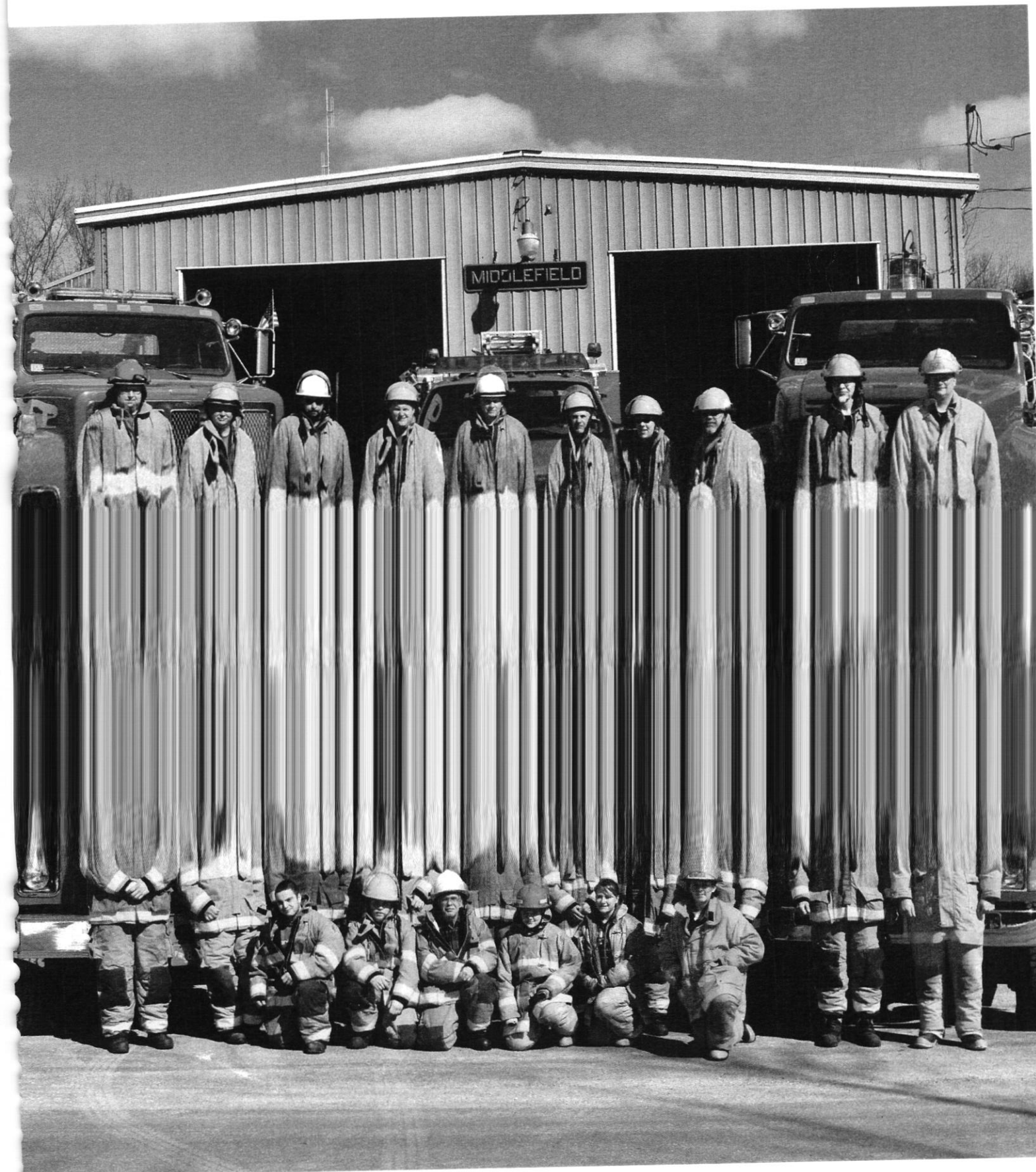


**THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN OF  
MIDDLEFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
FOR THE 2017 FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017**

