

## **City of Middletown Adopts 2020-21 Budget; \$211M Budget Fully Funds Schools, Reduces Taxes, and Redirects PD Overtime Funds to Support Anti-Racism Work**

MIDDLETOWN—On Thursday, June 11, the Common Council voted 11-1 to adopt a \$211 million budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. The budget as adopted makes minor adjustments to the proposal introduced by Mayor Ben Florsheim in April.

Key elements of the budget include:

- The first true cut in the property tax rate in a generation, with the mill rate declining from 36.0 to 35.8 on the back of strong grand list growth and bond performance;
- Full funding of the Board of Education’s budget request for Middletown Public Schools, in order to continue the strong upwards trend in graduation rates and student achievement;
- Zero increase in water, sewer, and fire tax rates;
- Defunding \$200,000 from Police Department private-duty overtime and redirecting those funds to support the newly-formed Mayor’s Permanent Task Force on Anti-Racism (increasing the budget for anti-racism programming from \$28K to \$228K);
- Support for riverfront projects, tree-planting initiatives, emergency housing support, and small business assistance programs.

“I am incredibly proud of the budget we put together, and grateful for the uniquely collaborative and bipartisan way in which we worked together with the Council to put it together and get it accomplished,” Mayor Florsheim said. “This budget meaningfully moves the needle on a number of key issues facing our community, from the COVID-19 pandemic to combating racism and improving police-community relations to laying the groundwork for our riverfront redevelopment.

“At the same time, it addresses our cost-of-living crisis by holding the line on taxes and actually delivering the first mill rate reduction in recent history—even as many of our neighboring communities find themselves having to raise taxes. And we did it without gimmicks or irresponsible financial practices, as evidenced by the renewal of our AAA bond rating and investors’ continued confidence that Middletown is one of the best-managed cities in the United States from a fiscal and budgetary standpoint. I would like to once again thank the entire staff of the city’s Finance Department, as well as our previous Mayors and Common Council members, for their hard work and leadership in making that a reality.

“I am excited about what this budget represents for the future of our community, and I look forward to working together with the Council and the public to see our shared goals realized.”