

MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

June 18, 2019

ROLL CALL

At 4:00 p.m., Mayor Mulligan called the City Council field trip work session to order.  
 City Council Members present: S. Bohannon, J. Mulligan, L. Mulligan, Mr. Moon, A. Vitori.

The group toured the City fire stations to discuss their future status and long term upgrades. Chief Lolli provided information and stated that 2014 was a tough year for the City and that the fire department stepped up and came through for the City. He discussed personnel issues and the fire vehicles and apparatuses. Two new fire trucks are ready to go into service. The department applied for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant to replace the 75' Quint ladder truck. He discussed the health and safety issues associated with the infrastructure of the stations. Firefighters are exposed to carcinogens due to the lack of ventilation in the equipment bays and the location of the gear storage.

Deputy Chief Snively provided information about travel times from each existing station and discussed the improved response time from the proposed station locations. He discussed the possibility of mixed use and multi-story public and private facility partnerships.

The group toured several of the City fire stations and were able to see the problems first-hand. The group also toured a modestly priced new station that was recently built in Fairfield Township. The group discussed the need for strategic planning to determine the best locations for the new stations and to identify potential available properties. They discussed adding design and land acquisition to the 2020 budget.

At 7:19 p.m., Mayor Mulligan called the City Council meeting to order in Council Chambers, Lower Level of the City Building.

ROLL CALL

City Council Members present: S. Bohannon, J. Mulligan, L. Mulligan, Mr. Moon, A. Vitori.

PUBLIC HEARING  
 2020 Tax Budget

Mr. Adkins reported that the 2020 Tax Budget for the City of Middletown has two purposes:  
 1) The 2020 beginning cash balances and 2020 projected revenues for each fund in this budget become the estimated 2020 resources for the City. The 2020 annual appropriations usually passed by City Council in November 2019 may not exceed these estimated resources. The objective, therefore, is to be realistic in these resource projections. If necessary, these estimated resources can be amended in writing during the 2020 calendar year by the Finance Department. This would be necessary if revenues are underestimated in this budget, or if expected revenues are not received.  
 2) A City's annual tax budget also supports the need for its annual property tax levy. The current levy of 6.90 mill (1.0 mill for the Senior Citizens Levy) will be requested for 2020.

The assumptions made in projecting the 2020 revenues and expenditures in this tax budget were:

- 1) Revenues in all funds agree with the most recent Financial Plan. The General Fund revenues projected for 2020 are projected with a 2% decrease and expenditures projected with 3% increase.
- 2) All 2020 operational costs agree with the most recent Financial Plan.
- 3) The 2020 debt service costs are at actual levels based upon debt repayment schedules already set. Capital improvement expenditures are from the five-year capital improvements plan.
- 4) These estimates are based on the current knowledge of the revenue stream and the current expenditures.

There are no alternatives. This budget must be submitted each year. The 2020 Tax Budget indicates that General Fund expenditures will exceed General Fund revenues by approximately \$2.1 million and that the 2020 year-end cash balance in the General Fund will be about \$4.9 million, which is a 15.2% reserve balance. This budget will be replaced with a permanent appropriation resolution later this year.

Mayor Mulligan opened the public hearing at 7:22 p.m. and asked for those who wished to speak in favor of the proposed 2020 tax budget; hearing none, he asked for those who wished to speak in opposition to the 2020 tax budget; hearing none, the public hearing was closed at 7:22 p.m.

CITY MANAGER  
 REPORT

City Manager Adkins introduced Ms. Huttlinger and she provided the following Middletown Visitors Bureau Mid-Year Update:  
 Mayor Mulligan, Members of City Council, City Manager Atkins, thank you for inviting the Middletown Visitors Bureau to provide an update on our organizational annual strategic goals. Before we get started, I would like to thank Shelby Quinlivan, Jennifer Ekey, and Ami Vitori for their service as liaisons and ongoing guidance to myself and to our Board of Directors. Their continued support, feedback, and encouragement has helped us stay the course.