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MAY 5, 2018**



Middlefield Town Offices  
And Departments

ACCOUNTING  
Bev Cooper  
Sat 10am-2pm

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR  
Duane Pease  
623-2079  
Tues-Thurs 9am-2pm

ASSESSORS  
623-8966  
Sat 9-11am

BOARD OF HEALTH  
See Selectboard  
Health Agent  
Jackie Duda  
413-586-5767 (home)

BUILDING COMMISSIONER  
William Girard  
413-464-4281 (cell)  
413-623-5847 (office)  
Mon 5-6:30pm

ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR  
Eric Main  
413-212-3021 (cell)

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
**To Report an Emergency**

**DIAL 911**

PLUMBING INSPECTOR  
William Zeitler  
413-665-8101

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
**To Report an Emergency**  
**DIAL 911**  
Tom Austin, Chief  
413-354-0468

TAX COLLECTOR  
Mary Ann Pease  
623-5182  
Fri 11:30am-4pm  
Sat 8:30-10:30am

TOWN CLERK  
Suzanne Lemieux  
Sat 9:00am-Noon  
Mondays 3-6pm

TREASURER  
Jane Thielen  
Sat 10am-2pm

Ron Radwich, Chief  
Larry Pease, Deputy Chief  
623-5060

HIGHWAY GARAGE  
Skip Savery, Supt  
623-5532

LIBRARY  
Maryann Walsh, Librarian  
Mon & Wed 3-7pm  
Sat 9-noon  
623-6421

## Dedication

This year the Town is proud to dedicate our 2018 Town Report to our Volunteer Fire Department and its over 60 years of service to the community. This group of volunteers stands ready to respond to all emergencies in Town and to assist neighboring towns when requested. Under the direction of Fire Chief, Ron Radwich, and his assistants the Town can be proud of the selfless service they provide in responding to duty whenever called.

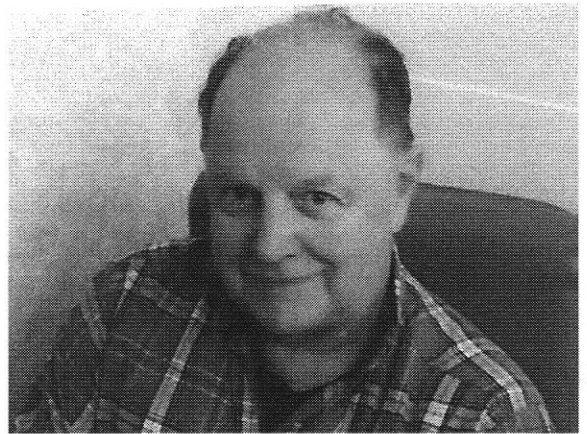


This page is dedicated to 3 residents whose service to the Town was greatly appreciated and will be sorely missed.

They all served in various capacities with tireless effort and always for the good of the Town.



**ED VIVIER**



**DENIS BASAK**



**MICHAEL HALE**

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## Elected Officials

### Selectboard:

David DiNicola, Chair	2020
Judith Hoag	2018
Albert Sirard	2019

### Assessors:

Laura Lafreniere	2019
Tamarin Laurel-Paine	2020

### Cemetery Commissioners:

Mark Doane	2019
Larry Pease	2020
Timothy Pease	2018

### Constables:

Charles Hunter	2019
Curt Robie	2018

### Library Trustees:

Christine Bresnahan	2019
Mary Lou Kearns	2020
Lois Bell	2018

### Finance Committee:

Scott Artioli	2019
Curt Robie	2020
Dale Hoag	2018
Joseph Kearns	2018

### School Committee:

Sarah Foley	2018
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### Planning Board:

Dale Hoag	2020
Kim Savery	2020
Cameron McNeill	2019
Doreen Black	2018

### Town Clerk:

Suzanne Lemieux	2018
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## Annual Appointees

