Middlebury Meeting Calendar*

Monday, November 2
Board of Selectmen, 5 p.m. .....Town Hall Conf. Room
Greenway Committee, 5 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 26
Tuesday, November 3
Parks & Recreation, 7 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 7
Wednesday, November 4
Land Preservation & Open Space, 7 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 7
Zoning Board of Appeals, 7:30 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 26
Thursday, November 5
Planning & Zoning, 7 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 26

Monday, November 9
Police Commission, 6 p.m. ..... Police Department
Wednesday, November 11 – Veterans Day Holiday
Thursday, November 12
Board of Finance, 7 p.m. ..... Town Hall Conf. Room

Monday, November 16
Board of Selectmen, 5 p.m. .....Town Hall Conf. Room
Public Works Commission, 7 p.m. ..... Public Works Mtg. Room
Tuesday, November 17
Commission on Aging, 9:30 a.m. ..... Shepardson, Dining Room
Library Board of Trustees, 4:30 p.m. ..... Middlebury Library
Water Pollution Control Authority, 7:30 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 26
Thursday, November 19
Beautification Committee, 6:30 p.m. ..... Shepardson, Room 26

Monday, November 23
Economic Development Commission, 6:30 p.m. ... Shepardson, Room 26
Tuesday, November 24
Conservation Commission, 7:30 p.m. .....Shepardson, Room 26
Thursday & Friday, November 27 & 28 – Thanksgiving Holiday

**Meeting details sometimes change after our deadline.*
Please check them and find agendas online at MiddleburyCT.gov



From the desk of ...
First Selectwoman Jennifer Mahr

Happy Halloween! My heartfelt thanks to all the participants who made Park & Rec's Annual Trick or Trunk event at Memorial Middle School possible. This safe, family-friendly tradition is a perfect kickoff event to the extended holiday season, and I love seeing the extra excitement generated by a Saturday Halloween. A special thank you goes to Bradley and Robbie Bernstein for their generosity and all the work that goes into their Annual Halloween Graveyard. The Middlebury Food Bank is especially grateful for the donations this event generates.

Great news from Region 15, and it's no trick! The Average Daily Membership (ADM) percentage is the October 1 enrollment snapshot that determines the percentage of the budget Middlebury and Southbury are each responsible for in the next budget year. Middlebury's 2026-27 ADM was 33.1270%, and the new ADM for 2027-28 Budget has fallen to 32.5240%. In practical terms, had this new percentage been applied to the 2026-27 Budget, it would have saved Middlebury taxpayers about $576,000. It is unusual that the ADM percentage fell for Middlebury two years in a row, and the Board of Finance and I are using this opportunity to begin planning to absorb the upcoming new school bonds. I believe we need, at a minimum, a stabilization reserve that allows us to smooth out the ups and downs of the ADM percentage over time.

Do you have a voting plan for this election? There are almost 7,000 registered voters in Middlebury, and your voice matters. Consider this report from CTdata.org: "Many CT towns saw increases of over 50% in voter turnout from 2021 to 2025. Bridgewater experienced a 166% increase from 24% to 63%, followed by Middlebury (149% increase, 19% to 47%), Deep River (140% increase, 24% to 58%), and Sprague (132% increase, 21% to 50%). Ten other towns experienced increases of over 50%, including Scotland, Lyme, Middletown, East Windsor, and Barkhamsted."

On Election Day, November 3, 2026, Middlebury residents will be voting for governor and lieutenant governor, representative in Congress, state senator, state representative, secretary of the state, treasurer, comptroller, attorney general, judge of probate, and Middlebury registrars of voters. Don't let someone else make your choices for you, and let's see if we can get voter turnout above 50%.

Sample ballots are available to review on the Town Clerk's website at www.middlebury-ct.gov/1341/Town-Clerks-Office.

Committee seeks members

The Middlebury Poet Laureate Committee is seeking new members to join their team. The committee is responsible for supporting and promoting poetry, literary arts, and the Poet Laureate program.

The committee meets once a month at the Middlebury Historical Society. If you have an interest in poetry, literature, or the arts and would like to help enrich Middlebury's cultural life, we would love to hear from you.

Serving on the committee is a wonderful opportunity to support the arts, encourage creativity, help select and work with Middlebury's Poet Laureate, and connect with others who share an appreciation for literature and community engagement. Whether you are a reader, writer, educator, artist, or simply someone who enjoys poetry, your perspective would be welcome.

For more information, please contact us through the Poet Laureate Committee email: middleburypoetlaureate@gmail.com.

Like us on Facebook:
Middlebury Bee-Intelligencer

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis, 988 provides a connection to confidential support 24/7. There is hope: Just call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org #988Lifeline

Not experiencing a crisis, but still want information, resources and support? Call 1-800-950-6264 Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Stay warm without the worry

By BRIAN PROULX

As Connecticut settles into the colder months, homes across the state begin to rely on fireplaces, wood stoves, furnaces, and space heaters to stay comfortable. With the sudden onset of high heating oil costs this summer, some homeowners may switch to a more traditional approach like burning wood to take the chill out. Unfortunately, heating season also marks a predictable rise in preventable fires.

Nationally, heating equipment is responsible for roughly 40,000 home fires each year, accounting for 13% of all residential fires. In Connecticut, the percentage is even higher, with heating equipment involved in 16% of residential structure fires annually. These incidents are often avoidable, but doing so requires preparation, awareness, and respect for the equipment that keeps us warm.

