

DATE: January 10, 2025
TO: Board of Health Members
FROM: Jacquelyn Phillips Carter, MPH, BSN, RN - Secretary
SUBJECT: **Agenda for January 14, 2025**

City of Middletown Board of Health & Environment will meet in regular session **January 14, 2025** at 7:30AM in Conference Room 2C at the City Building with the following agenda. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please call 513-425-1818.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

ROLL CALL- Motion to excuse absent members

CITIZEN COMMENTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES -December 2024

(Motion and Approval)

RECEIVE AND FILE FINANCIAL REPORT -December 2024

(Motion and Approval)

EDUCATION PRESENTATION – Norovirus-Dr. Jennewine

NEW BUSINESS

1. Travel Authorizations-None
2. 2025 Election of President Pro Tem
(Motion and Approval)
3. 2025 Board of Health Committees
(Selection)
4. 2025 Board of Health Roster
5. 2024 4th Quarter Report
6. Name, Address, Phone, Health History (NAPH) Form Update

REPORTS

Health Commissioner

Medical Director

Director of Nursing

Environmental Health Director

BOARD MEMBER OPEN DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

The Next Board of Health Meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2025 at 7:30am

It is the policy of the City of Middletown to make all public hearings and meetings accessible to all persons, in accordance with state and/or federal laws. If you have a disability which requires accommodation in order for you to attend and/or participate in this meeting, please contact us at 425-7851 or 425-7705 (TDD) at least forty-eight hours prior to the time of the meeting to advise the need for accommodation, and reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the same.

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
BOARD OF HEALTH
Minutes
December 10, 2024

The City of Middletown Board of Health met in regular session at 7:30 AM on December 10, 2024.

Members Present

Mayor, Elizabeth Slamka
Ruth Lolli
Jeff Bonnell
Sally Kash, MS, RN
Emily Miller, BSN, RN

Health Department Staff Present

Carla Ealy, BS, REHS
Dr. Paul Jennewine, MD
Chandra Corbin, BSN, RN
Amanda McDonald, Vital Statistics Registrar

Absent

Jackie Phillips Carter, MPH, BSN, RN

Absent and Excused

Joseph Richmond, MBA
Amy Sibcy
Dr. Scott Zollett, MD

ROLL CALL

Motion: Ms. Lolli moved, seconded by Ms. Kash to excuse absent board members.

Roll call vote: Yes-4 (Lolli, Bonnell, Kash, Miller). No-0. Motion Passed.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 2024

Motion: Ms. Kash moved, seconded by Ms. Lolli to approve the November 2024 minutes.

Roll call vote: Yes-4 (Lolli, Bonnell, Kash, Miller). No-0. Motion Passed.

RECEIVE AND FILE FINANCIAL REPORT-November 2024

Motion: Ms. Lolli moved, seconded by Ms. Kash to approve the November Financial Report.

Roll call vote: Yes-4 (Lolli, Bonnell, Kash, Miller). No-0. Motion Passed.

EDUCATION PRESENTATION-HIV-Dr. Jennewine

Dr. Jennewine provided the board with an educational presentation on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV was first described in 1981. HIV attacks immune cells and has a long incubation period, it is a long-term illness. There are 1.7 million Americans with HIV and an estimated 15% do not know that they are infected. HIV can be an acute infection, chronic infection or develop into Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS greatly weakens the immune system and makes hosts more susceptible to opportunistic infections or cancers.

HIV is a sexually transmitted infection that is passed through bodily fluids such as: blood, seminal fluids, vaginal fluids and breast milk. HIV is not transmitted through saliva. HIV is not transmissible if the viral load is <50 copies/ML (undetectable) consistently. HIV is 2-3 times more likely to be transmitted in HSV-1 infected individuals. HIV can be passed from mother to fetus and also those engaging in high-risk behaviors.

HIV is diagnosed by ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) test for HIV 1 and 2. ELISA is a blood test that is very quick and accurate. It can take up to six months to be able to detect the HIV antibodies in the blood.

There is no vaccine to prevent HIV. The best methods of protection is to limit possible exposure by using condoms and clean needles. There is a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) that can be taken when someone knows they will be exposed to the virus. TasP is a treatment as prevention that can be taken daily. PEP is a post-exposure prophylaxis that can be taken to lessen the likelihood of contracting the virus in the case that someone knows they have been exposed.

There is no cure for HIV/AIDS. It is best to begin treatments as early as possible. Antiretroviral regimens are fairly effective at slowing the progression of the disease. Early agents were moderately effective, but consisted of a complex dosing regimen. Newer agents are much more effective, easier to dose and much better tolerated. With treatment, HIV has become more of a chronic condition that a progression to AIDS and with adequate treatment the viral load can be maintained at an undetectable amount.

NEW BUSINESS

Travel Authorizations

None.

Approval of MBHE Ordinance No. 2024-04-Pay and Benefits

An Ordinance Establishing Pay Ranges and Certain Benefits for Employee Classifications in the Middletown Department of Health and Environment and Declaring an Emergency.

Motion: Ms. Kash moved, seconded by Ms. Lolli to approve MBHE Ordinance No. 2024-04-Pay and Benefits.

Roll call vote: Yes-4 (Lolli, Bonnell, Kash, Miller). No-0. **Motion Passed.**

Approval of MBHE Ordinance No. 2024-05-Health Department Budget

A Regulation Approving the Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget for the Department of Health & Environment and Declaring an Emergency

Motion: Ms. Lolli moved, seconded by Ms. Kash to approve MBHE Ordinance No. 2024-05 Health Department Budget.

Roll call vote: Yes-4 (Lolli, Bonnell, Kash, Miller). No-0. **Motion Passed.**

REPORTS

Health Commissioner

In Ms. Phillips Carter's absence, Ms. Ealy informed board members that the Health Commissioner Report had been included in the board packet and advised board members to direct any questions to Ms. Phillips Carter.

Ms. Ealy stated that she and Ms. Phillips Carter attended the Red Carpet Luncheon which was held in Hamilton by the Hamilton City Chambers. Ms. Phillips was a panelist with Butler County and Hamilton City Health Commissioners along with several other local health partners. Ms. Ealy stated that the Butler County Community Health Assessment (CHA) was discussed along with impactful ways in which businesses could improve their employee health and wellness. Ms. Ealy thanked board member Ms. Lolli who also attended the luncheon.

Medical Director

Dr. Jennewine reported the November communicable disease case numbers.

C. auris	2
Campylobacteriosis	1
Chlamydia infection	24
COVID-19	73
E. coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing	1
Gonococcal Infection	16
Hepatitis C	6
Meningitis-aseptic/viral	1
Pertussis	5
Salmonellosis	1
Streptococcal-Group A-invasive	1
Streptococcus pneumoniae-invasive	1
Syphilis	1

Director of Nursing

Ms. Corbin informed the board that two cases of pertussis have already been reported in December. Ms. Corbin stated that all local health departments have seen pertussis cases increase.

Ms. Corbin informed the board that CMHD will not be receiving any more funds from the Workforce Development Grant through the end of 2024. CMHD will be submitting all claims from now until the end of the year for 2025.

Ms. Corbin stated that the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant is issuing next year's contracts. Butler County General Health District receives the contract and City of Middletown Health Department is a subgrantee as in the past.

Environmental Director

Ms. Ealy informed the board that CMHD received three sets of plans: one food service operation, one mobile food service operation and one body art facility.

Ms. Ealy stated that second notices for Tobacco21 licenses have been mailed out. Payments and applications are due December 31st.

Ms. Ealy stated that roughly 200 septic permits have been issued. There are approximately 686 septic systems that are required to be permitted by December 31st.

body art facilities and septic businesses are also required to renew their annual licenses by December 31st.

Ms. Ealy informed board that environmental health is switching to a new web-based program for licenses and payments called Accela. Accela will allow online access for payments and processing and inspections of environmental programs. The go-live date is May 2025.

Vital statistics will also be switching to a new program to issue birth and death certificates. The current go-live date for this program is January 2025.

Board Member Open Discussion

Ms. Ealy informed board members that this was Ms. Kash's last board meeting. Ms. Kash has faithfully served the Board of Health for many years. Ms. Kash retired from the board once before and graciously stepped back in as a member was unable to complete his term. Ms. Ealy thanked Ms. Kash for all of her service and dedication.



City of Middletown Health Department
Middletown, Ohio

Connected and Healthy Community to Live, Work and Play

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09AM. The next meeting will be held on January 14, 2025 at 7:30AM in Conference Room 2C.

Jacquelyn D. Phillips Carter, MPH, BSN, RN
Secretary

Elizabeth Slamka, President
City of Middletown Board of Health

City of Middletown Health Department December 2024 Financial Notes

Vital Statistics

- \$6,094.58 Revenue Earned- *For the year VS Revenue Earned-\$93,485.80 up 1% YOY*
- 522 Certificates Sold- *For the year Certificates Sold-3,736 Birth & 3,545 Death*
- 20 Burial Permits Sold- *For the year 480 Permits Sold*

Environmental

- \$19,399.00 Revenue Earned- *Environmental Revenue-Up 14% YOY*
- \$7,250.00-T21 Licensing Revenue Earned- *(fees included in Reimbursement total)*

Indigent Services- *Indigent Services Up 1% YOY with Zero Reimbursements for the Year*

- \$24,891 Spent of the \$20,000 Budget for Indigent Services for 2024 (+4,891.00 over budget)
- 33 Applications approved (*3 waiting for invoices*)
 - 3 OD's
 - *Zero dollars in Reimbursements from the Embalmer's Association Program which ended May 2023*

Current Grants

- Workforce Development (WF-23) Active through 11/30/2027 - \$445,000 (*Target \$100K/Yr.*)
 - Multi-year project to support the development of current and future public health workforce
 - Award granted to CMHD \$435,000
 - \$10,000 awarded to all LHD's in Ohio for equity specific training.
 - **\$67,145.78 - Deposited to date**
 - The state has added Accreditation efforts to the WF grant in the amount of \$50,000 (*funding not received yet*).
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) 7/1/2024-6/30/2025 - \$23,837.70
 - **\$6,286.53 Deposited to date**
- Allotrac Medicaid Billing (MAC Billing) 1/01/2024-12/31/2024
 - Yearly agreement. Payments approved quarterly
 - **\$47,140.23- Deposited to date**
- Smoking State Reimbursement
 - **\$2,612.15 - Deposited to date**
- Tobacco21 Grant through Interact for Health(T21) 08/01/2023-07/31/2025-\$86,415.00
 - Final payment received and deposited
- State Health Subsidy Reimbursements & Vital Statistics Reimbursements
 - \$19,349.93 – State Subsidy (January) OAC 3701-36
 - \$9,329.20 – State Subsidy (May) OAC 3701-36
 - \$3,902.73 – Vital Stats (February)
 - \$1,519.20 – Vital Stats (May)

City of Middletown

Revenue Report

Accounts: 228.000.43310 to 228.000.49385

As Of: 1/1/2024 to 12/31/2024

Account Access Group: N/A

Account	Description	228			Target Percent:	100.00%
		Budget	MTD Revenue	YTD Revenue		
HEALTH FUND						
Revenue						
Intergovernmental						
228.000.43310	PHHS GRANT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43320	HIV GRANT (MONT CO)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43330	STATE HEALTH SUBSIDY	\$9,300.00	\$0.00	\$28,679.13	(\$19,379.13)	308.38%
228.000.43331	IMMUNIZATION ACTION PLAN GRANT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43332	BUREAU CHILDRENS MEDICAL HANDIC	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43360	PHI GRANT	\$14,333.00	\$0.00	\$14,333.00	\$14,333.00	0.00%
228.000.43362	CHILD/FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES GRA	\$14,333.00	\$0.00	\$14,333.00	\$14,333.00	0.00%
228.000.43363	EARLY START GRANT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43364	CARDIO/ASCULAR GRANT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43365	H1N1 GRANT REVENUE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43366	US HHS STIMULUS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43367	COVID-19 CRISIS RESPONSE GRANT (\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43368	COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING GRANT (\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.000.43369	HARM REDUCTION GRANT	\$14,334.00	\$0.00	\$14,334.00	\$14,334.00	0.00%
228.000.43370	PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE DEV GR	\$123,000.00	\$0.00	\$67,145.78	\$55,854.22	54.59%
Intergovernmental Totals:		\$175,300.00	\$0.00	\$95,824.91	\$79,475.09	54.66%
Charges for Service						
228.000.44197	ADMINISTRATIVE FEES	\$56,591.00	\$0.00	\$56,590.00	\$1.00	100.00%
228.000.44210	VITAL STATISTICS	\$108,130.00	\$4,310.66	\$96,979.21	\$11,150.79	89.69%
228.000.44211	VITAL STATISTICS SHIPPING CHARGE	\$0.00	(\$52.25)	(\$36.51)	\$36.51	N/A
228.000.44215	PATERNITY AFFIDAVITS	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$180.00	\$20.00	90.00%
228.000.44225	IMMUNIZATION CLINICS	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$30.45	\$2,969.55	1.02%
228.000.44280	VENDING LICENSE	\$620.00	\$0.00	\$1,220.90	(\$600.90)	196.92%
228.000.44281	FSO RESTAURANT LICENSE	\$63,000.00	\$439.00	\$69,745.42	(\$6,745.42)	110.71%
228.000.44282	FOOD ESTABLISHMENT LICENSE	\$22,000.00	\$300.00	\$30,514.25	(\$8,514.25)	138.70%
228.000.44283	HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE	\$3,500.00	\$8,676.00	\$21,596.79	(\$18,096.79)	617.05%
228.000.44284	FOOD SAFETY CLASSES	\$90.00	\$0.00	\$61.00	\$29.00	67.78%
228.000.44285	SWIMMING POOL/SPA	\$5,700.00	\$0.00	\$4,490.00	\$1,210.00	78.77%
228.000.44286	TATTOO LICENSE	\$1,500.00	\$750.00	\$1,925.00	(\$425.00)	128.33%
228.000.44287	PARK/CAMPS LICENSE FEES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$213.00	(\$213.00)	N/A
228.000.44288	MAC BILLING	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	\$47,140.23	(\$27,140.23)	235.70%
228.000.44290	MOBILE HOME PARKS	\$215.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$215.00	0.00%
228.000.44844	CREDIT CARD FEES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
	Charges for Service Totals:	\$284,546.00	\$14,423.41	\$330,649.74	(\$46,103.74)	116.20%
Interest/Contributions/Rentals/Leases/Misc						

Revenue Report
As Of: 1/1/2024 to 12/31/2024

Account	Description	Budget	MTD Revenue	YTD Revenue	Uncollected	% Collected
228.000.46780	MISCELLANEOUS	\$44,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,000.00	0.00%
Reimbursements/Transfers	Interest/Contributions/Rentals/Leases/Misc Totals:	\$44,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,000.00	0.00%
228.000.49100	REIMBURSEMENTS FROM INCOME TAX	\$0.00	\$2,100.00	\$83,631.73	(\$83,631.73)	N/A
228.000.49330	FROM CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	100.00%
228.000.49385	Reimbursements/Transfers Totals:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Revenue Totals:		\$200,000.00	\$2,100.00	\$283,631.73	(\$83,631.73)	141.82%
228 Total:		\$703,846.00	\$16,523.41	\$710,106.38	(\$6,260.38)	100.89%
Grand Total:		\$703,846.00	\$16,523.41	\$710,106.38	(\$6,260.38)	100.89%
	Target Percent:					100.00%

City of Middletown Expense Report

Accounts: 228.450.51110 to 228.450.59200

Account Access Group: N/A

As Of: 1/1/2024 to 12/31/2024

Include Inactive Accounts: No
Include Pre-Encumbrances: No

Account	Description	Budget	MTD Expense	YTD Expense	UnExp. Balance	Encumbrance	Unenc. Balance	% Used	Target Percent:	100.00%
228	HEALTH FUND									
Health Admin										
Personal Services										
228.450.51110	SALARIES & WAGES	\$600,840.00	\$56,566.87	\$591,969.26	\$8,870.74	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,870.74	98.52%
228.450.51120	OVERTIME WAGES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.51211	PERS	\$84,118.00	\$6,514.94	\$85,019.89	(\$901.89)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$901.89)	101.07%
228.450.51220	WORKERS COMPENSATIO	\$24,034.00	\$11,066.66	\$12,821.37	\$11,212.63	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,212.63	53.35%
228.450.51230	GROUP HEALTH INSURANC	\$103,148.00	\$7,247.81	\$89,669.40	\$13,478.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,478.60	86.93%
228.450.51231	HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUN	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.51240	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPEN	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.51270	MEDICARE-CITY SHARE	\$8,712.00	\$793.42	\$8,726.86	(\$14.86)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$14.86)	100.17%
228.450.51275	LIFE INSURANCE	\$1,941.00	\$152.10	\$1,808.30	\$132.70	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$132.70	93.16%
228.450.51290	EMPLOYEE AWARDS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Personal Services Totals:		\$822,793.00	\$82,341.80	\$790,015.08	\$32,777.92	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32,777.92	96.02%
Contractual Services										
228.450.52110	TRAVEL & TRAINING	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,353.31	\$646.69	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$646.69	83.83%
228.450.52111	MANDATORY TRAINING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52120	EMPLOYEE MILEAGE REIM	\$3,000.00	\$287.56	\$2,353.06	\$646.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$646.94	78.44%
228.450.52222	TELEPHONE LINE CHARGE	\$5,640.00	\$40.94	\$3,630.41	\$2,009.59	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,009.59	64.37%
228.450.52230	POSTAGE AND POSTAL CH	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52260	HEALTH - DUE STATE GOV	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52310	MUNICIPAL GARAGE CHAR	\$3,500.00	\$156.65	\$2,770.51	\$729.49	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$729.49	79.16%
228.450.52340	EQUIPMENT/VEHICLE REN	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52410	LEGAL SERVICES	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52420	MEDICAL SERVICE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52480	OTHER PROFESSIONAL SE	\$41,085.00	\$1,146.10	\$18,412.37	\$22,672.63	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$22,672.63	44.82%
228.450.52481	WORKFORCE GRANT CON	\$71,840.95	\$0.00	\$9,770.00	\$62,070.95	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$49,371.00	31.28%
228.450.52482	SYRINGE EXCHANGE PRO	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52488	HEALTH DEPT COVID-19 EX	\$3,815.00	\$0.00	\$3,815.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	100.00%
228.450.52490	OUTSIDE PRINTING	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,291.31	\$708.69	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$708.69	64.57%
228.450.52510	MAINTENANCE OF EQUIPM	\$8,000.00	\$1,373.07	\$6,463.48	\$1,536.52	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,536.52	80.79%
228.450.52680	MEDICAL LIABILITY INSURA	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52820	LICENSES AND PERMITS	\$11,855.00	\$1,545.00	\$9,307.50	\$2,547.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,547.50	78.51%
228.450.52920	MEMBERSHIPS, BOOKS, PE	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$274.00	\$1,226.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,226.00	18.27%
228.450.52930	PHOTO SUPPLIES & PROC	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.52940	INDIGENT BURIALS	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
Contractual Services Totals:		\$156,235.95	\$4,549.32	\$61,440.95	\$94,795.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$82,095.05	47.45%