**Accountant:** Beverly Cooper

**Town Admin.:** Duane Pease

**Animal Inspector:** Terry Donovan

**Board of Health Agent:**

Jackie Duda

**Electrical Inspector:** Eric Main

**Emergency Management Director**

Ann

**EMS Director:** Ed Vivier

**Fire & Forest Warden:**

Ron Radwich

**Fire Chief:** Ron Radwich

**Police Chief:** Thomas Austin

**Plumbing Inspector:** William Zeitler

**Recycling Coordinator:**

Joseph Kearns

**Tax Collector:** Mary Ann Pease

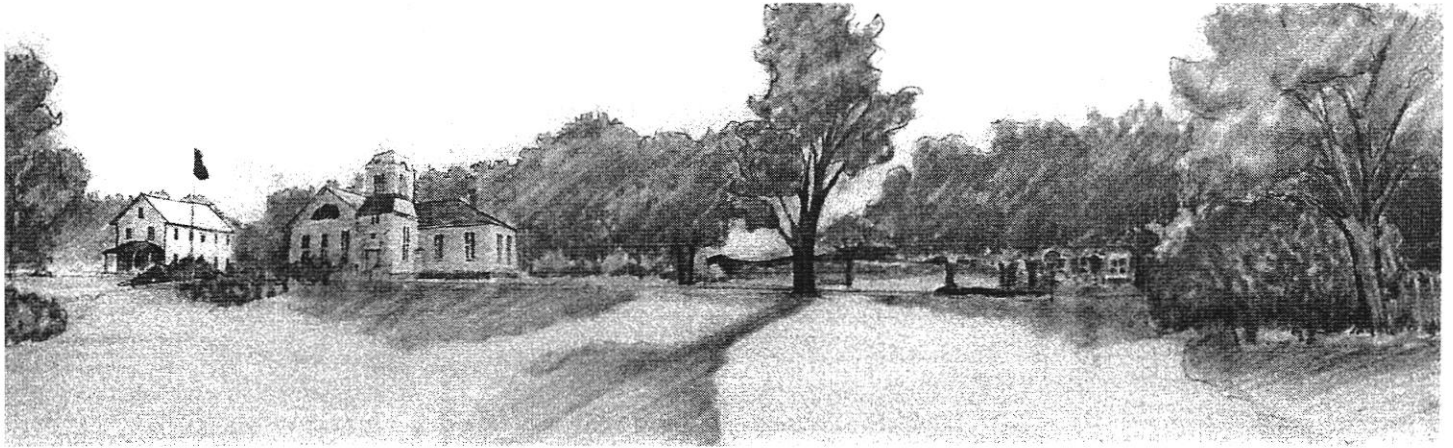
**Town Clerk Asst:** Lois Bell

**Tree Warden:** Skip Savery

**Veteran's Agent:** Steve Connor

**Westfield River Wild & Scenic**

**Advisory:** Carol Waag



## Select Board Report

The Select Board and citizens of Middlefield were saddened last year with the sudden passing of our Selectman Denis Basak. He was a longtime Middlefield resident and will be missed.

The Select Board is happy to report we had a substantial increase in the number of families making Middlefield their new home. We would like to welcome everyone to our friendly community. Hopefully we will see you all at one of our town meetings or family events.

One important issue we have been working very hard on is finding a high-speed internet provider that will service our town's needs now and into the future. We continue to work very closely with MBI to find a company that not only delivers the best technology but is financially strong enough to be there for us in the future. MBI acknowledges we have geographical issues with a very small population which makes it hard to attract a service provider willing to make their investment profitable. We are working very hard with them to make this service financially possible for Middlefield.

We worked closely with our office staff and departments to reduce costs. By reviewing their expenditures and following up on state monies owned to Middlefield we successfully increase our bottom line. We also reviewed our insurance costs and made changes to our policies resulting in reduced premiums without any reduction in appropriate coverages.

You might have noticed some transfer station improvements which have helped the facility operate more efficiently. We are looking into an electric cardboard compactor that will assist the attendant and residents when disposing of cardboard products. It will be easier, faster and safer for everyone. We also anticipate a reduction in trucking costs because the compressed cardboard will use less space resulting in fewer loads.