Middletown  
 Visitors Bureau

And I would be remiss, if I didn't extend a heartfelt thank you to our current Board of Directors.

- Elizabeth Hanavan, Board President
- Mica Glaser-Jones, Secretary
- Lyndsey Pittman, Treasurer
- Rick Pearce, DeAnna Shores, Stefan Wannemacher, and Heather Mason

Without these individuals, this organization would not have the energy, passion, creativity, and dedication that has carried us to where we are today. Since I addressed City Council a year ago, we have been busy establishing a solid organization infrastructure that would allow us to spend more of our time focusing on fulfilling our mission of promoting and telling the vibrant story of Middletown, instead of dealing with administrative tasks and compliance requirements.

I am pleased to report that a year later we have:

- A fully operational Board of Directors
- A budget, and budget process, that has withstood the first year start-up costs
- A clean bill of health from the State Auditor's office
- Full compliance at the local, state and federal level
- Transparent operations that hold us accountable, and internal processes and policies that will ensure smooth business continuity for years to come. In addition to building our operational infrastructure, we have laid the groundwork for positioning the Middletown Visitors Bureau to be a keystone organization representative of a small market destination location.

This means:

- Ongoing strategic planning and innovation
- Seeking out and developing key partnerships
- Fine-tuning our communications with science based data
- Aggressively pursuing opportunities to close tourism gaps, and executing a traditional marketing plan.

2019 has gotten off to an exciting start, we now have a brochure, print ads, tv and radio commercials, plenty of stock pictures and video, fully functional web site, a flourishing social media presence, engaged followers, and some pop opportunities like the Make it in Middletown Ron and CAVS Training Camp partnership that increased followers, engagement, and the collection of emails. Our brand is proving to be one that resonates with people and is flexible enough to tell our story while remaining fresh, exciting, and appealing. And while we may have a good solid foundation, there is still so much more potential and low hanging fruit to take advantage of. As part of our execution strategy, we have crafted a scope of traditional media channels that contribute to our "touch" potential. Keep in mind that the old marketing adage requires that a person hear or see a marketing message at least 5-7 times before it resonates with them. For our purposes, we have hit all forms of media: print, social media, tv, radio, in person events to increase our reach. One of our consistent drum beats is creative positioning.

How do we position Middletown to stand apart from our peers? How do we establish ourselves as a preferred destination? Sometimes this simply means keeping up with the Joneses, other times it means beating the Joneses. For example: keeping up with the Joneses in our case would mean making sure our bike path is connected. And beating the Joneses would mean having a canoe livery or campground. Part of our strategy includes building meaningful connections and leveraging those relationships. For example, our partnership with the Great Miami Riverway Coalition has shown to us that not only is it beneficial to be included in the regional efforts to maximize our national exposure, but it positions us in a way to learn and benefit from our neighbors who have been actively promoting their communities much longer than we have. This relationship is reaping dividends on so many levels and continues to push us as a Visitors Bureau and community to be and stay relevant. It's no secret, social media is where the revitalized Visitors Bureau started our efforts early on. This past year, Annie and I have fine-tuned our strategies so that our messaging is better targeted to our primary target groups and we've capitalized on learnings. If you calculate paid ads and our reach, we pay less than a penny for a touch. This is due to better targeting and ROI on our paid ads. And over 54% of our audience falls into the family range compared to a static 44% prior to 2019. We continue to see steady growth and engagement from our fans and adjust our methodologies accordingly to keep things fresh, engaging, and worthy of viral traction. As a Visitors Bureau, events often present to us an opportunity to increase our effectiveness and impact because we hear and experience real time what people are thinking about Middletown. These are also often a critical opportunity to help reframe people's perceptions about Middletown. Oftentimes it is a simple brochure and smiling face that triggers a discussion about the revitalization efforts in Middletown and the number of unique attractions for families to see and experience. We plan to continue these outreach and visibility efforts, in addition to, helping identify new in-person opportunities.