Expense Report
As Of: 1/1/2024 to 12/31/2024

Account	Description	Budget	MTD Expense	YTD Expense	UnExp. Balance	Encumbrance	Unenc. Balance	% Used
Commodities								
228.450.53100	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$2,500.00	\$100.77	\$2,124.81	\$375.19	\$0.00	\$375.19	84.99%
228.450.53101	SUPPLIES FOR HIV GRANT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.53102	HARM REDUCTION SUPPLI	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.53210	FOOD	\$200.00	\$21.00	\$151.38	\$48.62	\$0.00	\$48.62	75.69%
228.450.53510	SUPPLIES TO MAINTAIN EQ	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.53610	SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPME	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$196.22	\$3.78	\$0.00	\$3.78	98.11%
228.450.53620	MAJOR TOOLS & EQUIP	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.53710	CHEMICALS & LAB SUPPLI	\$500.00	\$67.59	\$478.25	\$21.75	\$0.00	\$21.75	95.65%
	Commodities Totals:	\$3,400.00	\$189.36	\$2,950.66	\$449.34	\$0.00	\$449.34	86.78%
Capital Outlay								
228.450.54300	COMPUTERS & OTHER PE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.54310	AUTO & TRUCK DEPRECIA	\$4,800.00	\$0.00	\$4,800.07	(\$0.07)	\$0.00	(\$0.07)	100.00%
228.450.54320	OFFICE MACHINERY & EQU	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.54360	OTHER EQUIPMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
228.450.54370	COMPUTER SOFTWARE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
	Capital Outlay Totals:	\$4,800.00	\$0.00	\$4,800.07	(\$0.07)	\$0.00	(\$0.07)	100.00%
Refunds								
228.450.59200	MISCELLANEOUS REFUND	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
	Refunds Totals:	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
	Health Admin Totals:	<u>\$987,228.95</u>	<u>\$87,080.48</u>	<u>\$859,206.76</u>	<u>\$128,022.19</u>	<u>\$12,699.95</u>	<u>\$115,322.24</u>	<u>88.32%</u>
228 Total:		<u>\$987,228.95</u>	<u>\$87,080.48</u>	<u>\$859,206.76</u>	<u>\$128,022.19</u>	<u>\$12,699.95</u>	<u>\$115,322.24</u>	<u>88.32%</u>
Grand Total:		<u>\$987,228.95</u>	<u>\$87,080.48</u>	<u>\$859,206.76</u>	<u>\$128,022.19</u>	<u>\$12,699.95</u>	<u>\$115,322.24</u>	<u>88.32%</u>
	Target Percent:				100.00%			

City of Middletown Board of Health Members 2025

Name, Address, Email	Board Position <i>(Mayor, City Council, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee)</i>	Telephone	Term Begins	Term Expires <i>(5 years from term start date)</i>
Elizabeth Slamka 1518 Central Ave. #1 Middletown, OH 45044 elizabeths@cityofmiddletown.org	President <i>(Mayor, City Council, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee)</i>	C-513.505.6600 W-513.425.7831	01/24	DNE
Joseph Richmond 104 Kensington St Middletown, OH 45044 richmoj17@gmail.com *First Term	Member <i>(Finance Committee)</i>	C-513.464.8545	01/23	12/31/2027
Amy Sibcy 4343 S Dixie Hwy Franklin, OH 45005 powerstationgym4343@gmail.com *First Term	Member <i>(Finance Committee)</i>	C-513.582.8142 W-513.425.8100	01/23	12/31/2027
Dr. Scott Zollett, MD 406 Curryer Rd Middletown, OH 45042 szollett@gmail.com *First Term	Member <i>(Personnel Committee)</i>	C-513.594.4471	01/23	12/31/2027
Ruth L. Lolli 14 Ardmore Dr Middletown, OH 45042 ruthlolli07@gmail.com *First Term	Member <i>(Personnel Committee)</i>	C-513-292-8585	01/21	12/31/2025
Jeff Bonnell 637 Tara Oaks Dr. Middletown, OH 45042 jeff.bonnell@sbcglobal.net *Third Term	Member <i>(Personnel Committee)</i>	W-513.423.9443 C-513.464.0877 H-513.464.0877	01/22	12/31/2026
Emily Miller 4527 Moore Rd. Middletown, OH 45042 emiller1287@gmail.com *First Term	Member <i>(Personnel Committee)</i>	C-513.435.3635	1/24	12/31/2028
Tiffani Baggett 718 6 th Ave. Middletown, OH 45044 tiffanibaggett1@gmail.com *First Term	Member	C-513-393-3048	1/25	12/31/2029

- Board members serve a 5-year term that begins January 1.
- The President of the Board's term does not expire and is held by the current Mayor
- The Health Commissioner is the Board Secretary
- Quorum is 2/3rds
- (Charter-Article V, Section 1. Board of Health shall be composed of seven members appointed by Council)
- Board meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 a.m.

City of Middletown Board of Health

Board of Health Committees

2024

Finance Committee

Mayor, President
Amy Sibcy
Sally Kash
Joseph Richmond

Personnel Committee

Mayor, President
Dr. Scott Zollett
Jeffrey Bonnell
Ruth Lolli
Emily Miller

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
 2024 Activity Quarterly Report- Third Quarter

Environmental Quarterly Totals	October	November	December	YTD Total
Food Service Operations/Vending Inspections	36	53	28	499
Retail Food Establishments Inspections	21	30	12	225
Mobile FSO/RFE	1	0	0	28
Prelicense/Consultations	9	11	12	94
Inspection of Temporaries	8	0	0	30
Environmental School Inspections	3	11	0	42
Smoking Inspections	1	0	0	5
Swimming Pools Inspections	1	2	12	99
Tattoo Establishment Inspections	3	4	1	16
Animal Bites	9	3	4	84
Complaints	4	7	7	48
Level 1 Food Certification Training	0	0	0	3
Temp Park/Park Camp	1	1	0	7
Sewage Inspections	7	0	1	9
Tobacco 21	12	0	0	45
Temporary Body Art	0	0	0	1

Vital Statistics Quarterly Totals	October	November	December	YTD Total
Birth Certificates Issued	354	299	250	4041
Death Certificates Issued	339	301	272	3954
Birth Certificates Filed	74	61	65	862
Death Certificates Filed	101	62	72	1045
Indigent Cremations	0	1	3	33
Accidents				
Drug Overdoses	5	1	1	21
Falls	0	0	1	3
Exposure to Elements	0	0	0	0
House Fire	0	0	0	0
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1	0	1	6
Undetermined	0	0	0	3
Suicide	1	0	1	6
Homicide	0	0	0	2
COVID-19 Related Deaths	0	0	0	4
5 Pending Death Certificates				

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2024 4th Quarter Report
Meetings/Conferences Calls Attended

Health Commissioner & Environmental Health Director:

- ODH Conference Call-Together We Can
- Unhoused/Homeless Meeting
- AOHC Conference Calls
- Health Department Staff Meeting
- Senior Staff Meeting
- Severe Weather Advisory Message
- Fall AOHC Conference
- Family Children First Council (FCFC) and Executive Committee
- Hamilton Chamber Red Carpet Health Council Presentation
- Accela Conference Call

Community Meetings attended by Health Commissioner

- Middletown Connect Core Meeting
- Centerpoint Board Meeting & Program Committee
- Family Children First Council (FCFC) and Executive Committee
- YWCA Board Meeting
- Policy Advocacy Meeting
- Housing Meeting & CDBG Survey
- Community Engagement
- BCDD Board Meeting
- Town Hall Meeting-Towne Mall
- Mayor's State of the City Address/Health Presentation

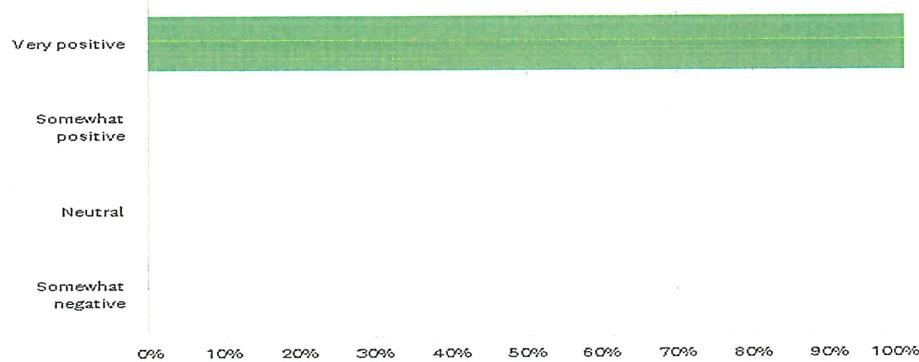
CITY OF MIDDLETOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
 REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES – 2024

DISEASE	1 ST QTR	2 ND QTR	3 RD QTR	4 TH QTR	YTD
COVID-19	460	73	666	265	1464
Atypical Mycobacteria	0	0	0	0	0
C. auris	0	3	6	5	14
Bacteremia S. Pneumoniae	0	0	0	0	0
Streptococcal-Group A-invasive	5	3	2	1	11
Streptococcus pneumoniae-Invasive	1	1	0	2	4
Campylobacter	0	2	1	3	6
Cryptosporidiosis	0	1	0	0	1
E Coli Shiga Toxin-Producing	1	0	1	1	3
Salmonella	3	0	1	1	5
Shigella	1	0	0	0	1
Dengue	1	0	0	0	1
Coccidioidomycosis	1	0	0	0	1
Hepatitis A	1	0	0	0	1
Hepatitis B	5	4	7	2	18
Hepatitis C	14	25	13	21	73
Meningitis Bacterial	0	0	0	0	0
Meningitis Viral	0	0	1	1	2
Haemophilus Influenza (invasive disease)	1	0	0	0	1
Influenza-associated hospitalization	60	5	0	3	68
Varicella	2	0	0	0	2
Mumps	1	0	0	0	1
Tuberculosis	1	0	1	0	2
Lyme Disease	1	0	0	0	1
Pertussis	5	2	4	15	26
CP Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacteriaceae	0	0	0	0	0
CPO	3	4	5	0	12
Legionellosis-Legionnaires' Disease	0	1	1	1	3
Giardiasis	0	0	1	1	2
HIV	3	3	4	1	11
STD's (Sexually Transmitted Diseases):					
Chlamydia	77	80	67	66	290
Gonococcal Infection	19	24	28	42	113
Syphilis	5	3	5	1	14

2024 4th Quarter Customer Satisfaction Survey

Overall, how would you rate the quality of your customer service experience?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0


ANSWER CHOICES

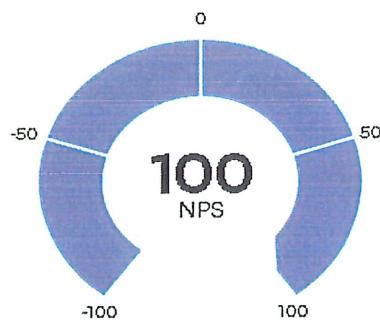
- ▼ **Very positive**
- ▼ **Somewhat positive**
- ▼ **Neutral**
- ▼ **Somewhat negative**

TOTAL
RESPONSES

100.00%	1
0.00%	0
0.00%	0
0.00%	0
TOTAL	1

How likely is it that you would recommend Health Department to a friend or colleague?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0


DETRACTORS (0-6)

 0
 0

PASSIVES (7-8)

 0
 0

PROMOTERS (9-10)

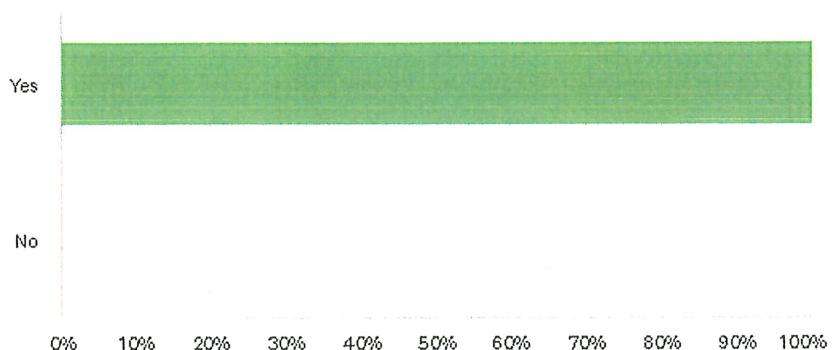
 100%
 1

NET PROMOTER® SCORE

100

Are our hours of operation sufficient to meet your needs?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0


ANSWER CHOICES
▼ RESPONSES

▼ Yes

100.00%

1

▼ No

0.00%

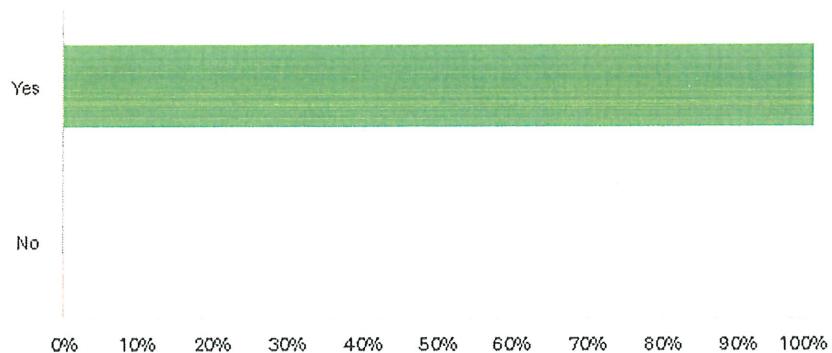
0

TOTAL

1

The wait time for service was reasonable.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0


ANSWER CHOICES
▼ RESPONSES

▼ Yes

100.00%

1

▼ No

0.00%

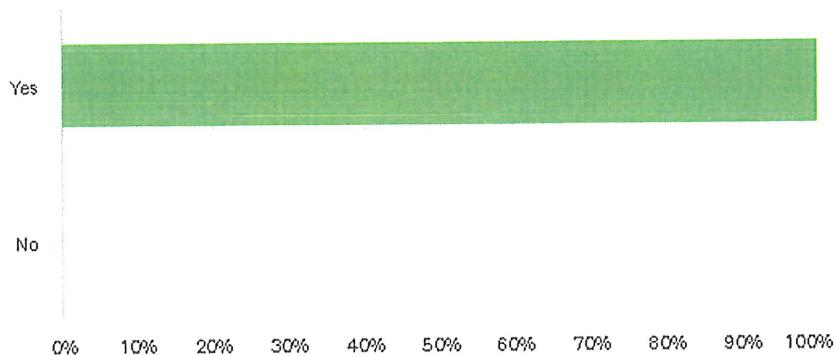
0

TOTAL

1

The staff was friendly and courteous.