We applied for a grant to remove the two condemned buildings in the center of town. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission indicated the grant application looks very promising because of our detailed reporting and preparation work completed by the Town Center Committee and Select Board over the years.

It would not be possible to run our town without the many volunteers and professionals who offer their time and expertise to Middlefield. We thank you all for your service to our community and are grateful for your commitments.

Sincerely,  
David DiNicola- Chair  
Judy Hoag- Selectwoman  
Al Sirard- Selectman

Middlefield Vital Statistics

**MARRIAGES**

Keith Allen Albee & Tina Marie Albee  
October 14, 2017

**DEATHS**

Marjorie P. Batorski... March 23, 2017

Denis Gene Basak...May 23, 2017

Charlene Marie Hunter...May 24, 2017

Michael J Jamula...May 26, 2017

Edward V Vivier...December 23, 2017

John F Doane...December28/2017

**DOG LICENSE REPORT FOR 2017**

67 single dogs were licensed

2 kennel licenses:

1 @ 10 dogs or less

1@ 4 dogs or less

Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes.

The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. The early symptoms of rabies in people are similar to that of many other illnesses, including fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort. As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms..

The Fire Department hosted a rabies clinic on March 23.

Thank you for returning the annual census. Only 11 surveys have not been returned.

Thank you for a great year,

Suzanne C. Lemieux  
Town Clerk  
Lois Leonardo-Bell  
Assistant Town Clerk





# Town of Middlefield

## Finance Committee

### FY 2017 Annual Report

This year the Finance Committee experienced a great loss with the passing of a valued, long term member, Ed Vivier. He wore many hats to many town boards in addition to our committee: EMT, Emergency Management, Town Constable and the Fire Department. His contributions will be remembered by many.

A new effort, funded by a Massachusetts Community Compact Grant, the Hilltown Collaborative is made up of the six towns of the Gateway District. During this past fiscal year, the position of Economic Development Director has been ably filled by Jeanne Le Clair. In addition to the foundation grant, funding her position, she has won two grants: one for \$140,000 for Information Technology and another for \$42,000 to do branding of the Hill Towns for the purpose of development. Toward these efforts, Middlefield is asked to contribute \$7,300. The Finance Committee strongly supports Middlefield's involvement and support of these needed economic development efforts.

Because access to high speed internet is no longer luxury but a necessity, evidenced by widespread difficulties selling houses with no access, we must continue to press for readily and inexpensively available internet service.

During this past year, a long financial discussion continued among district towns and The Gateway Regional School District, aided and guided by three former District Superintendents of Massachusetts schools. This effort, funded by the towns and district, was triggered by problems emerging from Worthington's withdrawal from the district. The needs of the district's towns and their schools were closely examined, providing better understanding of possible, positive directions.

A proposal, offered in a separate article in the Town Meeting warrant, would change statutory town assessments framed in the original district agreement. With ratification by all towns, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will revise the formula for setting the towns' education assessments. Historically, the cost of running the District was shared by district towns based upon the number of students each town sent. The new warrant article proposes that each town's assessment will be based upon its previous five-year average educational assessment increased by the percentage of District's budget hike. All towns will have to agree to this proposal for it to go into effect.

There are several major initiatives the Finance Committee is beginning to work on for the next year. One project is to develop a long range Capital Plan for the town which will hopefully aid in the development of future town budgets but will also categorize town needs. The plan will develop a database of current town assets including buildings, grounds, parks, and individual department town equipment. The plan will assess the condition of each existing asset and will

establish an approximate life expectancy for its use and replacement or improvement costs. Town departments will be asked to identify future equipment and space needs by filling out individual request forms. The database will be developed so that it can be used for planning and future funding. Information gathered will also be readily available to share with federal and state officials as possible grant funding opportunities become available.