As I mentioned earlier, the Great Miami Riverway Coalition partnership, along with the City has been extremely beneficial. Elizabeth Connor the executive director and Shelby Quinlivan of the City Manager's office has played an integral part in making sure that Middletown not only has a seat at the table but access to the many opportunities available to those who are just willing to show up. For example, we partnered with the Coalition to have a presence at Ohio Tourism

Day this year in Columbus, we are mimicking the Tour de Way Passport Challenge and kicking off a mini challenge in Middletown to drive traffic to our businesses, and we are partnering with them and the YMCA to create a Riverway Youth Day to introduce kids to the river and all of the amazing aspects of water trails and nature. When we get down to the performance and effectiveness of the Visitors Bureau, the most simplistic measure is are our hotels full? And for the most part they are. So how then do we move the needle? One way is to establish some basic marketing baselines and in this case, Annie and I have created some first year baselines to use to measure the effectiveness of our messaging campaigns. As I've mentioned before, touches are important in marketing, so my goal is to create as many touches as possible for potential visitors in our target demographic groups. As a reminder our sweet spot is 1-4 hours of drive time away from Middletown. So in 2019 we've created over 43 million opportunities for our target market to be touched. On the slide you can see an idea of the touches for different channels. At first glance you might say why not put all of your money in radio for ROI. But we also have to take into account that visual ads are very motivational, and people spend a lot of time on social media, and we still want to cater to the baby boomers with print, and that influencers are quickly gaining channel share with credibility and influence. As a result we will continue to fiddle with our market mix as our messaging evolves. We may be half way through 2019 but we have a lot still planned that is new and exciting! We are starting familiarization tours, where we bring hotel staff on a personalized tour of Middletown so they can see first-hand the revitalization, shop at our locally owned stores, and eat at our independent, family owned restaurants. We partnered with Spoken Bicycles to help them launch their bike rental program, a critical component to being a successful riverway and bike trail community. This would be an example of keeping up with the Joneses. We will be hosting a group of Beer Bloggers during the Hops in the Hangar, giving them a special curated tour experience of Middletown. And we will be rolling out 2 curated walking tours on Google Maps that visitors can follow along on their smart devices, read our custom stories, and view hand-picked photos. And last but not least, we will be making sure that Middletown is ready to take advantage of the opening of Spooky Nook which will have a 30 mile radius economic impact.

I would be remiss if I didn't use this opportunity to share with you our wish list. What will help us keep up with the Joneses or help us beat the Joneses? It is critically necessary that we have a livery. We have positioned ourselves as a riverway community, yet our only utilization of the river is our proximity to it and the bike trail. Having a livery would help us beat the Joneses. And of course a downtown hotel would provide tremendous opportunity for the Visitors Bureau to pitch small meetings and conventions – think 150-300 people. Cornerstone Manor and Indigo Pass are an amazing start but as I mentioned earlier, our hotels along 75 are mostly at capacity most of the time. Spooky Nook coming in, it presents an opportunity to seize on this regional investment. At this point in time, I would like to mention that the Middletown Visitors Bureau is in a good space, people are excited, there is plenty of opportunity and we are positioned to enjoy an upward trajectory for the remaining part of this year and next. And of course thank you to City Council for your continued support of the Visitors Bureau.

Mr. Adkins commented that a few years ago the City made some significant changes to the Visitors Bureau. He commended the Board and Ms. Huttlinger for all of the great progress that has been made.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Approve the City Council minutes of May 18, 2019  
 Receive and File an Oath of Office for Jordan Pergrem  
 Receive and File Board and Commission Minutes:  
     Park Board- April 8 and May 13, 2019  
     Civil Service April 18, 2019  
 Confirm the following Personnel Appointments:  
 Lisa McHenry to the position of part-time Bus Driver in the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Transit.  
 Alaina Geres to the position of Economic Development Program Manager in the Economic Development Department.