Answered:1 Skipped:0

**ANSWER CHOICES**

▼ Yes

▼ No

TOTAL

RESPONSES

100.00%

1

0.00%

0

1

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2023 Activity Quarterly Report- Fourth Quarter

Environmental Quarterly Totals	October	November	December	YTD Total
Food Service Operations/Vending Inspections	59	32	52	489
Retail Food Establishments Inspections	17	16	9	187
Mobile FSO/RFE	2	1	1	18
Prelicense/Consultations	14	12	6	104
Inspection of Temporaries	21	2	0	72
Environmental School Inspections	10	4	0	40
Smoking Inspections	1	0	0	4
Swimming Pools Inspections	4	0	0	121
Tattoo Establishment Inspections	5	1	1	9
Animal Bites	14	5	5	114
Complaints	0	2	5	53
Level 1 Food Certification Training	0	0	0	5
Sewage Inspections	1	0	0	9

Vital Statistics Quarterly Totals	October	November	December	YTD Total
Birth Certificates Issued	292	308	244	3979
Death Certificates Issued	355	365	339	3917
Birth Certificates Filed	60	74	74	862
Death Certificates Filed	93	111	84	1035
Indigent Cremations	4	3	0	34
Accidents				
Drug Overdoses	6	4	1	29
Falls	1	0	0	8
Exposure to Elements	0	0	0	2
House Fire	0	0	0	1
Motor Vehicle Accidents	0	0	2	7
Undetermined	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	1	8
Homicide	0	0	0	4
COVID-19 Related Deaths	0	0	2	5
6 Pending Death Certificates				

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN HEALTH DEPARTMENT
 REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES – 2023

DISEASE	1 ST QTR	2 ND QTR	3 RD QTR	4 TH QTR	YTD
COVID-19	537	129	343	887	1896
Atypical Mycobacteria	0	0	0	0	0
Bacteremia S. Pneumoniae	0	0	0	0	0
Brucellosis	0	0	0	1	1
Streptococcal-Group A-invasive	0	5	3	1	9
Streptococcus pneumoniae-Invasive	2	3	1	4	10
Campylobacter	0	2	4	2	8
Cryptosporidiosis	0	0	2	0	2
E Coli 0157 H7	1	0	1	2	4
Ehrlichiosis	0	0	0	0	0
Salmonella	1	0	0	0	1
Shigella	0	0	1	0	1
Coccidioidomycosis	0	1	0	0	1
Hepatitis A	1	0	1	0	2
Hepatitis B	7	7	8	11	33
Hepatitis C	25	23	16	19	83
Meningitis Bacterial	0	0	0	0	0
Meningitis Viral	0	2	0	1	3
Haemophilus Influenza (invasive disease)	1	1	0	1	3
Influenza-associated hospitalization	2	0	0	4	6
Varicella	0	0	4	0	4
Mumps	0	0	0	0	0
Malaria	0	0	1	0	1
Tuberculosis	0	0	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	0	0	0	0	0
Q Fever	0	0	0	1	1
Pertussis	0	0	0	5	5
CPO	0	0	0	1	1
CP Carbapenem-Resistant	1	8	4	0	13
Enterobacteriaceae					
Legionellosis-Legionnaires' Disease	0	0	1	0	1
Giardiasis	0	0	1	0	1
HIV	2	3	0	2	7
STD's (Sexually Transmitted Diseases):					
Chlamydia	65	71	77	62	275
Gonococcal Infection	14	28	34	30	106
Syphilis	3	3	4	2	12

PUBLIC HEALTH NAME, ADDRESS AND PERSONAL HISTORY (NAPH) FORM (*revised 5/2017)

Full Name of Person Picking up Medication			
Address			
City/State/Zip			
Date of Birth	<input type="text"/> Phone	<input type="text"/> Date	<input type="text"/>



		To Be Completed By Staff	
		Label	
A	B	C	D
<p>Provide the name and age of each person receiving medication.</p> <p>Answer Yes or No to questions A, B, C, and D for any person for whom you are picking up medication.</p>		<p>Is the person allergic to: Doxycycline or Tetracyclines</p> <p>Is the person allergic to: Ciprofloxacin or Quinolones Or are they taking: Tizanidine (Zanaflex) Or do they have: Myasthenia Gravis</p>	<p>Is the person: A Breastfeeding Mother or Pregnant</p> <p>Does this person weigh less than 76 pounds (lbs); If yes, indicate weight</p>
<input type="text"/> Name	<input type="text"/> Age	<input type="text"/> Gender	<input type="text"/> lbs
<input type="text"/> Name	<input type="text"/> Age	<input type="text"/> Gender	<input type="text"/> lbs
<input type="text"/> Name	<input type="text"/> Age	<input type="text"/> Gender	<input type="text"/> lbs
<input type="text"/> Name	<input type="text"/> Age	<input type="text"/> Gender	<input type="text"/> lbs
Medical Referral Notes: <input type="text"/>			

		To Be Completed By Staff	
		D	
		C	
		Is the person: A Breastfeeding Mother or Pregnant	
		Does this person weigh less than 76 pounds (lbs): If yes, indicate weight	
		Label	
<p>Provide the name and age of each person receiving medication. Answer Yes or No to questions A, B, C, and D for any person for whom you are picking up medication.</p>		<p>A Is the person allergic to: Doxycycline or Tetracyclines</p> <p>B Is the person allergic to: Ciprofloxacin or Quinolones Or are they taking: Tizanidine (Zanaflex) Or do they have: Myasthenia Gravis</p> <p>C Is the person: A Breastfeeding Mother or Pregnant</p> <p>D Does this person weigh less than 76 pounds (lbs): If yes, indicate weight</p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	
<p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Age <input type="text"/> Gender <input type="text"/></p>		<p><input type="text"/> lbs <input type="text"/></p>	

Medical Referral Notes:

Health Commissioner Notes

December 2024

Budget 2025

- Budget and Pay and Benefits Ordinance Approved

Middletown Connect/Grant OHIZ

- All Ambassadors meeting focus on community issues
- Activities and dates in Packet and emailed to Board
- Middletown Connect Core Meetings
- New grants and funding opportunities-ONEOHIO 40k

BC Cares

- Continue to meet every Wednesday at 1p to discuss community issues

PHAB

- Chronic Disease Committee met to discuss initiatives re: CHIP
- Workforce Development Activities
- PHAB Annual Report received and response

Internal/External Meetings and Tasks

- Seasonal Affective Disorder S.A.D. Health Moment Facebook

Meetings Internal/Activities

- Indigent/Unclaimed Services and activities
- Weekly Sr. Staff Meeting
- Council Review Meeting
- Middletown Connect
- Together We Can ODH Weekly
- Infectious Disease Call
- Steve Ausgt-Reporter Soapbox health topic
- Joe Simon photographer

Community Participation/Events

- CenterPoint Program Meeting
- CenterPoint Board Meeting-CEO search
- Miami University-Regionals Hamilton Speech STI/STD
- AOHC Mtg

- SWOH District Mtg
- YWCA Board Meeting
- Prevention Advocacy and Policy Coalition meeting
- Miami University Regionals Holiday Party
- Infectious Disease meetings
- YWCA strategic meeting retreat
- BC Board of Development and Disabilities
- MLK Speaker for West Chester 1/20/2025
- P.E. Group 1/9/2025



Butler County Monthly Communicable Disease Surveillance Report

December of 2024

Jordan Luttrell-Freeman, MPH
Jordan.luttrell-freeman@bcohio.gov

Notifiable Communicable Diseases

Summary:

- Number of Disease Cases Reported in Butler County: 992
- Most Frequently Reported: COVID-19, Chlamydia infections, Gonococcal infections, Pertussis, Hepatitis C

Table 1. Comparison of Reported Cases of Confirmed or Probable Notifiable Communicable Diseases, December 2024 (excluding Chlamydia infection and gonorrhea)

	Reported Cases	Rate per 100,000	Rate Ratio	Confidence Interval
State of Ohio (excluding BC)	26,779	234.72	-	-
Butler County	881	225.69	0.962	0.900-1.028

Interpretation: The residents of Butler County were 3.8% less likely to be the subject of a notifiable disease report when compared to the rest of Ohio as a whole. These results are not statistically significant. (excluding Chlamydia infection and Gonorrhea)

Table 2.* Communicable Diseases by Jurisdiction (December 2024)

Jurisdiction	Count	Rate per 100,000	Change from Previous Month
Butler County General Health District	624	226.1	↑103.3% from November 2024 (n=307)
Middletown City Health Department	176	344.9	↑32.3% from November 2024 (n=133)
City of Hamilton Health Department	192	302.9	↑128.6% from November 2024 (n=84)
Butler County (all inclusive)	992	254.1	↑89.3% from November 2024 (n=524)

Table 3.* Butler County Reportable Diseases by Subgroups (December 2024)

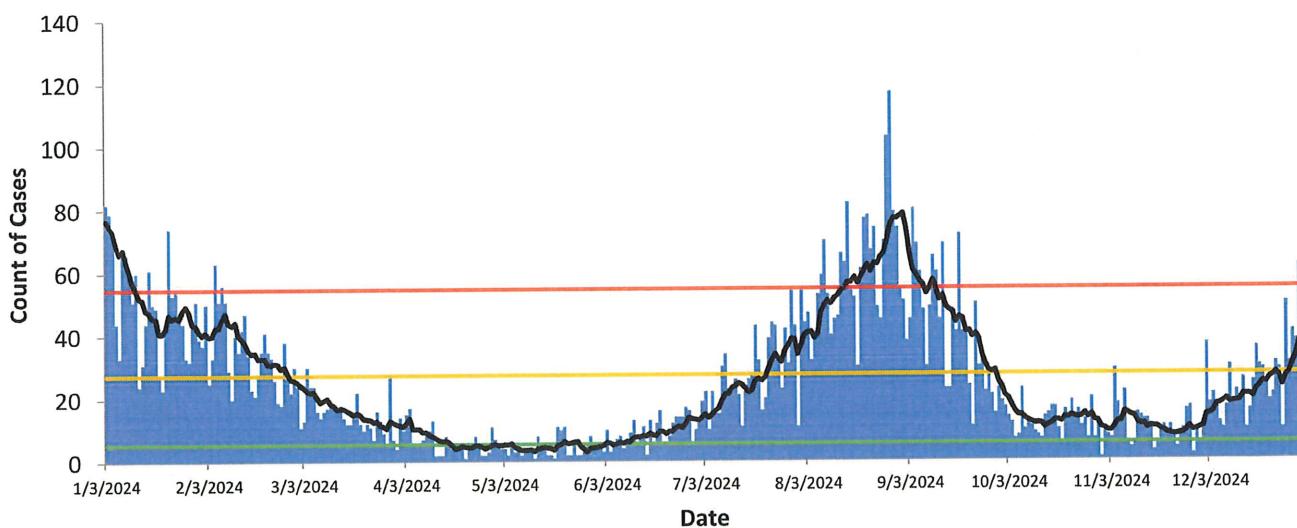
Reportable Disease Subgroup	Count	Trend
Viral Hepatitis (B and C)	26	↑8.3% from November 2024 (n=24)
Sexually-Transmitted Infections (Chlamydia infection, Gonorrhea, Syphilis and HIV)	111	↓22.4% from November 2024 (n=143)
Enteric Diseases (Hepatitis A, Amebiasis, Campylobacteriosis, Cryptosporidiosis, Cyclosporiasis, STEC, Giardiasis, Salmonellosis, Shigellosis, Vibriosis and Yersiniosis)	16	↑6.7% from November 2024 (n=15)
Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (COVID-19, influenza-associated hospitalizations, <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> , Bacterial meningitis, Mumps, Pertussis, invasive <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> , Tetanus, and Varicella)	817	↑151.4% from November 2024 (n=325)

*Data is provisional and subject to change – Table 1 does not include Gonorrhea or Chlamydia infection due to the high likelihood of duplicate cases and co-infections. Suspected, probable, & confirmed cases are included in counts for Tables 2-4 except for cases of arboviral encephalitis such as Zika virus disease, of which only probable and confirmed cases are reported and Novel Influenza A of which only confirmed cases are reported. Report reflects diseases reported to ODH for the period of December 1 - 31, 2024, unless otherwise noted. Table 6 includes only probable and confirmed cases. Data accessed from the Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS) on 12/5/2024.

Table 4. *Diseases Reported in Butler County (December 2024)

Jurisdictions	Butler County General Health District	Middletown City Health Department	City of Hamilton Health Department	Butler County (all inclusive)
C. auris	2	2	0	4
Campylobacteriosis	1	2	0	3
Chlamydia infection	34	20	23	77
COVID-19	505	124	145	774
CPO	5	0	3	8
Cryptosporidiosis	2	0	0	2
E. coli, Shiga Toxin-Producing	1	0	0	1
Giardiasis	2	0	1	3
Gonococcal infection	14	8	5	27
Haemophilus influenzae - invasive	2	0	0	2
Hepatitis A	2	0	0	2
Hepatitis B	3	1	1	5
Hepatitis C	10	6	5	21
HIV	3	1	0	4
Influenza-associated hospitalization	11	3	1	15
Legionellosis	2	1	0	3
Meningitis - aseptic/viral	3	0	1	4
Pertussis	14	8	1	23
Salmonellosis	2	0	1	3
Streptococcal - Group A -invasive	0	0	1	1
Streptococcus pneumoniae -invasive	2	0	2	4
Syphilis	2	0	1	3
Varicella	1	0	0	1
Yersiniosis	1	0	1	2
Total	624	176	192	992

Figure 1. Reported Cases of COVID-19 by Date of Event 2024*



*Data is provisional and subject to change – Table 1 does not include Gonorrhea or Chlamydia infection due to the high likelihood of duplicate cases and co-infections. Suspected, probable, & confirmed cases are included in counts for Tables 2-4 except for cases of arboviral encephalitis such as Zika virus disease, of which only probable and confirmed cases are reported and Novel Influenza A of which only confirmed cases are reported. Report reflects diseases reported to ODH for the period of December 1 - 31, 2024, unless otherwise noted. Table 6 includes only probable and confirmed cases. Data accessed from the Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS) on 12/5/2024.

Butler County Reportable Disease Surveillance

Table 6 outlines Butler County's select, reportable disease counts by year, that were classified as either "probable" or "confirmed" during the years of 2019 through 2024 and provides a 5-year average column for comparison. Graph includes those diseases that represent a consistent threat to public health.

Table 5. * Reported Probable/Confirmed Cases in Butler County (2019-2024)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5 Year Avg.	Up to 12/31/2024
Amebiasis	1	0	1	1	0	<1	0
Botulism- wound	0	0	0	1	0	<1	0
Brucellosis	0	0	2	0	0	<1	0
Candida auris (not reportable prior to 2019)	0	0	1	13	37	10.2	57
Campylobacteriosis	45	30	35	48	49	41.4	42
Chlamydia infection	1,631	1,512	1,406	1,359	1,321	1,445.8	1,208
COVID-19 (not reportable prior to 2020)	-	26,420	39,521	49,323	12,192	31,864	9303
CPO (replaces CP-CRE) (not reportable prior to 2019)	4	10	11	12	93	26	58
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease	2	0	1	1	0	<1	0
Cryptosporidiosis	4	6	5	7	7	5.8	12
Cyclosporiasis	2	0	0	1	3	1.2	1
Dengue	1	0	1	1	0	<1	1
E. coli, Shiga-Toxin Producing	11	14	15	17	17	14.8	12
Ehrlichiosis-Ehrlichia chaffeensis	0	1	1	1	0	<1	0
Giardiasis	12	4	14	7	13	10	5
Gonococcal Infection	732	651	480	473	413	549.8	369
Haemophilus influenzae (invasive disease)	10	7	6	11	18	10.4	14
Hemolytic uremic syndrome	0	0	1	0	1	<1	0
Hepatitis A	104	2	1	0	2	21.8	0
Hepatitis B - acute/chronic/perinatal	109	67	85	78	82	84.2	69
Hepatitis C – acute/chronic/perinatal	552	486	434	390	280	428.4	234
HIV	24	17	58	38	35	34.4	44
Hansen's disease	0	0	0	1	0	<1	0
Influenza-associated Hospitalization	325	266	18	306	70	197	333
Legionellosis – Legionnaires' Disease	17	10	10	15	12	12.8	14
Listeriosis	0	0	0	1	2	<1	0
Lyme Disease	3	2	0	2	2	1.8	5
Malaria	2	2	1	3	4	2.4	3
Measles – imported outside Ohio	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Meningitis – aseptic/viral	25	9	14	10	10	13.6	26
Meningitis – bacterial (not N. meningitidis)	4	3	3	11	10	6.2	11
Meningococcal dz. – Neisseria meningitidis	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
MIS-C associated with COVID-19	-	0	15	7	1	5.75	0
Mpox (not reportable prior to 2022)	-	-	-	4	0	-	0
Mumps	1	0	0	0	0	<1	1
Pertussis	38	13	3	3	5	12.4	65
Salmonellosis	32	20	26	34	54	33.2	36
Salmonella Paratyphi	0	0	0	0	1	<1	1
Salmonella Typhi (Typhoid Fever)	0	0	2	0	1	<1	2
Shigellosis	7	8	3	6	7	6.2	12
Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis (including RMSF)	0	2	0	1	0	<1	0
Streptococcal – Group A – invasive	24	27	24	34	39	29.6	31
Streptococcal – Group B – in newborn	0	1	0	1	1	<1	0
Streptococcus pneumoniae – Invasive	59	31	33	40	43	41.2	40
Syphilis (all stages)	11	17	23	45	66	32.4	55
Tuberculosis (active)	8	6	7	8	7	7.2	13
Varicella	14	1	5	8	19	9.4	11
Vibriosis (not Cholera)	1	0	2	2	3	1.6	2
West Nile Virus Disease	0	0	0	0	1	<1	0
Yersiniosis	1	0	1	2	4	1.6	4

*Data is provisional and subject to change – Table 1 does not include Gonorrhea or Chlamydia infection due to the high likelihood of duplicate cases and co-infections. Suspected, probable, & confirmed cases are included in counts for Tables 2-4 except for cases of arboviral encephalitis such as Zika virus disease, of which only probable and confirmed cases are reported and Novel Influenza A of which only confirmed cases are reported. Report reflects diseases reported to ODH for the period of December 1 - 31, 2024, unless otherwise noted. Table 6 includes only probable and confirmed cases. Data accessed from the Ohio Disease Reporting System (ODRS) on 12/5/2024.