The asphalt surface on Skyline Trail is also starting to show its age. As town residents remember, the town was able to get special legislation passed which allowed for ownership of the road to be temporarily transferred to state so that the Department of Transportation could oversee the engineering and reconstruction of the road. This project took place in 2003. The Committee believes that the town cannot rely on this procedure to be repeated again. It is felt that annual Chapter 90 funding given to the town by the state is not large enough to develop a project to address an asphalt reclamation and repaving project to address the existing road conditions on Skyline Trail and address other town road improvement projects. Working with the Selectmen and Highway Superintendent, the Committee hopes to develop a successful grant proposal to take advantage of state funding available under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts MassWorks Program to allow for necessary work on Skyline Trail to take place in the near future.

Joe Kearns, Chair  
Scott Artioli  
Dale Hoag  
Curt Robie

## Middlefield Planning Board

The Planning Board has spent the last year reviewing and revising town zoning by-laws with the expectation of presenting these potential revisions to the townspeople this year.

The topics under review include the zoning use tables and definitions, the home-based business by-law, a potential new village center district, a camping by-law, and a retail and wholesale marijuana establishment by-law.

The planning board is awaiting approval from the Attorney General for a Marijuana Moratorium for retail and wholesale marijuana establishments. The purpose of the moratorium is to allow the townspeople to review the state's regulations from the Cannabis Control Commission before issuing any license for recreational and wholesale establishments in the town.

We will be holding public hearings and comment periods to solicit feedback and further revisions before holding any Special Town Meeting to vote on any zoning changes.

The goals of proposed revisions will be to make the zoning by-laws more user-friendly and more accommodating to a wider range of enterprises.

The current board members are: Doreen Black, Cam McNeil, Dale Hoag, and Kim Savery. Words cannot express the board and town's loss of a long time civil servant Michael Hale. His expertise, humor and presence will be missed.

# Board of Assessors Annual Report – 2017

FY 2017 was the Periodic Revaluation year by DOR, which had come every three years, but will in future be every 5 years. The Board hired Mayflower Valuation Ltd to conduct this process. The FY 2017 building values increased due to new cost per square foot tables input by the DOR as part of this Revaluation process.

With the May 2017 election, the Board welcomed Tamarin Laurel-Paine as a new member. Later that May, member Ann Marie Visconti resigned. The two remaining board members have worked well together throughout the year. By July (FY'18) we hired Karen Tonelli, recommended by DOR and Principal Assessor for Peru and Montague, to work with Middlefield's board on the annual reports to fulfill state revaluation requirements. Karen incorporated training, as part of the reporting work, to a much greater extent than previous revaluation vendors, building the knowledge and capacity of the local board members.

The statistical analysis of recent home sales showed that Middlefield assessed values were low compared to DOR standards. To stay in line with DOR standards, the values on houses were adjusted globally by a 2% increase in house assessment between the value shown on the January 2017 tax bills and the January 2018 bills. The land assessments stayed unchanged since FY2011, at \$29,500 for the first 2 acres (buildable), \$1,400/acre for the next 25 acres, and \$800/acre on remaining acres over 27 in the same parcel.

The increase in assessed value does not affect the actual taxes owed, so much as the votes taken at Town Meetings do. **The key equation for tax bills is still the Tax Levy divided by the assessed value of town.** The Tax Levy is mainly from Raise and Appropriate votes. See the chart below for how total budget is reduced to the remaining Tax Levy to be raised from taxes. (Non Raise & Appropriate budget items include funds transferred from other accounts, Stabilization, Free Cash, and items on the recap sheet not voted at Town Meeting.)

Chart of 3-year intervals in previous history and... Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 tax rate calculation

FY 2011		FY 2014		FY 2017		
1,382,974		1,491,703		1,615,992		Budget voted ...minus:
-116,483		-120,030		-120,159		-cherry sheet net receipts
-75,500		-100,900		-82,725		-estimated other receipts
-96,313		-61,935		-185,179		-non Raise & Appropriate
-100,000		-60,000		-60,000		-Free Cash to reduce tax rate
994,678		1,148,838		1,167,929		= Tax Levy
	tax rate		tax rate		tax rate	
994,678	= \$15.12	1,148,838	= \$17.42	1,167,929	= \$17.63	Tax Levy divided by
65,786	per 1,000	65,949	per 1,000	66,247	per 1,000	total taxable value/ in 1,000s

