4 Removal of snow from sidewalks

It shall be unlawful for the occupants of any building and where there is no occupant, for the owner of such vacant building or any unimproved lot or land lying on any street, alley or public place within the town where there is a brick or cement sidewalk, or any other walk so named by the Mayor or Town Council, to permit snow to remain on such a sidewalk longer than 6 hours after the snow has ceased to fall; except, that if the snow shall cease to fall in the night time, it shall be cleaned away by noon the following day. If the occupant or owner of the premises, as the case may be, fails or refuses to clear off the snow after being duly notified, it shall be the duty of the Town Sergeant to cause such pavement or sidewalk to be cleaned at the cost plus 10% to such occupant or owner of the premises. All bills for cleaning ice or snow from pavements are due payable when presented, which shall be in addition to any fine imposed. (10-3-55, ch.17, S 55.)

Penalty – Any persons violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to arrest, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$25.00 nor more than \$100.00 or the discretion of the court trying the case.

With spring fast approaching, please take a minute to review the Town's ordinance on grass, weeds or like vegetation as well as littering. When mowing or weeding it is unlawful to leave your grass clippings on the sidewalks and roadways.

Town Code section 6-2 / Duty of owners, etc., of premises - To cut and remove tall grass and weeds.

- a.** It shall be unlawful for any person owning, occupying or having charge of any real estate or an interest therein, located within the corporate limits of the town, where the parcel is one acre or less, to allow grass, weeds, or like vegetation grow on the property to a height of no more than 10 inches.
- b.** Parcels greater in size than one acre that lies within 25 feet of the right of way boundary of a public roadway (except for interstate highways) must also keep the grass, weeds or like vegetation to a height of no more than 10 inches.
- c.** If any owner, occupant or person in charge of such land or interest therein shall fail to have such illegal growth of grass or weeds on his land cut or otherwise removed within 7 days written notice of violation of this section, the town shall have the right to cut or remove such unlawful growth at the expense of the landowner, and such expense may be collected by the town as taxes are levied and collected. In addition, the owner shall pay a penalty of \$50.00 as a fine of this section.
- d.** Each day that any owner, occupant or person in charge of such land or interest shall fail to have such an illegal growth of grass or weeds on his land cut or otherwise removed after the above mentioned 7 days has run shall constitute a separate offense. Subsequent offenses in the same calendar year shall double until the fine reaches \$200.00. The fine per calendar year is capped at \$2000.00.
- e.** This section shall not apply to any land used for agricultural or industrial purposes.

Lastly please remember to be courteous & considerate of your fellow neighbors and their pet(s) and clean up after your pet(s) when out on walks. It is the law and fines can and will be enforced for those who choose not to.

Town Code section 3-8 Littering

No person shall allow feces deposited by his/her animal to remain on any public highway, street, sidewalk, part of other public property, or on private property without written consent of the owner thereof or his agent.

Penalty – Any person who knowingly violates this Ordinance shall be guilty of a littering infraction and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$25.00 per occurrence. (Middletown Town Code § 3-8)

From the Public Works Department

Les Morefield

This year yard waste pick-up will begin on Monday March 29, 2021 and will end on Monday November 15, 2021.

If a holiday falls on a Monday, yard waste will be picked up the next day.

Please review the guidelines for yard waste. **We will no longer pick up any yard waste that does not meet the required guidelines.** Yard waste collection will be every Monday, and must be placed curbside by 8:00 a.m. Yard waste consists of grass trimmings and leaves which CANNOT weigh more than 40 lbs. Branches or twigs can be **NO LONGER** than four (4) feet in length and **NO LARGER** than twelve (12) inches in diameter and must be **tied in bundles** (no wire or plastic string). Yard waste must be placed in biodegradable or paper yard waste bags only, **NO PLASTIC BAGS**. Yard waste should not be placed curbside until the morning of collection. This helps keep the community neat and free of clutter and ensures the bags have not been compromised due to weather. Rain soaked or damaged bags that rip or tear during pick up will be the responsibility of the homeowner/tenant to clean up. If you have any questions, please contact Les Morefield, Public Works Superintendent at (540) 869-7731.