Butler County General Health District

Figure 1: Oxford SSP Site Visitors by Week for December 2024

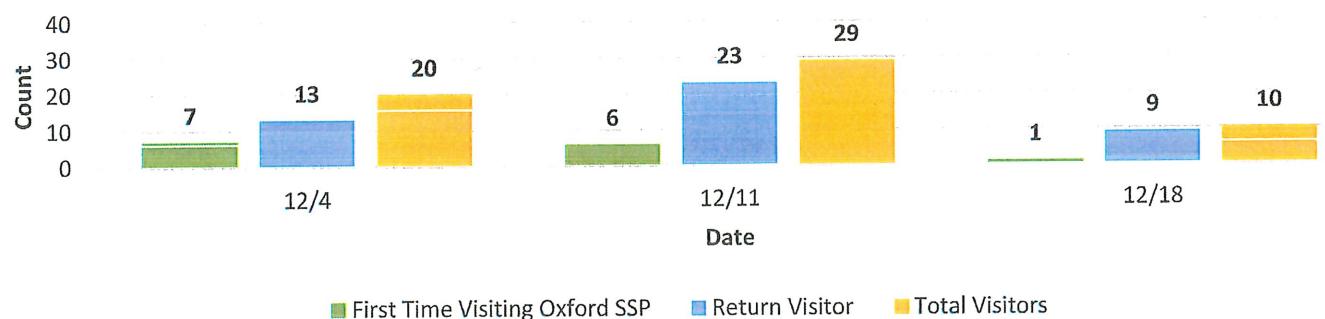


Figure 2: Oxford SSP Site Visitors by Month for 2024

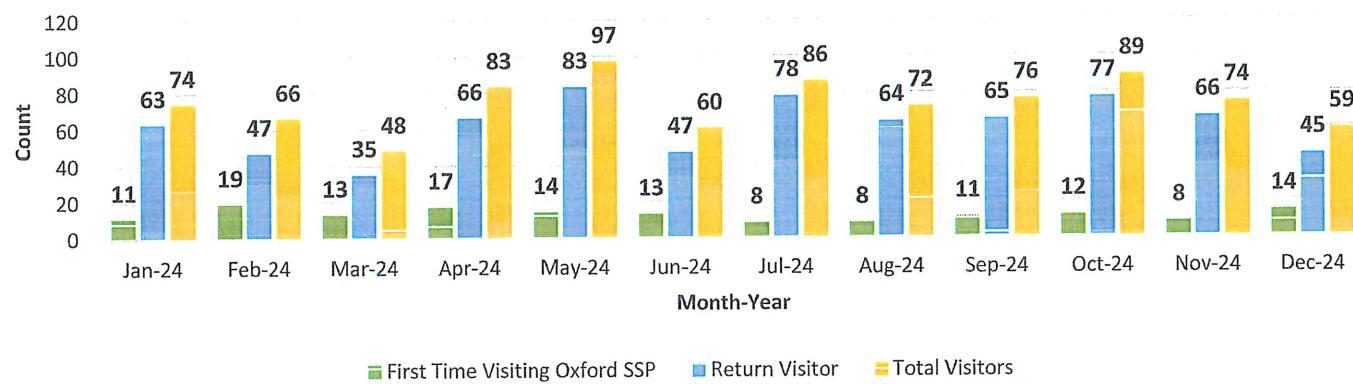
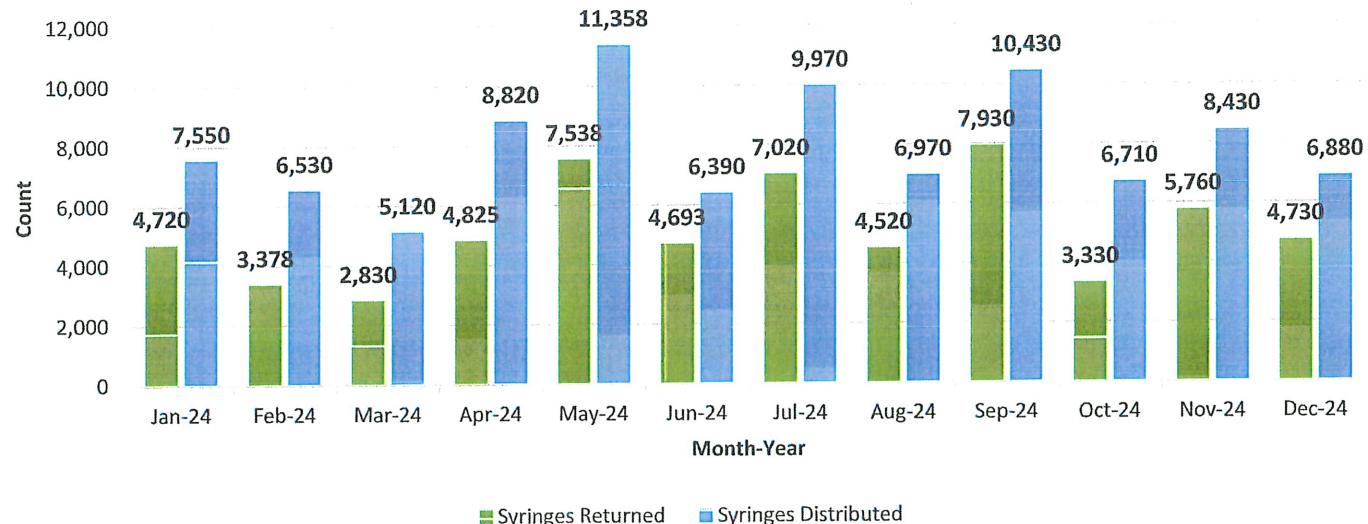


Figure 3: Syringes Returned and Distributed by Month for the Oxford SSP Site for 2024



Source: Butler County General Health District – Oxford Syringe Service Program Site, Data obtained January 3, 2025, Data is provisional and subject to change

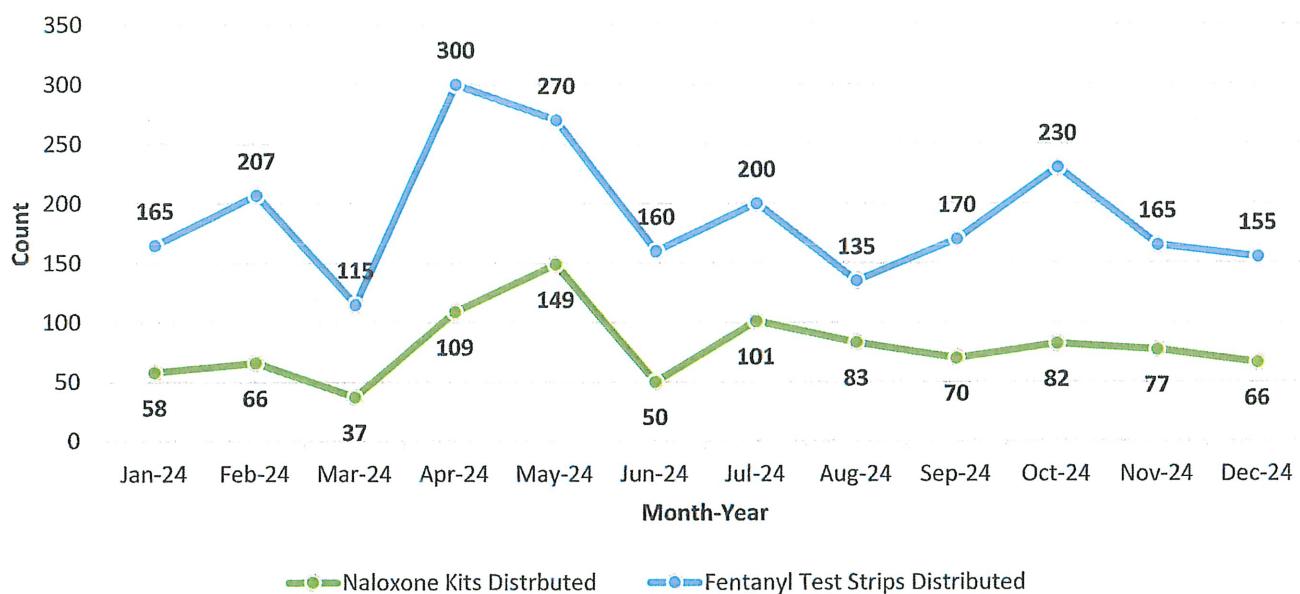


Butler County
General Health District

Table 1: Syringes Returned and Distributed by Zip Code – City or County for the Oxford SSP Site by Visitors' Reported Home Residence for December 2024

Zip Code - City	Syringes Returned	Syringes Distributed	Percent Returned
Hamilton			
45011	490	1,150	42.61%
45013	1,260	2,250	56.00%
45015	700	740	94.59%
Hamilton Total	2,450	4,140	59.18%
45014 - Fairfield	340	340	100.00%
45044 - Middletown	300	340	88.24%
45056 - Oxford	1,340	1,760	76.14%
Warren County, OH	300	300	100.00%
Total	4,730	6,880	68.75%

Figure 4: Naloxone Kits and Fentanyl Test Strips Distributed at the Oxford SSP Site for 2024





Butler County
General Health District

Figure 1: Fairfield SSP Site Visitors by Month for 2024

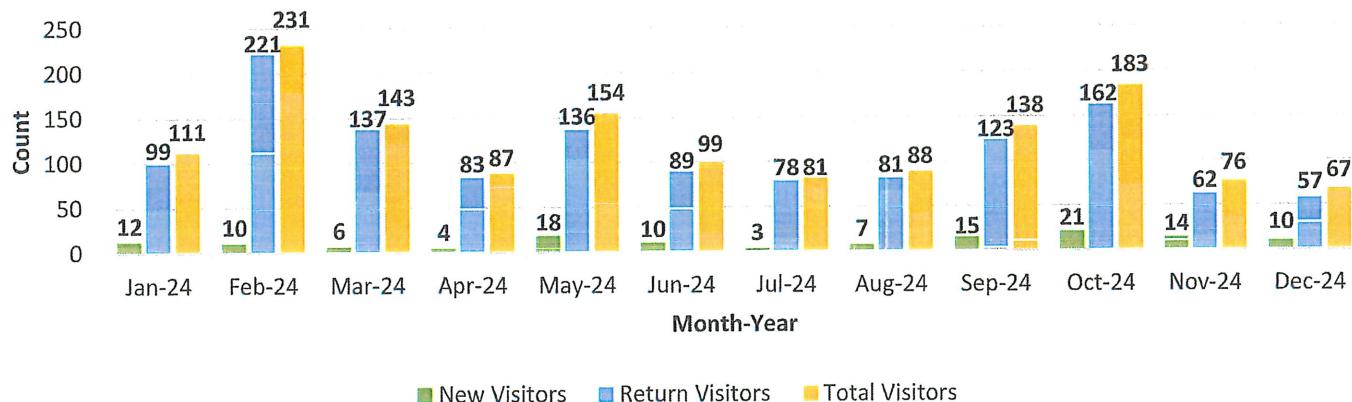


Figure 2: Syringes Returned and Distributed by Month for the Fairfield SSP Site for 2024

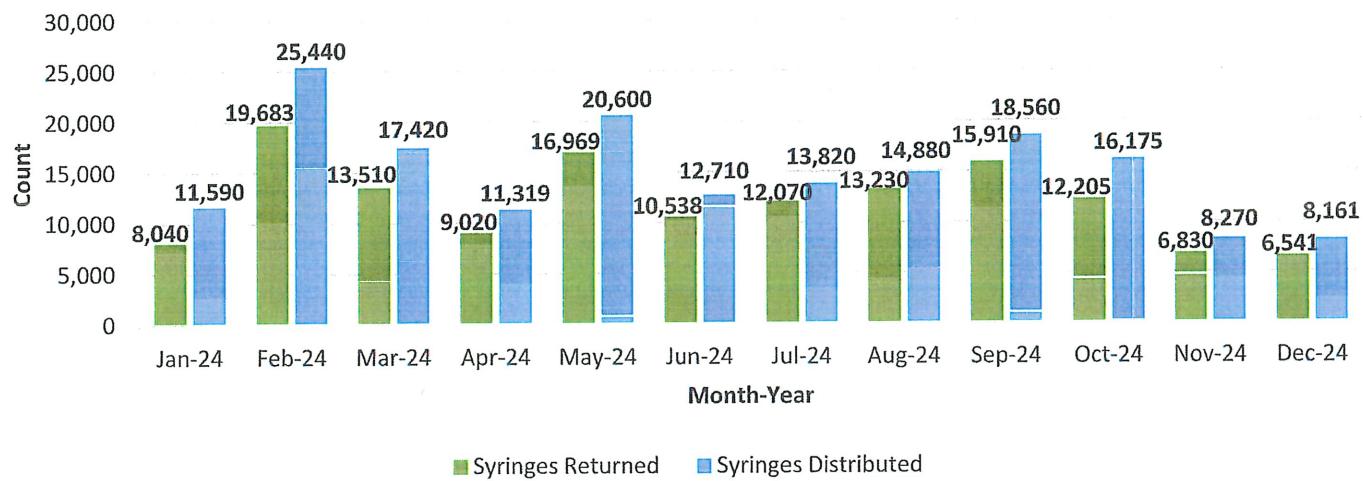


Table 1: Syringes Returned and Distributed by Visitors' Home County of Residence for the Fairfield SSP Site for December 2024

County	Syringes Returned	Syringes Distributed	Percent Returned
Butler County, OH	6,541	8,041	81.35%
Hamilton County, OH	0	120	0.00%
Total	6,541	8,161	80.15%



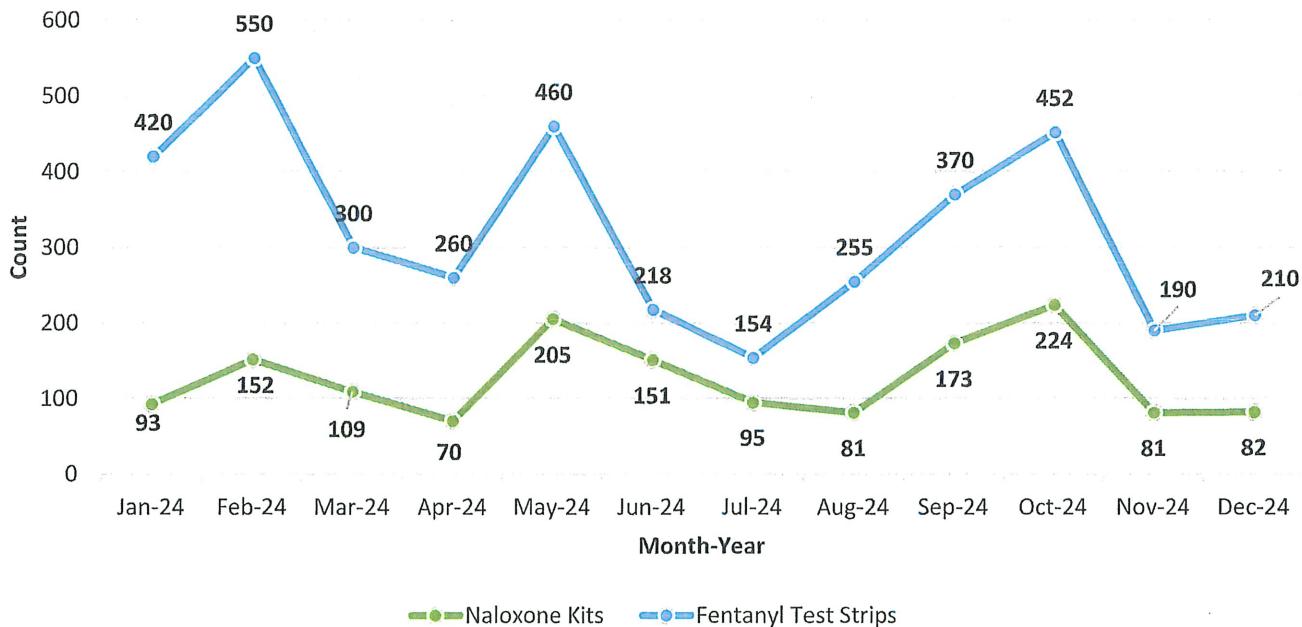
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Butler County
General Health District

Table 2: Syringes Returned and Distributed by Zip Code - City for the Fairfield SSP Site by Butler County Visitors' Home Residence for December 2024

Zip Code - City	Syringes Returned	Syringes Distributed	Percent Returned
Hamilton			
45011	2,000	2,440	81.97%
45013	1,630	2,250	72.44%
45015	620	740	83.78%
Hamilton Total	4,250	5,430	78.27%
Middletown			
45042	420	500	84.00%
45044	850	990	85.86%
Middletown Total	1,270	1,490	85.23%
45014 - Fairfield	1,021	1,121	91.08%
Butler County Total	6,541	8,041	81.35%

Figure 3: Naloxone Kits and Fentanyl Test Strips Distributed by Month for the Fairfield SSP Site for 2024





Smoking Complaint Spreadsheet For December 2024

Business Name	Date	Notice of Report	Dismissed	Notice of Violation (60 Days)	Letter of Warning (15 Days)	Civil Fine Letter	Violation Contested	Notice of Hearing	Additional Comments
1 @ The Square	Complaint 8/11/24								Case completed, must be closed by ODH
2									
3									
Notes:									

City of Middletown Health Department

December 2024

Vital Statistics

	MONTHLY	YTD
Birth Certificates Filed	65	862
Death Certificates Filed	72	1045
Birth Certificates Issued	250	4041
Death Certificates Issued	272	3954
Indigent Cremation Services	3	33

Environmental Inspections

	MONTHLY	YTD
Food Service Operations(FSO)	28	471
Retail Food Establishments(RFE)	12	225
Prelicense/Consultations	12	94
Sewage Inspections	1	9
School Inspections	0	42
Vending Locations	0	28
Temporary FSO/RFE	0	30
Mobile FSO/RFE	0	28
Complaints	7	48
Smoking Complaint Inspections	0	5
Swimming Pools	12	99
Tattoo	1	16
Temp Park/Park Camp	0	7
Jail Inspection	0	1
Site Visit (Septic)	0	0
Well Inspection	4	4
T-21	0	45
Temporary Body Art	0	1

**Totals reflect City of Middletown residents that died inside of city limits only

Level 1 Certification Training

Number of Attendees

0

3

Animal Bite Events

Dog	4	72
Cat	0	7
Bat	0	2
Raccoon/skunk-Animal Exposure	0	3

SOUTHWEST OHIO CHEMICAL EMERGENCY TABLETOP EXERCISE

FEBRUARY 4TH, 2025



EXERCISE DETAILS:

February 4th, 2025

8AM - 1230PM



BUTLER COUNTY
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

400 N Erie Blvd., Suite A Hamilton, OH 45011

This exercise is designed to enhance our collective preparedness and response capabilities for chemical emergencies and will provide an opportunity for public health and our community partners to engage in scenario-based discussions, share insights, and strengthen our collaborative response strategies.