Mr. Bohannon moved to approve the issues and actions listed on the Consent Agenda. Mr. J. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Bohannon, Mr. Moon, Mr. J. Mulligan, Mr. L. Mulligan, Ms. Vitori.

**MOTION AGENDA  
 2020 Tax Budget**

To Receive, File, and Adopt the 2020 Tax Budget for the City of Middletown

Mr. Bohannon moved to receive, file, and adopt the 2020 Tax Budget for the City of Middletown. Mr. J. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. Moon, Mr. J. Mulligan, Mr. L. Mulligan, Mr. Bohannon, Ms. Vitori.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS  
 Mr. J. Mulligan**

Mr. J. Mulligan thanked Mary Huttlinger for the update from the Middletown Visitors Bureau and for the good work that is being done to get the word out about all of the great things going on in Middletown. He thanked Chief Lolli and Deputy Chief Snively and Fairfield Township Fire Chief Thompson for the report and tour of the fire facilities to better understand the capital needs of the department.

<b>Ms. Vitori</b>	Ms. Vitori thanked Mr. Adkins for his role in reorganizing the Middletown Visitors Bureau and stated that she is proud of the work that the bureau has accomplished. She encouraged everyone to come out and enjoy the upcoming Broad Street Bash and Pride event.
<b>Mr. L. Mulligan</b>	Mr. L. Mulligan stated that he appreciated first-hand look at the fire stations and thanked the Chiefs for the report. He encouraged everyone to come out to the Broad Street Bash and the Pride festival. He announced that the Multi-Cultural Festival was rescheduled until July 27 <sup>th</sup> because of the weather forecast.
<b>Waive Charter</b>	Mr. Moon moved to suspend the Charter provision that requires reading on two separate days and to declare Ordinance O2019-37 and Ordinance O2019-38 emergency measures to be read one time only. Mr. J. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. J. Mulligan, Mr. L. Mulligan, Ms. Vitori, Mr. Bohannon, Mr. Moon.
<b>Ord. No. O2019-37 Amend Contract for Additional Well Screen</b>	<p><b>Ordinance No. O2019-37</b>, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing an amendment to a contract with National Water Services, LLC for additional well screen and declaring an emergency was read.</p> <p>Mr. Bohannon moved to approve Ordinance No. O2019-37, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing an amendment to a contract with National Water Services, LLC for additional well screen and declaring an emergency. Mr. J. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Mr. L. Mulligan, Ms. Vitori, Mr. Bohannon, Mr. Moon, Mr. J. Mulligan.</p>
<b>Ord. No. O2019-38 Authorize a Contract With BrainWave Connections, Inc.</b>	<p><b>Ordinance No. O2019-38</b>, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing a contract with BrainWave Connections Inc. for Phase II of the Oakland Revitalization Incentive District and declaring an emergency was read with no action requested until June 18, 2019.</p> <p>Mr. Bohannon moved to approve Ordinance No. O2019-38, an ordinance establishing a procedure for and authorizing a contract with BrainWave Connections Inc. for Phase II of the Oakland Revitalization Incentive District and declaring an emergency. Mr. J. Mulligan seconded. Motion carried. Ayes: Ms. Vitori, Mr. Bohannon, Mr. Moon, Mr. J. Mulligan, Mr. L. Mulligan.</p>
<b>Ord. No. O2019-39 Amend PBO</b>	<b>Ordinance No. O2019-39</b> , an ordinance amending the pay and benefits ordinances, Ordinance No. O2018-81 and Ordinance No. O2018-82, and declaring an emergency was read with no action requested until July 2, 2019.
<b>Res. No. R2019-20 Amend Appropriations</b>	<b>Resolution No. R2019-20</b> , a resolution to make adjustments to appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the City of Middletown, counties of Butler and Warren, State of Ohio, for the period ending December 31, 2019 and declaring an emergency was read with no action requested until July 2, 2019. (Various Funds)
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	At 7:45 p.m., the meeting was declared adjourned until July 2, 2019 at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers.

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Lawrence P. Mulligan, Jr., Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_