Citizens the Public Works department will begin hydrant flushing during the month April. You could potentially experience cloudy or discolored water during this time. If you do notice a change in your water it will clear up and resolve itself the more you run your water. If you have any questions regarding this process please feel free to contact the Public Work department Monday - Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (540) 869-7731

Please make sure the water meter in your yard is free and clear at all times. The meter should never be covered or buried by anything. This can cause serious problems in the event of an emergency if we are unable to find and/or access the meter. The meter should be visible and most importantly easy to access. Please take the time to make sure the water meter on your property is free and clear and accessible at all times.

With warm weather approaching please take the time to read the outdoor water saving tips provided on the next page. We hear from a lot folks in the warmer months that their water & sewer bills have gone up substantially and think they have a leak. To avoid this from happening to you take a minute to review the tips provided. If you think you do have a leak please feel free to call the Public Works department and we will be glad to come out. If you have billing questions please call the town office for assistance (540) 869-2226. Unfortunately, we cannot assist you with billing/account related questions.

Reminder we continue to have issues with animal waste being left behind by irresponsible pet owners. Please remember to always bring a bag along with you, even on a short walk. "Poop happens" and you as the pet owner need to be prepared to clean it up. The town park and walkways throughout town are littered with animal waste. This is unsanitary and unhealthy for all including your pet. Those who do not own pets and those who do own pets that are responsible pet owners do not need to be subjected to your lack of respect for others. Clean it up!

Public Works Department cont. next page

There's no such thing as
the poop fairy.



**Only you can make your
pet's waste disappear.**

Pet waste contains **harmful bacteria** and **parasites** that **make people and pets sick**. When it is left on the ground, it washes down storm drains and **contaminates our streams** and rivers.

Scoop it. Bag it. Trash it.



OUTDOOR WATER SAVING TIPS

SAVE WATER!



- Wash your pet outside over an area that needs watering.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveway or sidewalks.
- Water plants only when they need it.
- Adjust sprinklers so only the lawn is watered, not the house or street.
- Water your lawn or garden in the morning or night when it's cool & not windy.
- Place water-loving plants in the shade.
- Check for leaky hoses & nozzles.
- Mulch like crazy to keep soil cool & moist.
- Wash your car using a bucket.
- Cover the swimming pool.

www.nrgideas.com

**Generally A Healthy Lawn Needs
Only 1 Inch of Water Every 10 Days.**



Please do not over-water

Middletown Veterans Memorial

Raymond Steele

Please save the date for Monday May 31, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. for our Memorial Day Remembrance & Wreath Laying Ceremony. The plan is to conduct the ceremony at the Memorial and to live stream it via Facebook.

Our guest speaker this year is Winsome Earle Sears, Ret. USMC. Winsome Earle Sears was born in Jamaica and partly raised in Bronx, New York. Winsome is currently seeking the Republican nomination for Lt. Governor of Virginia. Winsome has appeared on CSPAN, MSNBC, CBN, FOX, and other media outlets, including nationally distributed publications. She has met with ambassadors and foreign leaders as she toured their countries and discussed foreign policy. Please plan to join us for a day of remembrance and a salute to our veterans.

Middletown Heritage Society

Tess Klimm

The Middletown Heritage Society (MHS) has been hibernating this past year as so many groups have...but there is hope we can finally meet in person in April. The Wayside Inn is hoping to reopen this month and weather permitting we can meet on their patio which will still allow room for distancing.

Our regular monthly meetings are the second Thursday of each month at The Wayside Inn. The Wayside Inn renovations are exciting and they are planning a museum room where we can display our case of Middletown memorabilia, as well as a case for the Sons of the American Revolution. This is very exciting news. Our next monthly meeting will be at 12 noon on April 8, 2021, weather permitting.