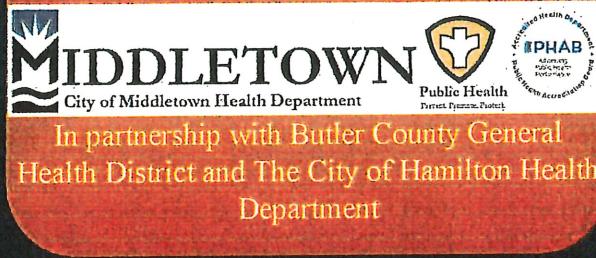
To register to attend, please **RSVP** by contacting **Chandra Corbin**

Ph: 513-727-3887 or email: chandrac@cityofmarietta.org

OR

RSVP online: https://bcohio.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2nx1lgwEUDVMPY

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**Southwest Ohio
Public Health Region**



Prevent. Promote. Protect.



SHALOM

SERVING THE HOMELESS WITH ALTERNATE LODGING OF MIDDLETOWN

Serving Homeless with Alternative Lodging of Middletown (SHALOM) will host the homeless for nine weeks this winter. Those in need of housing are transported at 5 p.m. every day from the SHALOM office, which is located in the lower level of the First United Methodist Church, 120 S. Broad St., to the host church.

All guests are allowed to shower, dine, rest and share fellowship in a safe and warm environment and at approximately 8 a.m. each day the guests are transported back downtown.

Jan. 5-12: Berachah Church at Tytus Avenue Church of God, 3300 Tytus Ave.

Jan. 12-19: Breiel Church of God, 2000 N. Breiel Blvd.

Jan. 19-Feb. 2: Stratford Heights at Tytus Avenue Church of God

Feb. 2-9: Holy Family Parish, 201 Clark St.

Feb. 9-16: Crosspointe Church of Christ, 212 S. Broad St.

Feb. 16-23: First Baptist Church, 4500 Riverview Ave.

Feb. 23-March 2: Quest Church at Tytus Avenue Church of God



Two Middletown fire stations on schedule for end of year openings

Two more slated for summer 2025. New stations will cost \$26.8M.



Construction crews work on the new Middletown Division of Fire headquarters on Yankee Road in June. The headquarters will be the first of four new fire stations to be completed. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

In September, Middletown city administrators said two of the four new fire stations would be a “stocking stuffer” to firefighters with a tentative

opening by Christmas.

That date is looking more like a “New Year’s present” in reality with construction winding up by the end of December and move in still scheduled by the end of the year. On Tuesday, council approved the purchase of refrigerators, dishwashers, stoves, and microwaves for the two stations with a cost of \$16,000 for the headquarters (Station 83) and Station 82.

While many of the appliances are worn out beyond repair, appliances that are being moved from the old stations to new include ice machines, washer and dryers and gear washers, according to the staff report.

The new headquarters on Yankee Road and Station 82 on Dixie Highway near Atrium Medical Center will be the first completed.

Construction is continuing on the other two stations on Clinton Street and at Breiel Boulevard and Central Avenue with the projected completion date of those stations of May or June.

When completed all four of the city’s decades-old fire stations will be replaced. The projected cost for the construction of the four new stations is estimated to be \$26.8 million.

Citizens overwhelmingly passed a 1-mill property tax levy to finance the majority of the project. A public open house for the first two completed new stations will be planned for the second week of January.

Acting City Manager Nathan Cahall said logistics of moving equipment is in the works, but the new fire stations will have more built in features, like office space and furnishings.

City and fire officials said building the four stations was needed to better serve the communities that have experienced population shifts and growth. The oldest station in the city is 70 years old.

"It will be a lot safer, a lot healthier environment and a lot more room for storage," said Middletown Fire Chief Tom Snively, who plans to retire after 30 plus years in mid June. He added all four will have tornado shelters, which is required by state law and fitness rooms.

Contact this reporter at 513-543-9227 or email lauren.pack@coxinc.com.

ESTIMATED COSTS OF BUILDING FOUR FIRE STATIONS

New fire headquarters located on 3.6-acre site at Yankee Road and Cherry Street: Size: 24,300 square feet. Total cost: \$10.5 million.

Station No. 81 location on 2.85-acre site at Henry Avenue and Charles Street: Size: 10,200 square feet. Cost: \$5 million.

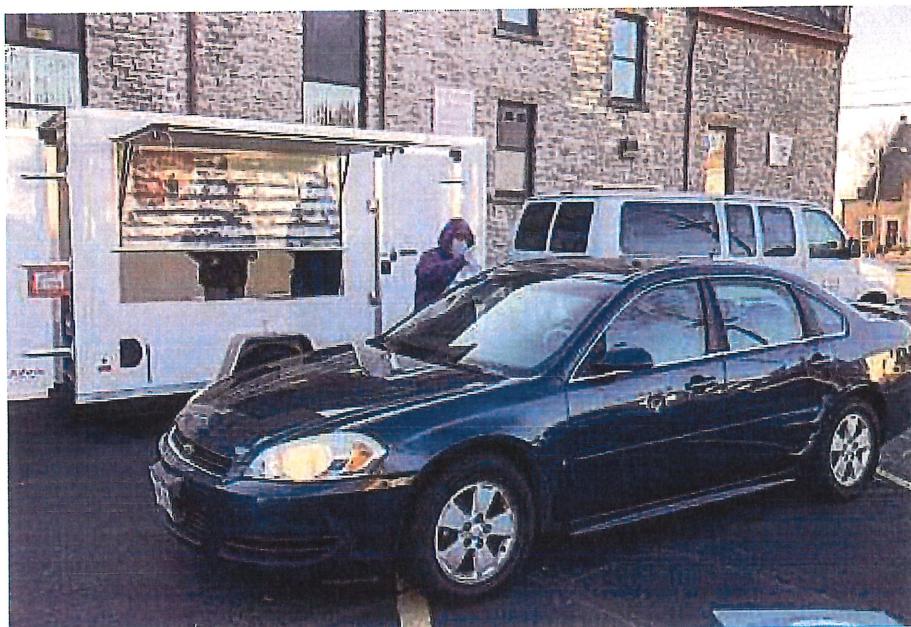
Station No. 85 location on 2-acre parcel at Sophie Avenue and Stolz Drive: Size: 10,200 square feet. Cost: \$5 million.

No. 82 location on 2.7-acre site at Ohio 122 and Atrium Boulevard: Size: 11,800 square feet. Cost: \$5.9 million.

SOURCE: CITY OF MIDDLETOWN/APP ARCHITECTURE

Homeless agency opens 23rd year addressing ‘never-ending situation’

SHALOM churches will house the homeless for nine weeks this winter.



SHALOM volunteers serve homeless people breakfast three days a week from a food trailer at First United Methodist Church. “Homelessness hasn’t dwindled even with the efforts of the city. There are constantly new homeless,” Volunteer coordinator Bill Fugate said. FILE

BY RICK MCCRABB CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One year after serving nearly 100 homeless in Middletown, a church-based shelter expects the need for services to increase this winter.

Bill Fugate, director of Serving Homeless with Alternate Lodging Of Middletown (SHALOM), said the weak economy, lack of affordable

housing, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues are leading to more people becoming homeless.

"It's a vicious cycle," he said. "It's an never-ending situation."

Even though SHALOM doesn't start its nine-week housing season until Jan. 5, Fugate said the all-volunteer agency has already received numerous requests for assistance.

"The homeless hasn't dwindled even with the efforts of the city," Fugate said. "There are constantly new homeless."

SHALOM, operating without federal financial assistance, was founded in 2002 by Roy and Pat Ickes .

Of the 91 SHALOM served earlier this year, Fugate said there were 41 females and one child. When asked why the number of females becoming homeless is rising, Fugate was lost for the answer.

"Good question," he said.

"I'm sure some of it has to do with housing, but it has to be more than that."

When parents and their children become homeless, SHALOM tries to find other places for them to stay. If that isn't an option. SHA- LOM takes in the children and typically the family stays in the same room when possible, he said.

SHALOM clients sleep on mats and the men and women are in separate rooms. Those needing assistance are picked up every day at 5 p.m. at the SHA- LOM office, then driven to the host church. Volunteers feed the homeless dinner and breakfast and chaperone throughout the night, Fugate said.

Daily intakes are performed from 4-5 p.m. of the hosting season. New

guests must arrive at 4 p.m. on their initial day of stay, according to Fugate.

Eight churches are hosting the nine-week schedule with Stratford Heights hosting consecutive weeks. Tytus Avenue Church of God is allowing churches that want to host use their facilities.

Fugate called the partnership with Tytus Avenue Church of God "a real blessing" because it allows churches that don't have the required space an opportunity to host for a week.

SHALOM is still seeking area churches to host or partner with a hosting church, he said. The agency would like churches from surrounding communities get involved in the program. He said many of those SHALOM serves come from the Oxford community, but churches there are located too far away to host.

Addressing homelessness in Butler County has been a heavily debated topic for years.

Last month, Butler County commissioners announced plans to hire a coordinator to keep a "laser focus" on the problems facing the homeless.

The commissioners convened a second Housing Insecurity and Advocacy Summit with fellow elected officials from other jurisdictions and stakeholders. Commissioner Don Dixon announced they are willing to commit dollars to hire a staffer — independent of the service provider community — to man the joint, monumental task of trying to solve the homeless problem that is impacting every corner of the county.

Dixon said solving the problem does not just involve building more housing, they need to get many people mental health and substance abuse treatment as well so they can be successful.

"We have to have a coordinator that wraps their arms around all these different things that are going on in this new laser focused group, but also manages the outcomes. It can't be left to the agencies that are

reporting," Dixon said and later added, "This independent person that fills this role will be a coordinator for all these services, they will be the one that's digging in and asking the tough questions of what's the outcome, how many (people) have you had, how much did it cost for treatment, how much is that for housing. This person will not be connected to anybody, they'll be the auditor.

That way we can make sure we're getting the most for our dollars."

The Butler County Mental Health and Addiction Recovery Services Board just passed a new \$6.6 million levy and Dixon said they can use some of that for the cause.

County Administrator Judi Boyko said the county also has \$3.5 million of national opioid litigation settlement money in the bank and they will receive roughly \$1.2 million annually for the next decade; \$3.5 million in onetime, American Rescue Plan Act HOME funding and the county receives roughly \$1 million annually in federal HOME Investment Partnership Program funding to invest in affordable housing for low-income households.

SHALOM 2025 SCHEDULE

Serving Homeless with Alternative Lodging Of Middletown (SHALOM) will host the homeless for nine weeks this winter. Those in need of housing are transported at 5 p.m. every day from the SHALOM office, which is located in the lower level of the First United Methodist Church, 120 S. Broad St., to the host church.

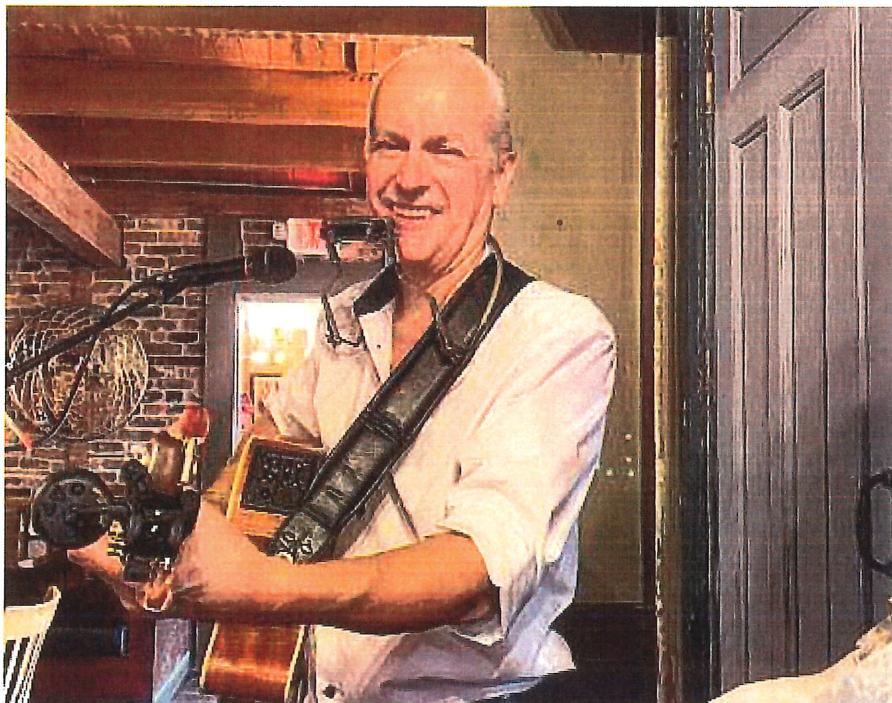
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- Feb. 9-16: Crosspointe Church of Christ, 212 S. Broad St.
- Feb. 16-23: First Baptist Church, 4500 Riverview Ave.
- Feb. 23-March 2: Quest Church at Tytus Avenue Church of God
- March 2-9: First United Methodist, 120 S. Broad St.

Middletown's annual blues concert to benefit Hope House shelter

MIDDLETOWN



"Blue Christmas" will feature a lineup of local musicians, including Chuck Evans, who will bring an evening of blues, rock, funk, and jazz music to The Windamere in downtown Middletown. Proceeds will benefit Hope House Mission – Women's Shelter. CONTRIBUTED

BY GINNY MCCABE CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For more than 30 years, the annual "Blue Christmas" benefit concert has raised money for Middletown's homeless shelter, Hope House Mission. This year, the event will be held at The Windamere and feature a stellar line-up of popular regional artists.

"We want to continue to do the fundraiser to benefit the Hope House, because the Hope House is an important institution in Middletown and they're doing a lot of good things," said event organizer and chair, Chuck Evans.

Founded in 1989, Hope House Mission serves homeless men, women and children and Butler, Warren, and the surrounding counties in Southwest Ohio. Funds raised from this year's event will be earmarked for the Hope House Mission – Women's Shelter.

The Hope House Mission does more than house and feed the homeless, he said, they also conduct job training, focus on education and health, and teach life skills.

The annual "Blue Christmas" concert is from 6 to 11 p.m. Dec. 15 at The Windamere, 2 S. Main St. in Middletown.

General admission tickets are \$25. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. VIP Table/Eight reserved tickets are \$240. To purchase tickets or make a one-time donation to Hope House, go to <https://thewindamere.ticketspice.com/blue-christmas-2024>.

The fundraiser will feature a talented lineup of artists for an evening of blues, bluesbased rock and jazz music.

Performers include Fred Gillespie & The Swamp Bees; I Dig Pig featuring Jimmy D. Rogers; Chuck Evans; The Gillespie Express with Ferris Gillespie; Ashley & Friends; James Clark; and other special guests. Each act will play for about an hour.

"It's really become a traditional show, and a lot of folks want to get behind it. It's the philanthropy in everybody that makes them want to do it, and we have a lot of fun," Evans said.

Gregg Clark, who passed away in 2019, started the event in 1991 to help the Hope House. Clark was the original chair, and a regular player at the

annual event. He was also an instrumental part of the Lebanon Blues Festival.

Clark was a 1971 graduate of Middletown High School.

All of the musicians volunteer their time in support of the event, and many of the musicians have been involved every year.

HOW TO GO

What: Blue Christmas concert to benefit Hope House Mission – Women's Shelter

When: 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., Dec. 15

Where: The Windamere, 2 S. Main St., Middletown

Admission: General admission tickets are \$25.

VIP tickets for a table of eight are \$240. Purchase tickets online at <https://thewindamere.ticketspice.com/blue-christmas-2024>. Advance purchase recommended. Tickets may also be purchased at the door, if available. Cash bar (beer and wine.) Community members can also donate directly to Hope House Mission at www.hhmission.org.

City owns about 400 parcels of land, some ripe for redevelopment

Critical decisions are coming for Middletown City Council about its downtown properties.



The five-story Manchester Inn, which closed in January 2011, is included on the National Register of Historic Places. The hotel, which has 119 rooms and is approximately 60,000 square feet, turned 102 in November. It is now owned by the city of Middletown. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF



The Sonshine Building, 101 N. Main St., is owned by the city of Middletown. The city spent more than \$100,000 in 2022 to clean it and the former Manchester Inn out to make them more attractive to developers.



Multiple houses could be built on the property of the former Lincoln School on Central Avenue in Middletown. NICK GRAHAM PHOTOS / STAFF



The city was given a \$1.5 million grant for redevelopment of the Middletown Paperboard site that is now cleared at Verity Parkway and Vanderveer Street.