Total Taxable Value for FY 2017 was \$66,246,667. Shown above ^ in \$1,000s since tax rate is per \$1,000

When valuations go up, the tax rate goes down –unless the levy limit has gone up also. [For example: If the budget had kept the same Tax Levy for FY2018 as in FY2017, then the change in assessed value would have resulted in: Levy \$1,167,929 ÷ (\$66,754,129 in new assessed value ÷ 1,000s) = \$17.50 tax rate instead of the actual \$17.98 rate created by the FY2018 tax levy being higher.]

Respectfully submitted by: Laura Lafreniere, Chair & Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Secretary



**Town of Middlefield  
Office of the Building Inspector  
188 Skyline Trail  
Middlefield, Massachusetts 01243**

**Town Report 2017**

**There were 62 permit pulled during 2017.  
The breakdown of that number is as follows:**

	<b>Fees Collected</b>
<b>Building: 27</b>	<b>\$3,121.00</b>
<b>Commercial: 1</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>
<b>Electrical: 16</b>	<b>\$1,250.00</b>
<b>Plumbing 2</b>	<b>\$ 100.00</b>
<b>Gas 8</b>	<b>\$ 330.00</b>
<b>Certificate of Occupancy: 3</b>	<b>\$ 105.00</b>
<b>Certificate of Inspection: 1</b>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>
<b>Solid Fuel Burning: 4</b>	<b>\$ 195.00</b>

**Fees were paid with all the possible methods including: Unibank Online, Check, and Cash with one fee waiver for a total collection of \$5,401.00.**

**I would like to thank the town of Middlefield for the opportunity to continue to be of service. I would also like to thank Gary Danko, assistant building inspector, Eric Main, wiring inspector, Al Sirard, assistant wiring inspector and William Ziegler, the gas and plumbing inspector for their service to the town as well.**

**Respectfully submitted,  
William E Girard  
Building Commissioner**

## Tax Collectors Annual Report

July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

As I end my 7th fiscal year here in Middlefield, I would like to thank the residents for making me feel welcome all these years.

Time passes quickly and I always don't have a chance to tell everyone what a pleasure it is to serve you in this capacity.

I would also like to point out some information that may be helpful to residents of Middlefield.

What are Property Taxes (Real Estate) Taxes?

The major source of revenue for Middlefield is the property tax. The property tax is an "ad valorem" (based on the value) tax. The tax is apportioned to individual properties based on the value of the property. In Massachusetts, estimates of the value are called assessments. In Massachusetts, the property tax is assessed on real and personal property to the owner of record as of January 1.

What is Preliminary Tax?

Preliminary tax bills are estimated bills. The estimate is based on the actual net tax bill of the previous fiscal year.. The preliminary tax bill is due in two installments, August (1st quarter) and November (2nd quarter)

What is Actual Tax?

Real Estate/Personal Property tax is the actual tax for the fiscal year. In December, the Board of Assessor assesses the tax for the year and the amount paid on the preliminary bills are subtracted from the tax. The Real Estate/ Personal Property tax is due in two installments (February 3rd quarter) and May (4th quarter)

I don't think my tax bill is correct, what should I do?

You have 30 days from the date of issue of the first actual tax bill and or personal property tax bill to file for an abatement (usually February 1st) with the Board of Assessors.

I am the new owner of the property, why is the prior owner's name still on the Real Estate bill?

M.G. L. Chapter 59 Section 11 states the name and owner of record as of January 1 will appear on the tax bill for the next fiscal year (4 bills per fiscal year). Although your name is in the care of line, you are the owner and are responsible for the property.

And the number 1 question I get from tax payers all the time that applies to Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicle Tax is?

I did not receive a tax bill; do I have to pay a penalty and interest?

Yes, State Law requires that failing to send or receive a tax bill does not affect the validity of the tax, penalty, or interest.