If anyone has stories to tell, remember we have an MHS Facebook page and if you or someone you know would like to be added to our email list please get in touch with me. Tess Klimm, President (540) 247-2211

Middletown Volunteer Fire & Rescue Company

BINGO is back! We will open for Bingo on April 6! The doors will open at 5 p.m. There will be early bird games, followed by regular Bingo at 7 p.m. Things will be a little different than they were before. Tables will be set for social distancing. Masks are **REQUIRED**. We are limited to one third of our capacity so that means 100 people. Concessions will be available.

On April 24 at 4 p.m. we will have a Drive-thru Roast Beef Dinner. The meal is \$12 and includes beef, scalloped potatoes, green beans, roll, and cookie. There will be 250 dinners sold so it is first come, first serve! We hope you will come by and get dinner to help support us!

Last January, we ordered a new rescue engine that will replace our 2003 rescue engine. This January we have ordered a new ambulance. We received a grant from the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services Rescue Squad Assistance Fund to help with this purchase. We **MUST** keep our equipment up-to-date to provide the best service we can to our community. Your support is more important than ever, especially as our Town and surrounding areas grow.

At our last meeting the following members were recognized for their years of service to Co. 12: 5 years – Ali Catlett, Matthew Price, Corey Swzydek; 10 years – Matthew Clark, Peggy Lafollette, Bill Orndorff; 15 years – Joshua Adams; 35 years – Sammy Henry; 50 years – Gary DuBrueler; 55 years – Ray Steele; 60 years – Wayne Dalton; and 65 years – Dick Legge and Henry Shiley. The Auxiliary also recognized members for years of service at their meeting. Recognized were: 5 years - Jerry Clark, 15 years – Karen Musser, and 60 years – Jean Legge. Congratulations to all of these members for their many years of service to the community!

You, too, can make a difference in your community by joining our Company. Please stop by and visit if you are interested in becoming a member. We are always looking for new recruits to run calls and/or help with fundraising. This is a great opportunity for young people! You can join as a junior member at age sixteen.

SPRING CLEAN UP

**THE ANNUAL SPRING CLEAN UP WILL BE MONDAY MAY 3, 2021
ALL ITEMS MUST BE PLACED
CURBSIDE by 7:00 a.m.**

***THE COLLECTED ITEMS MUST BE LANDFILL
ACCEPTABLE ITEMS, INCLUDING FURNITURE***

**IF IT IS NOT LANDFILL
ACCEPTABLE IT WILL
NOT BE PICKED UP**

***EXAMPLES OF NON-ACCEPTABLE ITEMS:
APPLIANCES, TV'S, COMPUTERS,
COMPUTER MONITORS, MICROWAVE OVENS, PAINT, HAZARDOUS WASTE,
TIRES OR
LAWN EQUIPMENT***

**REMINDER:
PLEASE KEEP YARD WASTE SEPARATE.
YARD WASTE SHOULD BE PLACED IN
BIODEGRADABLE OR PAPER YARD WASTE BAGS ONLY
NO PLASTIC BAGS**

Yard waste will be picked up by the Public Works Department. Spring clean-up items will be picked up by the trash service. Please keep these items separate to ensure pick up.



Calendar of Events

March

March 22 – Planning Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

March 29 – Yard Waste Pick-Up begins curbside by 8:00 a.m. – please read the guidelines to ensure pick-up

April

April 3 – Easter Egg Hunt 11:00 a.m.

April 5 – Work Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.

April 12 – Town Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.

April 26 – Planning Commission Meeting 7:00 p.m.

April 30 – Apple Blossom – office closing at 12 noon

May

May 3 – Annual Spring Clean-Up, curbside 7:00 a.m.

May 3 – Work Session Meeting 7:00 p.m.

May 10 – Town Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Middletown Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday April 3, 2021 | 11:00 a.m.

Middletown Park

Bring your own basket



Parents bring your camera. The Easter Bunny will be here to visit the kids.