By 2026, the five-million-gallon tank and water movement system to help reduce combined sewer overflows will be in place on North Main Street and an urban park will developed on top of it.

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

More than 500 people have responded to Middletown's request for ideas to redevelop the Towne Mall property, which is owned by the city. The largely empty mall purchased this summer is just one of about 400 parcels of land owned by the city.

From small easements and rights of way to grassy residential lots left after blighted demolition to large empty lots, to water towers, fire stations and vacant buildings, the city is the landlord to thousands of acres — and developing a plan for many of them will be a primary focus

in 2025, according to city staff and council.

The building with perhaps the most sentimental attachment is the former Manchester Inn on Manchester Avenue, just steps ways from the city building.

Neighboring the once vibrant landmark is the also the vacate Sonshine Building, 101 N. Main St., which is also owned by the city.

In October 2022, the city spent \$112,000 for a company to clean-out the two properties in hopes of making them more attractive to potential developers and less attractive to the homeless.

A demolition company, removed any remaining furniture/bedding, trash, debris or any other loose items left behind and damaged by vandals with the goal of reducing the risk of fire.

The five-story Manchester Inn, which closed in January 2011, is included on the National Register of Historic Places and has 119 rooms and is approximately 60,000 square feet. It turned 102 years old in November.

The future of the Manchester Inn has been a contentious topic for years, with former owners and developers unable to follow through with plans for renovation.

Acting City Manager Nathan Cahall said the properties, as will as the city owned former First Financial building at the corner Main Street and Central Avenue, are “all properties staff will be discussing with council in the coming months.”

Councilman Paul Lolli, the city's former city manager and fire chief, said the future of The Manchester Inn is “without a doubt something council is going to have to decide in early 2025. There is a lot of history there. A lot of people have strong opinions.

It won't be easy. It is just going to come down to the city deciding what

is the most financially feasible thing and right path and direction to go."

Decisions also will have to be made on other downtown properties including the former Aeronca plant site on Germantown Road near the airport and the open lots that once housed Swallen's and a parking garage, according to city staff.

A project is in the works to build 59 homes on the city-owned site of the former Lincoln School at 2402 Central Ave. The plan has been through planning commission and a public hearing is expected before council in December.

It's part of an effort to address the need for more housing in the city.

"Our development office is working on a strategy to more actively facilitate in-fill housing construction," Cahall. "A 2022 study determined the city is 3,000 to 4,000 housing units light in terms of what is needed in the housing market."

That also includes many parcels deeded back to the city after demolition of dilapidated or eyesore properties through the Butler County Land Bank process. Most are now vacant lots grassy lots, but could again become a new home site.

Here are some other large city-owned properties:

Middletown Paperboard site

From a part of the city's historic paper manufacturing core, to a crumbling vacant plant hit by a large arson fire, the former 14-acre Middletown Paperboard site is now seen as an opportunity to re-imagine a gateway to the city.

\$1.5 million in state funding was received this fall for brownfield remediation and development, and testing will determine exactly what can be built on the site at Verity Parkway and Vanderveer Street now vacant after months of demolition.

North Main Street underground storage tank

By 2026, the five-million-gallon tank and water movement system to help reduce combined sewer overflows will be in place on North Main Street with an urban park on top.

For now, the \$53 million project on the four acres of city-owned land is keeping North Main narrowed with plenty of construction equipment moving in and out of the site.

The Event Center of Middletown

In 2023, Middletown purchased the former Central Connections building on Central Avenue from Middletown Area Senior Citizens Inc. for \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds after financial difficulty and the termination of the former director for alleged theft. The theft allegations remain an ongoing, open investigation.

Following the purchase of the building, it was staffed for a while by city employees as a way to keep doors open and assure the city's senior citizens still had a center.

In May, city leaders determined the facility at 3907 Central Ave. would remain in city stewardship with an event manager. It has been reborn as a home to daily senior activities and is booking special occasion events.

Robert 'Sonny' Hill Community Center

After years of plans that stalled, groundbreaking was held this fall on an addition that will double the space in the historic building, adding a new gym with retractable bleachers, new windows, gutters and downspouts, and painting it to match the new addition. The two existing bathroom facilities will be upgraded and the existing facility is getting new flooring, walls and ceilings, electrical improvement and HVAC improvements.

Construction is expected to take about 16 months.

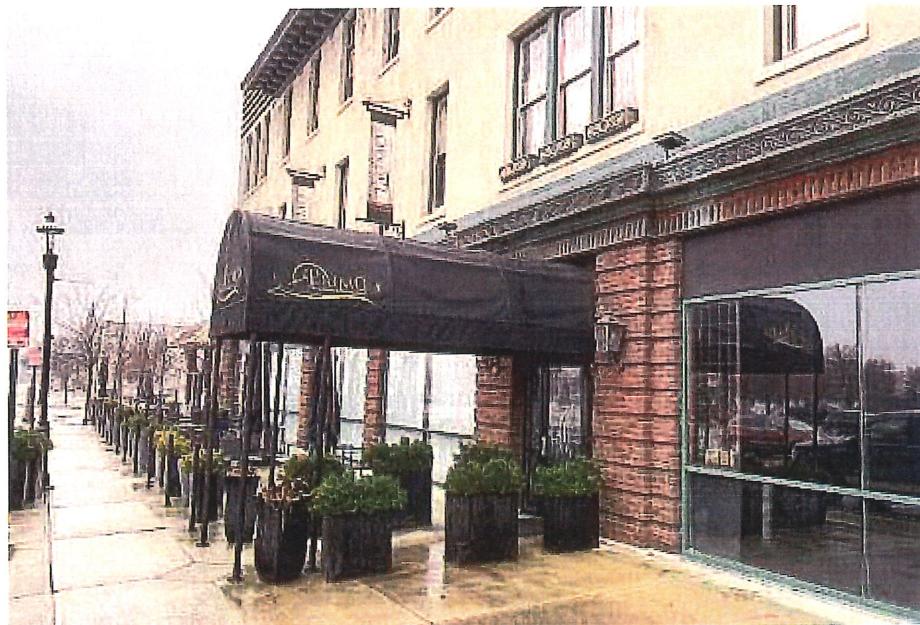
Contact this reporter at 513- 543-9227 or email lauren.
pack@coxinc.com.

HOW TO TAKE THE SURVEY

To take the community survey and share your ideas about the redevelopment of the Towne Mall property, go to www.cityofmarietta.org/forms.aspx?fid=65

Restaurant owners accused in lawsuit of misusing funds

MIDDLETOWN



While the owners of Primo Middletown have been terminated from their positions with Cincinnati Restaurant Holdings LLC, the Middletown restaurant at 6 S. Broad St. remains open. RICK MCCRABB / CONTRIBUTED

BY RICK MCCRABB CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The owners of an upscale Middletown restaurant that received a \$200,000 forgivable loan from the city to open in downtown are being accused of misappropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to a Dec. 5 civil lawsuit filing in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court.

Cincinnati Restaurant Holdings LLC, which owns Prime Cincinnati,

accused Nelson Castillo and his wife, Karoll, owners of Primo Italian Steakhouse, 6 S. Broad St., Middletown, of “financial improprieties” during their longtime employment at Prime Cincinnati.

In 2022, Paul Lolli, then Middletown’s city manager and now a member of city council, called it a “calculated risk” to approve a forgivable loan agreement with Primo.

“We need to dare to win,” Lolli told council in October 2022. “We can’t live in failure.”

Later that year, Primo Middletown opened in the Murphy’s Landing building in downtown. Jay Moorman, owner of the property, said the Castillos signed a 10-year lease with an option to buy.

He said Primo remains open and frequent patrons said it was busy last week.

The \$200,000 loan, which came from the Civic Development Fund, is attached to the restaurant meeting certain commitments, including having a yearly payroll of at least \$1 million after five years. If certain benchmarks aren’t met, the owners have agreed to pay the loan back over five years, Jacob Schulte, economic development program manager, said at the time.

Now the owners are being accused of using the assets of Cincinnati Restaurant Holdings for their personal business, including subsidizing their two restaurants, Primo in Middletown and Unexpected Burgers and Bourbon in downtown Cincinnati.

The Castillos also are accused of not paying sales tax and using funds to make monthly rental payments on their residence in Mount Adams, travel expenses and purchase Cincinnati Bengals tickets for their family, according to documents.

Nelson Castillo oversaw day-to-day operations and was the point of

contact with vendors for Prime Cincinnati, according to the filing. He was placed in a position of “considerable trust and was afforded a high level of autonomy and access to Prime’s business operations,” the filing said.

Castillo managed Prime and his wife was a bookkeeper.

Corporate owners were tipped off about the potential missing funds by Prime investors, according to court documents.

The Castillos were terminated from their leadership positions Nov. 25 following an extensive investigation, according to the filing.

As retaliation for being fired, the Castillos used, manipulated, blocked access, and deleted Prime’s social media pages, website, and employee internal platforms so that the corporation, Prime’s employees, and Prime’s customers cannot access the programs, the lawsuit says.

In the lawsuit, Cincinnati Restaurant Holdings, LLC is asking for at least \$25,000 in damages from the Castillos on eight issues, an amount to be proven at trial.

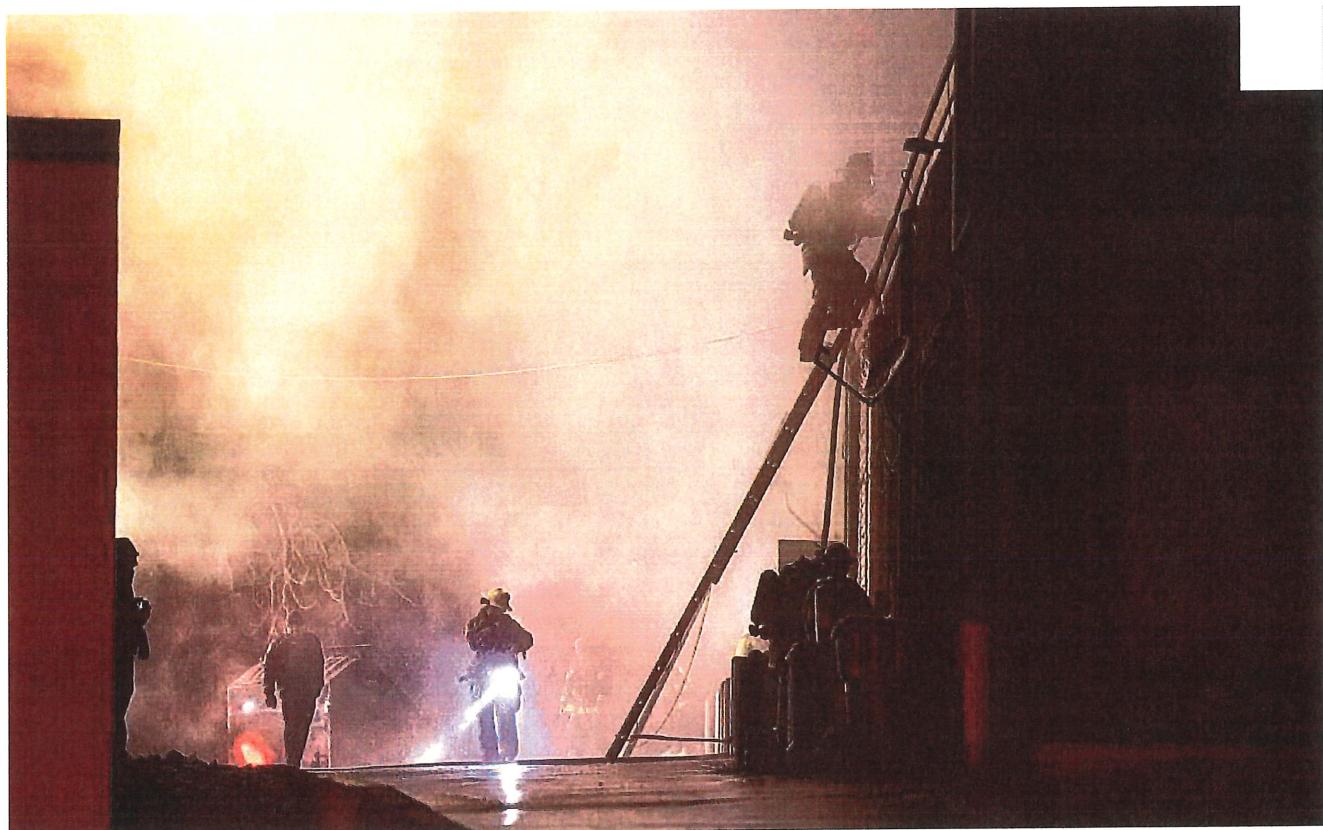
The corporation, represented by Porter, Wright, Morris and Arthur LLC, is asking for a jury trial on all issues.

Middletown’s acting City Manager Nathan Cahall said the city recently was aware of the lawsuit and he had no comment at this time.

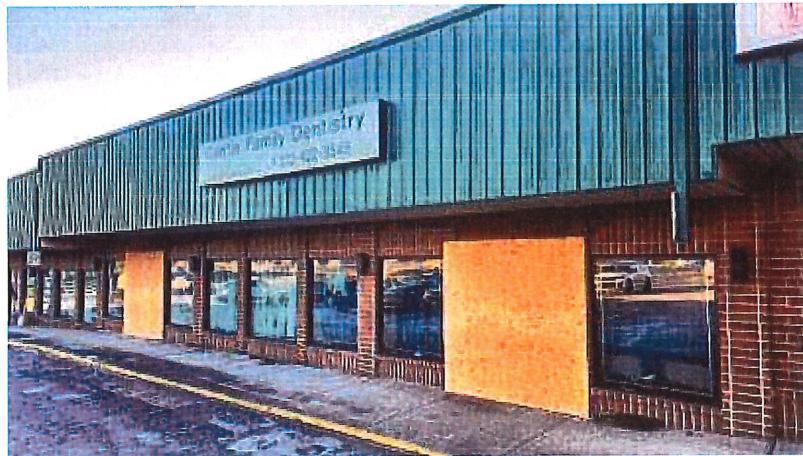
The Castillos could not be reached for comment.

Fire damages Middletown shopping center

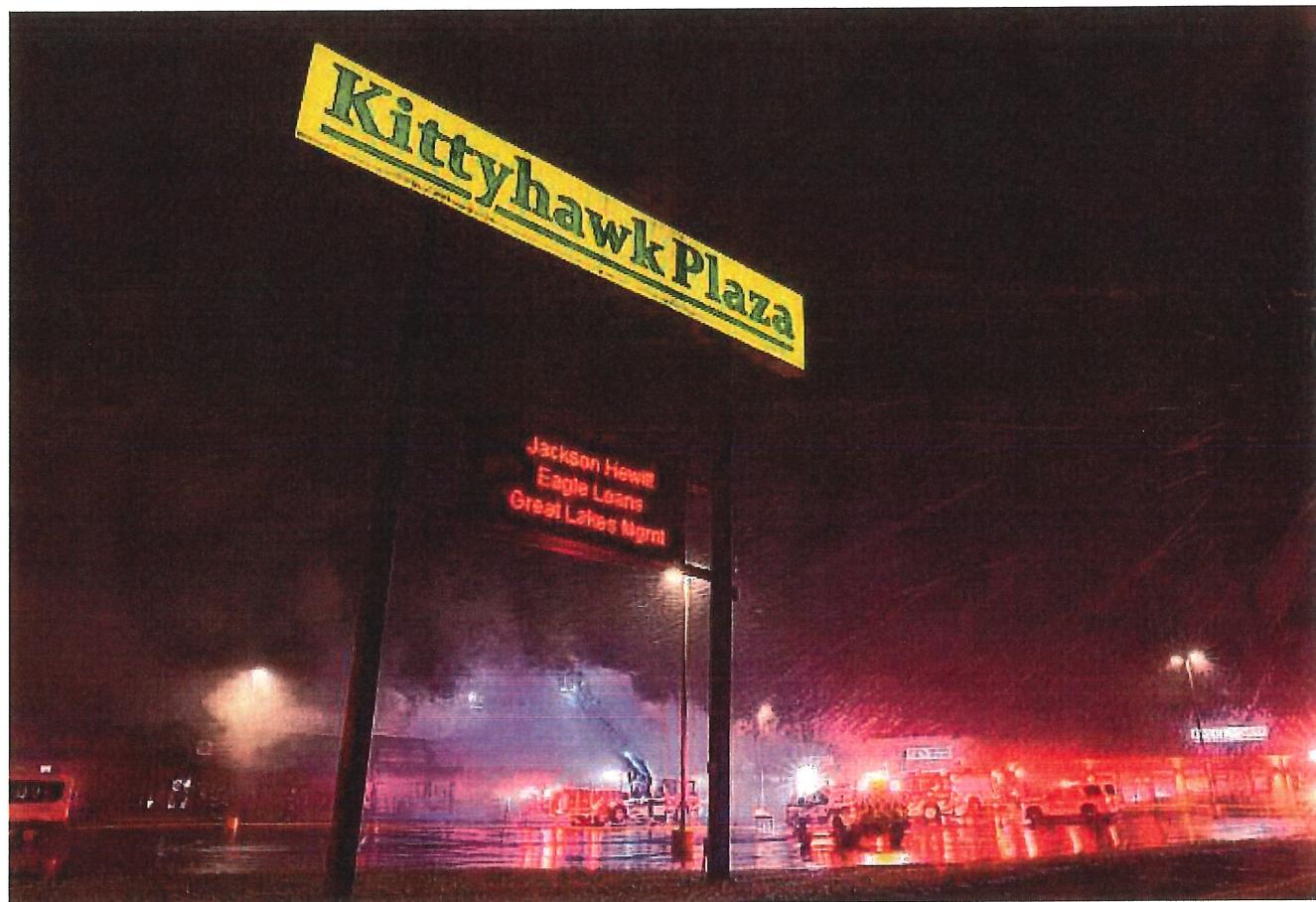
5 businesses affected; dental office, roof heavily damaged.



Crews battle a fire at Kittyhawk Plaza on Marie Drive in Middletown on Wednesday. No injuries were reported. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF



Fire officials say a fire at Middletown's Kittyhawk Plaza started inside Gentle Family Dentistry. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF



Crews from several area fire departments battle a fire at Kittyhawk Plaza on Marie Drive in Middletown on Wednesday. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

Middletown Fire Department and fire crews from surrounding areas including Trenton, Monroe, Franklin Twp., Liberty Twp. and Turtlecreek Twp. fought a large fire Wednesday night at a Middletown shopping center where five businesses were damaged. There were no injuries.

The fire, reported around 5:27 p.m., began inside Gentle Family Dentistry, 4484 Marie Drive, in Kittyhawk Plaza, said Middletown Fire Capt. Frank Baughman, who is a fire marshal. The dental business, which occupies two suites in the wing, was heavily damaged by smoke, water and fire.

"It sustained extensive damage," Baughman said.

The other businesses, including an insurance company, had at least smoke damage.

Baughman said the fire got into a common attic, traveled onto the roof and was blazing when firefighters arrived. The roof sustained heavy damage. "It was pretty ugly," Baughman said.

The decades-old shopping center in the city's East End is located in a busy area and the blazing roof was visible for miles. Dispatchers received 25 calls reporting the fire, according to records.

Fire units remained on the scene until 11:30 p.m. The cause remains under investigation. On Thursday morning, the windows of several businesses, including the dentist office, were boarded up and the office was closed. The damage on the roof is not visible from the front of the shopping center.

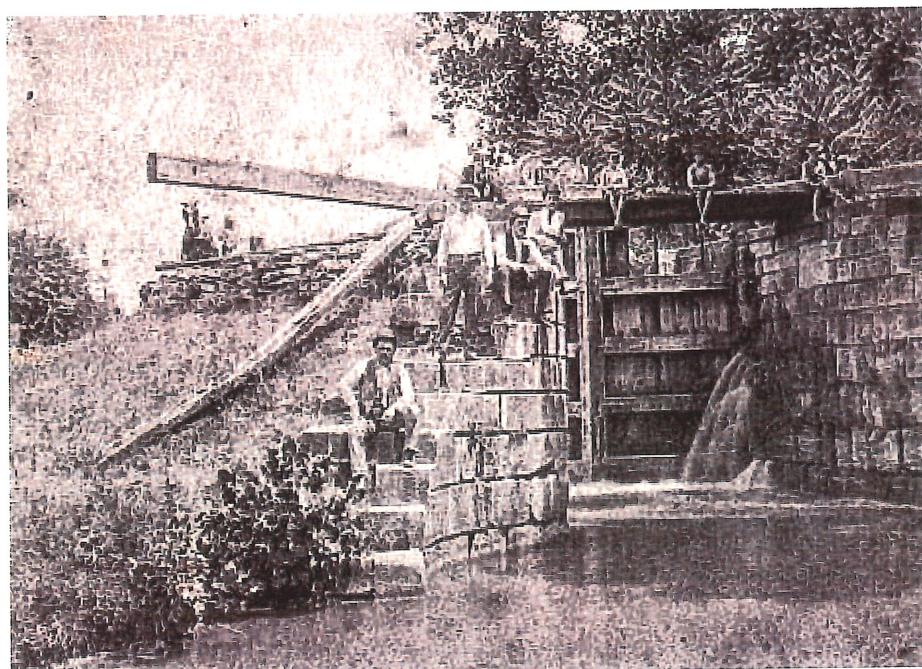
Fire officials say there were no injuries to those in the businesses or to the firefighters.

Fire marshals were at the scene looking for a cause Wednesday night.

Contact this reporter at 513- 543-9227 or email lauren.
pack@coxinc.com.

Grant to help Middletown celebrate canal bicentennial

Canal started at Yankee Road and Verity Parkway on July 21, 1825.



The Excello Lock, shown around 1900, was the first lock completed on the Miami & Erie Canal in 1826. There were 105 locks on the canal when it was completed in 1845. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



The rock monument on Yankee Road in 1929, when it was dedicated after the canal was closed. The Middletown Historical Society is planning a bicentennial event at Yankee Road and Verity Parkway on July 21.

BY RICK MCCRABB CONTRIBUTING WRITER

To understand the significance of the Miami & Erie Canal and the hydraulic canal that followed, you just have to look at Middletown's 1820 census.

At the time, there were 312 people living in Middletown, then a "tiny village" on the edge of the Great Miami River, said Sam Ashworth, the city's most noted historian.

Five years later, on July 21, 1825, the digging of the canal began at what now is Yankee Road and Verity Parkway.

That "major event" is what propelled a population growth and the eventual transformation of Middletown into an industrial city, according to Ashworth.

Last year, Ashworth formed a committee, and the group has been planning a bicentennial celebration of the first dig. The property belongs to Cleveland-Cliffs, and Ashworth said the steelmaker has been very cooperative.

Ashworth plans to invite Gov. Mike DeWine, local and county officials and the community to the 200-year anniversary.

Part of that celebration and educational signage that will detail the canal's historical significance are being funded by a grant the Middletown Historical Society received from the W.E. Smith Family Charitable Trust.

The trust has awarded grants twice this year in excess of \$90,430 to history-related projects from libraries, museums, school programs and other organizations across Southwestern Ohio, said Dick Sollmann, chair of the advisory board.

Ashworth said the grants have been "a lifesaver" for the historical organizations in the region, and without them, some projects would not be possible.

The historical society used some grant funds last year to create a little park near the Excello Lock by Dicks Creek, he said. There were 105 locks on the canal from Cincinnati to Toledo when it was completed in 1845.

The Excello Lock was the first one completed, in 1826.

The canal allowed farmers to ship goods and was a harbinger of the hydraulic canal that drew several paper companies to Middletown, Ashworth said.

"That changed everything," he said. "It made a major impact and changed Middletown from a small village to an industrial town."

The grants are awarded twice a year and this fall nearly \$26,000 was given to support projects submitted for display and storage materials for

collections; computer equipment to manage collections; school and community outreach programs; publishing projects; and other events and programs, Sollmann said.

The Smith Trust was established by the estate of Ophia Smith, longtime Oxford resident and wife of W. E. Smith, who chaired Miami University's history department and was the first director of the William Holmes McGuffey Museum.

FALL SMITH TRUST GRANTS AWARDED

- Butler County Historical Society: To support local field trip scholarships for elementary school programs and retractable banner display units.
- Heritage Hall McCloskey Museum: For programming and materials for Women's History and Heritage using McCloskey resources.
- Cummins Local History Room, Lane Library: Continuing the library's digitization of newspaper holdings.
- Delhi Historical Society: Assist in purchase of computer equipment to input and manage the collection.
- Friends of White Water Shaker Village: In support of Simply Shaker: Preserving and Sharing the Shaker Story.
- Hamilton City Parks Conservancy: Partial support of rejuvenation and replacement of base for historic GAR sundial.
- King Studio Cincinnati: Music record history project of King Studios after school for elementary students.
- Middletown Historical Society: Support historic signage for the "First Dig Project" of the Miami & Erie Canal.
- Over The Rhine Museum Cincinnati: Partial funding for Questo,

electronic self guided tour project.

- Preble County Historical Society: Assist with continuation of digitization project of scanning and conserving documents donated to the collection and be able to make them available to the public via internet searches.
- Reilly Twp. Historical Society: Continue cataloging and digitization projects for library/research room.
- Smith Library of Regional History: Continuing the project of digitization of city directories for Hamilton/Oxford and Hamilton/ Fairfield.
- Talawanda Elementary School: To help fund scholarships to assist deserving students opportunity to participate in the school's planned visit to Washington, D. C. to explore the nation's Capital and history.
- West Chester Historical Society: Update and reprint a driving tour brochure of the historic features of West Chester.

HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

The Journal-News periodically runs a "Good News" story on weekends. If you have a story idea, send it to contributing writer Rick McCrabb at rmccrabb1@gmail.com.

Veteran suicides a concern in Butler County

Butler County Veterans Service Commission reaching out to offer services to those in need.



A car zooms past as Roger Tackett and his daughter, Debbie Harbaugh, stand silently over a flag draped casket at the intersection of South Fountain Avenue and High Street Sept. 9, 2023. The annual display is called Silent Watch as is meant to bring awareness to veteran suicides. Volunteers took turns standing silently with the casket. BILL LACKEY / STAFF

BY DENISE G. CALLAHAN CONTRIBUTOR

The holiday season can be tough on people's mental health, especially veterans, and that's why the Butler County Veterans Service Commission wants veterans to know they are not alone and can get help through county resources.

BCVSC Executive Director Mike Farmer said veterans here are "four times more likely than a non-veteran to die by suicide." Of the 50 suicides in Butler County, seven were among county veterans this year and the last one tragically happened over Thanksgiving.

Farmer told the Journal-News the veteran suicide rate is higher because veterans are generally adverse to admitting they need help.

"Veterans, particularly the Marine Corps branch – but we know it happens in the other five branches as well – they teach you all through basic you don't reach out for help, you don't go to sick call," Farmer said. "The Marine Corps has a saying that pain is weakness leaving the body, which kind of infers it's normal to have pain and you suck it up, you embrace the suck and you keep going."

If someone is in crisis they can call the federal veterans 988 crisis line to get help or the Butler County crisis hotline which is 844-427-4747, "we can link them to the resources, it's about trying to freeze time in the moments of crisis to have them call a crisis line or get that resource."

Farmer said they prefer vets call the local line because the county has a mobile crisis unit staffed with local law enforcement and mental health workers who can respond immediately and follow-up in a timely manner later.

"What we're trying to get communicated is there are so many resources out there," Farmer said. "We know suicide often happens in the most critical minutes of a crisis but if we can get them to call a crisis line, whether that's 988 or the Butler County crisis line managed by Beckett Springs, we know that we can take those critical minutes and potentially turn that individual to a resource that can help."

Farmer said it is not just the veterans themselves who can call the help lines, family and friends can also seek help through that resource for their loved ones. Farmer said they can't get statistics specific to Butler County from the federal 988 crisis line but there have been 2,229 calls from the 513 area code this year and people have been referred to either the Cincinnati or Dayton VA for help. There have been 2,120 calls to the countywide line but only 39 were by veterans.

"The VA has great mental health services, if you don't want Cincinnati we can transfer you to Dayton," he said.

"If you don't want the VA at all I have hundreds of pages of mental health providers, some of them specialize in post traumatic stress, some are substance abuse disorder, so we can link them to the resources they need."

Martin Schneider, the Butler County Coroner's Office administrator, said at the request of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs they started extrapolating veterans suicide statistics a couple years ago. Last year eight of 57 total suicides were by veterans and eight of 64 the previous year.

The vet board has a committee dedicated to suicide prevention that started out with two or three people and has grown to around a dozen people working to help at-risk veterans.

Scott Rasmus, executive director of the Butler County Mental Health and addiction Recovery Services Board, listed veterans as one of the board's priority populations when seeking new levy funds in the November election.

Since they won approval of a new \$6.6 million levy they are planning to hire a new suicide specialist who will handle a myriad of tasks.

He said higher suicide rates generally around the holidays are understandable and that's why the crisis hotline is crucial.

"To have a safe place for veterans and others that are risk especially around the holidays, it may not be the appropriate culture to share negative feelings at a happy time," Rasmus said. "It may be hard for family members, friends and supporters to listen to traumatic stories veterans and others have and that's why hot lines are so very important."

SIGNS SOMEONE NEEDS HELP

- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness and mood swings
- Feeling rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities
- Increased alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

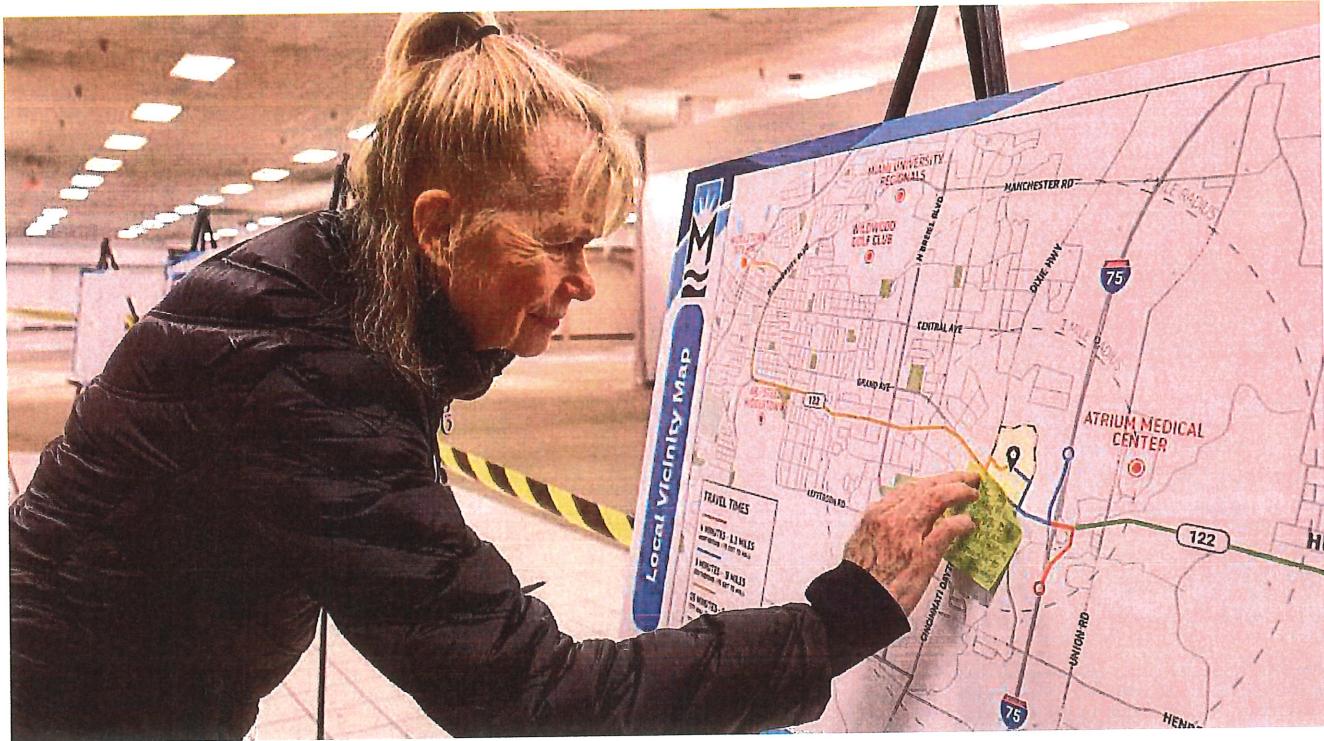
Butler County crisis hotline can be reached at 844-427-4747

Middletown leaders still seeking ideas for mall

Residents suggest bars, dog park, walking path, many other amenities.



Middletown officials received lots of feedback from city residents in a survey and open house on redeveloping the Towne Mall.



Aymsley Toomer shares her ideas for the redevelopment of the Towne Mall at one of two town hall sessions held by the city inside the mall's former Elder-Beerman building Monday. NICK GRAHAM PHOTOS /STAFF



Middletown resident Aymsley Toomer suggested painting or tearing down the entrance sign to the Towne Mall.



People learn about and share ideas about the future of the Towne Mall at one of the city of Middletown's town hall sessions Monday inside the former Elder-Beerman building at the mall. NICK GRAHAM PHOTOS/STAFF

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

Middletown residents have offered hundreds of ideas on how the city should redevelop the largely empty Towne Mall.

Their suggestions were revealed Monday in a vacant space at the mall that once was packed during Christmas, and the city provided sticky notes to allow participants to add more ideas.

Billed as a town hall meeting exploring the redevelopment of the East End mall, it was more like an open house, with Christmas music and plenty of discussion as residents looked at the survey suggestions in the

space once occupied by Elder-Beerman.

As soon as resident Aym斯ley Toomer drove into the lot, she had a suggestion, pointing out the shabby entrance sign.

“It is falling down. It’s rusting.

Either paint it or remove it,” she said. “It is a small thing, but I think it is a statement as to the state of the property.

There are a lot of things they can do to make it more attractive.”

Toomer said she saw many ideas that she would like to see, including residential housing, restaurants, children’s activities and walking paths.

“It is a wonderful property, it just needs someone to care about it,” she said.

Built in the late 1970s, the mall was annexed into Middletown in the late 1990s after a battle with Warren County officials. As shopping habits changed in recent years, the mall, like many others, fell on hard times, leaving a huge empty complex at one of the city’s gateways.

The city paid \$10 million to purchase the four-parcel, 32-acre mall property in July to guide what goes on the land in the middle of surging development along Interstate 75. But when the city acquired the property, it had no specific plans.

So city leaders asked for help from citizens. They got plenty of feedback.

What amenities should be included in the mall site? A walking path, bars and taverns, a skate park, a dog park, a bakery, an athletic facility, art installations, an arcade, medical offices, residential housing, specialty shops and pickleball courts were tops in the survey.

Among the 40 services people said they leave Middletown for are upscale shopping, movie theaters, healthy food, date-night venues, wine/bourbon bars, casinos, birthday party venues, indoor shooting ranges, public art, sporting goods, openair malls, wellness spas and outdoor entertainment.

While some question why the city choose to purchase site, survey results indicate people believe its redevelopment will remove blight, attract new residents, increase a sense of pride, raise morale, bring people together, attract new jobs and keep money in the city.

When asked to point to a location the Towne Mall site should take for inspiration, many pointed to favorite shopping areas in the region, including Liberty Center, Bridgewater Falls, Austin Landing, Streets of West Chester, The Greene, Kenwood Mall, Kettering Town & Country, Newport on the Levee and Spooky Nook.

Councilwoman Jennifer Carter said she saw some “good ideas” but added a few of her own.

“I want a comedy club, and we need a dry cleaner and senior housing, she said, adding her sticky note to the board.

Council wanted to hear from citizens before moving forward with plans in 2025.

Beginning early next year, there will be a strategic planning session, followed by a formal request for proposals to developers likely in February, according to Councilman Paul Lolli.

Middletown made an offer to purchase Towne Mall last year with the intent of placing Renaissance Pointe at the location, but withdrew the offer. Renaissance Pointe is a nearly 51-acre mixed-use \$200 million developmentat Ohio 122 and Union Road that will include an event center, retail and offices, hotels, restaurants and residential living.

Ground-breaking for that project was in the summer.

The Towne Mall has one large tenant, Planet Fitness.

When the city's Towne Mall purchase was announced, two council members, one of whom has left office, said they envisioned the project as a teardown of the mall, possibly using state brownfield remediation grant money to have the land shovel-ready for a developer.

Contact this reporter at 513- 543-9227 or email lauren.
pack@coxinc.com.

Middletown swaps acting city manager as it continues to explore its options

Council ends Cahall's contract; Vice Mayor West says Combs' acting role is a 'tryout.'



Ashley Combs

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

Middletown has a new acting city manager four months after the abrupt retirement of Paul Lolli from the position.

Following an executive session Tuesday, city council ended Nathan Cahall's acting city manager contract and named assistant city manager Ashley Combs as acting city manager. Cahall will remain at the assistant city manager post.

"Ashley is a great asset to the city and has served the city and its residents well over the last nine years in various leadership roles," said Vice Mayor Steve West.

"I look forward to seeing her showcase her skills and continue the city's successes."

While the city continues to hone its search for a permanent city manager, West said the acting city manager switch is a "tryout" of sorts.

"We all appreciate Nathan's service to the city. Because we are unique in Butler and Warren counties as having two assistant city managers, some members of city council simply wanted to give Ashley an equal chance to serve as acting city manager prior to making a decision on the full-time city manager position," said West.

"We look forward to Nathan continuing to support the city's initiatives and projects he has been working on and continuing to make Middletown great again."

In March 2022, Jim Palenick, who served as city manager for less than two years, and the council signed a mutual separation agreement ending his tenure as the city's leader and setting the stage for Lolli, then the fire chief, to take the reigns.

After retirement from the city manager position, Lolli was appointed in October to a vacant council seat following the resignation of Zack Ferrell, who moved out of the city.

Lolli said in a statement following Tuesday night's meeting that he is a proponent of "developing your people and leadership from within."

While city manager, Lolli said he had two assistant city managers, Cahall and Combs, who both have areas of expertise.

"Mr. Cahall was given the opportunity to present his leadership abilities over the past two quarters, and now we feel that it is Ms. Combs opportunity to lead the city over the next six months.

"We are content that if we have the individual best suited to lead this city on the inside, then that is the path we will take. We will continue to

explore options outside of that for a permanent city manager, however, we strongly believe we want that person to be from the region," Lolli said. He said Combs is "a trusted and loyal employee.

Her leadership skills are evident in her operational abilities in the day-to-day actions of city business. Ms. Combs honesty and integrity is faultless as she is a straight shooter who gets the job done"

Councilman Paul Horn said realistically, the selection process for a new city manager will take until summer 2025 and Combs and Cahall will be top candidates.

Combs will now have a chance spend several months at the top position.

Council has indicated a regional search will happen in coming months for a permanent city manager.

"It is a massive, massive decision. Some will want us to review candidates from across the county; I personally am not a fan of that ... there is so much talent in our region that we can recruit from," West said.

Mayor Elizabeth Slamka voted against ending Cahall's acting city manager contract.

Contact this reporter at 513- 543-9227 or email lauren.pack@coxinc.com.

'Some will want us to review candidates from across the county, I personally am not a fan of that ... there is so much talent in our region that we can recruit from'

Middletown Vice Mayor Steve West

Middletown residents oppose plan for 50-plus homes

CONTINUING COVERAGE



Multiple houses could be built on the property of the former Lincoln School on Central Avenue in Middletown. NICK GRAHAM/STAFF

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

Residents expressed concerns Tuesday about a proposed townhome development on the cityowned property that once housed Lincoln

School.

Built in 1927, the former Lincoln School on Central Avenue was the last historical Middletown school building to be demolished when it was torn down in July 2021. The 5.53-acre site is now on track to become the Townes of Lincoln Village, a new neighborhood of attached, single-family homes.

Last summer, the city authorized an agreement with Cristo Homes for the development of up to 59 homes on the property.

In the solicitation for redevelopment proposals, city officials noted the property is adjacent to the Highlands Historic District to the east and serves as an endcap to the light retail corridor along Central Avenue to the west.

The concept plan calls for the construction of up to 59 dwellings with a mix of three- and four-unit residential buildings along a new public street to be constructed as part of the development.

Cristo and J.A. Development were back before council Tuesday night for a public hearing on a zoning change to the property. It comes after months of working with city staff and planning commission hearings.

The planning commission approved the preliminary plan, but called for a traffic study, consultation with the fire chief on ladder truck access and the reduction of density to 57 units.

Middletown Fire Chief Tom Snively said the issue had been addressed.

Adam Cristo told council removing two units would increase the price of the homes, which he estimates would be at about \$300,000 for a three-bedroom home. He said the residences would be owner-occupied.

“Middletown needs new housing stock, if you want less density it is going to be at a higher price ... an increase of about \$5,000 bucks each,”

Cristo said.

He said Middletown will have to decide if “they want new housing. They have to make peace with the density or it just won’t get built.”

Several residents spoke against the plan, citing concerns about increased traffic, the price point, the number of residences on the land and concerns the development won’t blend in with the neighboring Highland Historic District.

Resident Linda Moorman summed up the concerns: “This is too many houses ... it is too much.”

Council members noted the density concerns, but the housing is needed and development has to be profitable, they said.

“That school just sat there and now we have some land with the ability to let Middletown grow,” Councilman Paul Horn said.

Mayor Elizabeth Slamka urged developers to work more on landscaping, including tree placement and updated fencing.

Councilman Steve West II said he wanted to make it clear that a no vote on this plan, which offers some city control, means another developer could come in with a new plan that, under current zoning, could include rental units.

Councilwoman Jennifer Carter voted no in a straw poll.

The preliminary plan is scheduled for a formal first reading at the January council meeting and will still have to go back to the planning commission and council for approval on a final plan.

Lincoln School closed in 1980 when students were moved up Central Avenue to Roosevelt Elementary School, which closed in 2008 and was also demolished. It is now the site of a residential development.

Lincoln was then sold to Middletown Dental Group, which maintained a dental practice in the building until 2011. Several small businesses operated out of the building during that time.

The large brick structure built in 1927 continued to deteriorate and caught fire several times. After years of discussion, it was demolished by the city due to its dilapidated condition.

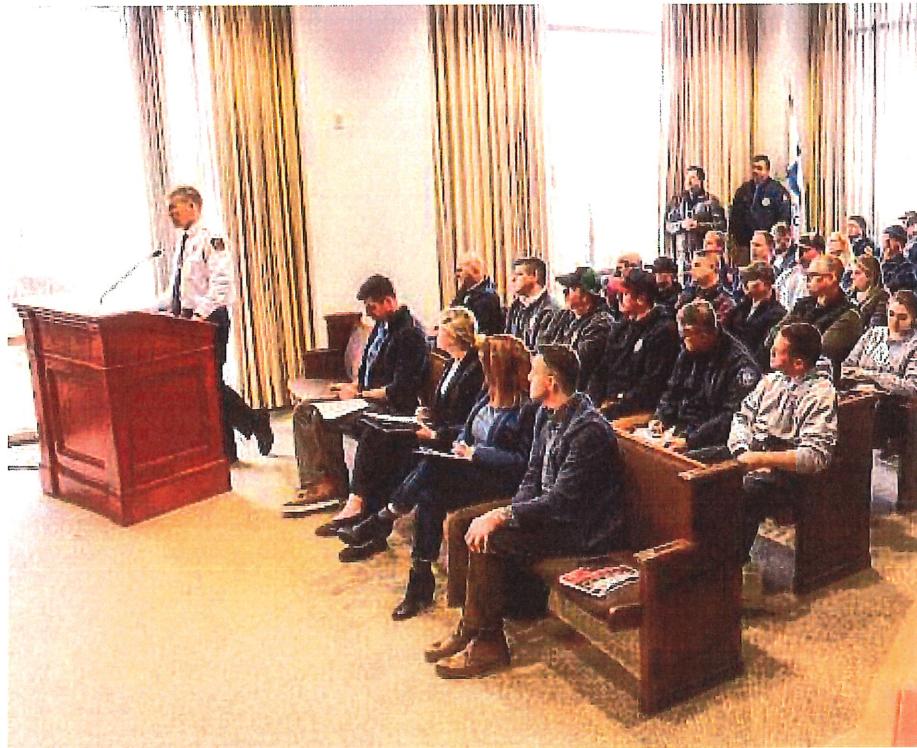
Contact this reporter at 513- 543-9227 or email lauren.
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Responders fight possible EMA plan

Group packs meeting to voice their concerns after Butler County Commission passes resolution.



Butler County Administrator Judi Boyko (left) and Commissioners Don Dixon and T.C. Rogers listen to public comments about Butler County Emergency Management Agency during a meeting in Hamilton on Monday.



Liberty Twp. Fire Chief Ethan Klussman speaks during public comments about Butler County Emergency Management Agency during the commission meeting. The room was filled with first responders concerned with possible changes to the Butler County EMA. NICK GRAHAM / STAFF

BY DENISE G. CALLAHAN CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As promised, the Butler County commissioners passed a resolution this week to begin the process of possibly taking over the county Emergency Management Agency, but told a roomful of first responders it is far from a done deal.

Last week, commissioners Don Dixon and T.C. Rogers said they intended to wrest control of EMA operations from the independent board that runs the operation.

First responders packed the commission chamber this week to protest the move.

Matthew Owen, president of the local firefighter's union 4394 in Liberty Twp., told the commissioners the EMA has a stellar reputation in many emergency response circles here and nationally and "it's really pretty shameful the treatment our county EMA gets from within."

"The current model has the EMA controlled by a board that I believe the commission has a seat on," Owen said.

"Now our elected officials in Butler County have decided 'if it ain't broke let's blow the whole thing up.' Your misguided actions over the past few years have been shameful at the least, very disappointing and possibly at worst dangerous, and I can only think you're listening to the wrong people. This latest attempt to recreate something that is currently completely functional will, I'm sure, fall flat on its face and cost way more money."

Presumably, he was referring to efforts by Sheriff Richard K. Jones, who has tried for decades to take over the agency, but the commissioners haven't obliged.

Commissioner T.C. Rogers told the Journal-News this recent takeover discussion isn't about the sheriff, although the commissioners did receive a letter from Jones regarding the EMA in November.

"We got a letter a while back about his intent of sending a proposal to take over the EMA; he never sent the proposal," Rogers said, adding he brought up the subject because, as the commissioners' liaison to the EMA, he knows the money situation. "They need more money, which is why they raised the fees."

Commissioner Don Dixon told the Journal-News he's not ruling out Jones' future involvement with the agency because, he said, law enforcement isn't well represented on the EMA board, and they should be.

"He (Jones) raises some good points and probably brought the issue up sooner than it would have been, it probably would have been later," Dixon

said. "It was all fire people. There was no law enforcement there, and law enforcement are the first responders, they get the call. Why aren't we collaborating with them? I don't know why, but I'm going to find out why."

Jones' letter was not immediately available because County Administrator Judi Boyko said it was subject to redaction and review by the prosecutor's office before they could release it.

EMA Director Jim Bolen told the Journal-News the nine-member executive board "has had law enforcement representation for many, many years" and newly named West Chester Twp. Police Chief Brian Rebholz is on the board.

The Emergency Management Agency is not a first responder to emergencies, as the local police and fire agencies retain that role.

The EMA becomes involved when incidents beyond a common emergency occur and marshalling a host of other resources is required.

The commissioners decided to begin proceedings to take over the agency after the EMA board agreed to raise the per capita fees they charge communities— which have been in place since 2010 — from 39 cents to 55 cents next year and 60 cents in 2027. The fee increase will cull an additional \$61,742 for a total collection of \$212,240 next year and \$81,037 more in 2027, for a total of \$231,535. The total budget for next year is \$699,287 and includes a \$67,500 grant from the county general fund.

Jones' Chief Deputy Anthony Dwyer said when the sheriff got wind of the rate hike, he reached out to commissioners. Jones always maintained he could save taxpayer money by running the EMA.

"The sheriff did send a letter when they increased their rate, asking them to reconsider the options," Dwyer said.

Bolen said they raised the rates because some grants have decreased in

value and “the grant environment is changing and we’re seeing less and less federal grants, so we needed to increase it to accommodate the new grant environment as well as the inflationary environment.”

Dixon told the Journal-News the county is in a position and willing to help financially, and that includes looking into creating an emergency management system that ensures the smallest jurisdictions — some still rely on all-volunteer first responders — are getting top-notch public safety.

Bolen said they would gladly take more funding from the commissioners.

“It’s less about the funding and support; there’s nothing preventing the commissioners from providing more financial support than they do now,” he said.

“They’ve always put in funding for our Hazmat Team and our technical rescue and incident support teams, I think that’s great,” Bolen said. “In terms of completely dissolving an agency that is functional and starting an entirely new program that has no guarantees of success and has no guarantees of what that program will look like when it’s executed, that’s my concern.”

Liberty Twp. Fire Chief Ethan Klussman asked the commissioners to “consider the stakeholders and what we would like to see happen with this.”

“I would ask that you entertain all the stakeholders involved before making this decision and maybe table this,” Klussman said.

“Whether it’s the police chiefs, the fire chiefs, local hospitals, schools, we all play a stake in what the EMA does for us and how they support us, and to not have our voice heard would be detrimental to the services they provide. ... We also supply the members to these technical teams that supply residents with these services.”

The commissioners said they understand the board is functioning well,

but they passed the resolution giving the EMA board 90 days notice — as required by law — so they can study whether this is a better way of handling emergency management.

Many other counties statewide have EMA under the commissioners' control.

Boyko said the agency will continue to operate normally during the process, which will take months.

"This action doesn't do it," she said.

They said one of the options could be to keep the status quo.

"I think there is an opportunity to at least look at it, and I think we need to do that, and I think the stakeholders will be at the table," Dixon said. "This is not going to happen in a vacuum, it's not going to happen in a month. It may be months, it could be the end of the year. I think it's good to look at it and I think there may be opportunities there that we can make things better, expand services."

Local homeless shelter's schedule begins today ahead of winter storm

8 churches hosting 9-week schedule with Stratford Heights for consecutive weeks.

BY LAUREN PACK STAFF WRITER

As bitter cold and snow approaches this weekend, the Middletown Health Department and the SHA-LOM organization assisting the homeless has announced the 2025 schedule beginning Sunday.

Serving the Homeless with Alternate Lodging of Middletown (SHALOM) will host the homeless population for nine weeks this winter.

Those in need of housing are transported at 5 p.m. every day from the SHALOM office, on the lower level of the First United Methodist Church, 120 S. Broad St. to the host church.

All guests are allowed to shower, dine, rest and share fellowship in a safe and warm environment and at approximately 8 a.m. each day, the guests are transported back downtown.

Those needing assistance are picked up every day at 5 p.m. at the SHA-LOM office, then driven to the host church. Volunteers feed the homeless dinner and breakfast and chaperone throughout the night, according to Bill Fugate, director of SHALOM.

Daily intakes are performed from 4-5 p.m. of the hosting season. New guests must arrive at 4 p.m. on their initial day of stay, according to

Fugate.

Eight churches are hosting the nine-week schedule with Stratford Heights hosting consecutive weeks. Tytus Avenue Church of God is allowing churches that want to host use their facilities.

SHALOM, operating without federal financial assistance, was founded in 2002 by Roy and Pat Ickes.

Rick McCrabb contributed to this report.

Contact this reporter at lauren.pack@coxinc.com.

SHALOM 2025 SCHEDULE

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- Jan. 5-12: Berachah Church at Tytus Avenue Church of God, 3300 Tytus Ave.
- Jan. 12-19: Breiel Church of God, 2000 N. Breiel Blvd.
- Jan. 19-Feb. 2: Stratford Heights at Tytus Avenue Church of God
- Feb. 2-9: Holy Family Parish, 201 Clark St.
- Feb. 9-16: Crosspointe Church of Christ, 212 S. Broad St.
- Feb. 16-23: First Baptist Church, 4500 Riverview Ave.
- Feb. 23-March 2: Quest Church at Tytus Avenue Church of God
- March 2-9: First United Methodist, 120 S. Broad St.