Wood stoves and fireplaces remain winter favorites, but they demand regular maintenance. Creosote buildup, the sticky and flammable residue left behind by burning wood, is a leading cause of chimney fires. Failure to clean residential chimneys accounts for 27% of heating-related fires nationwide. Chimney fires can lead to full home fire involvement if cracks exist in the chimney lining or enclosure. The hot gases produced in a small contained area create a blow-torch effect and can easily push into an attic space, wall cavity, or chimney chase. If you burn wood regularly, schedule annual chimney cleanings, burn only seasoned and dry wood, and use proper screens to keep sparks from escaping the fireplace.

Wood and pellet ash disposal is another commonly overlooked hazard; embers can stay hot for hours and sometimes days. Ashes should be placed in a metal container and stored outside, away from the home and any combustible materials. Every year, fire departments respond to fires caused by ashes that were anything but "cold." I have personally investigated three residential fires in recent years caused by improper ash disposal. In all three cases, the ashes ignited the disposal container, which then ignited nearby combustibles.

Space heaters, while convenient, present one of the most significant heating risks. These devices are involved in 47% of heating-equipment fires and cause over 70% of heating-related deaths. Many of these incidents stem from misuse such as placing heaters too close to bedding or furniture, plugging them into extension cords that melt due to the energy these units draw, or leaving them running unattended or for extended periods of time. A few simple precautions can dramatically reduce the danger. Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away. Plug heaters directly into a wall outlet. And turn heaters off when leaving the room or going to sleep. Tip over protection is a must, especially if you have pets.

As we approach Thanksgiving, it's worth remembering that cooking remains the number one cause of home fires, responsible for 49% of residential fire incidents nationwide. Thanksgiving consistently ranks as the busiest day of the year for cooking-related fires. Staying in the kitchen while frying, baking, or boiling, keeping children and pets away from hot surfaces, and having a lid or wet towel nearby to smother stovetop fires can make all the difference. Keep the oven door shut if anything looks ominous. Restricting airflow can prevent flames from appearing and escaping the oven. And if you're deep-frying a turkey, do it outside, far away from the house, and never with a frozen bird. A frozen turkey introduced into hot oil will immediately cause the oil to overflow and ignite, creating a fireball that can spread rapidly and cause severe burn injuries.

Connecticut winters are beautiful, but they require vigilance and some preparation. With heating equipment contributing to a significant portion of home fires, and Thanksgiving cooking adding seasonal risk, a few simple precautions can keep you and your family safe this season. Clean your chimney, clean and inspect your furnace, use space heaters wisely, and keep a close eye on holiday cooking. On behalf of the Middlebury Fire Marshal's Office, have a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving.

Fire Marshal Brian Proulx is a Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department member.

Golden Technologies

Agency focus: Cybersecurity

By JUSTIN GOLDEN

The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for strategy, policy and education on cybersecurity. It does this through its Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Commonly called America's Cyber Defense Agency, its website is cisa.gov. It created the National Cybersecurity Awareness month first launched in 2004 and also creates a theme for each year. This year's theme is "Securing the Next 250."

The cyber defense magazine "Cybernoz" reports a pressing concern in cybersecurity is the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) attacks, including phishing, smishing and social engineering campaigns enhanced by Generative AI (Gen AI). Gen AI is a subtext in Artificial Intelligence that generates text, images, videos, audio and other forms of digital data for users.

Phishing is a cyberattack in which bad actors convince you to hand over your passwords, banking details or access to systems, e.g. your computer devices or even your network by convincing you they are someone you can trust. The attack can be delivered via a communication method such as an email, text message, telephone call, social media or QR code.

Smishing is doing the same but via text message. Social engineering is using psychological pressure to entice you to act on behalf of someone else and not for your benefit.

Adopting and utilizing AI may inadvertently expose confidential data that leads to compliance or reputational risk. The New York Times reported that researchers using OpenAI's advanced artificial intelligence models unearthed major bugs in a piece of software used widely across the internet, setting off fears around the world about significant disruptions for consumers and businesses.

The Trump administration and some governments in Europe and Asia warned all organizations that rely on this software, which is known as PHP, to immediately install updates released Wednesday to patch the flaws.

The concern is that, although the fixes are available and are being released now, bad actors could easily reverse engineer the patches to beat the government, business and individuals before they can protect themselves. A successful attack could allow the hackers to take control of servers, steal data and deface websites. Security agencies, including the National Security Agency (NSA) advised companies to take their systems offline if a patch could not immediately be applied.

You have probably heard or read about concerns that Artificial Intelligence may upset cybersecurity unless shortcomings are addressed immediately. Japan's prime minister recently alerted everyone there that they may need to take action now via social media and if that isn't possible, to temporarily suspend websites as an effective way to reduce risk.

Last month I wrote about AI as an advanced technology that provides benefits and challenges to its users. Hackers may use it to steal your identity and your money or to gain access and use of confidential information to their benefit. In some cases, this can happen before you realize it and can react effectively to prevent them from advancing or causing damage.

I recommend you stay on top of this subject. Keep aware of its uses and risks to reduce your exposure now. Visit the CISA website periodically to see what and where the cyber threats are.

Golden Technology Services, Inc. provides cybersecurity awareness education and testing. Contact them at justin.golden@gts-cloud.com.

In Brief

Zoning regulations

Don't forget that Middlebury's proposed revised zoning regulations are ready for consideration. Middlebury First Selectwoman Jennifer Mahr posted the draft, which is available at tinyurl.com/56dhch4c. Middlebury residents are encouraged to read through this lengthy document (more than 300 pages) and compare it with the current zoning regulations. Residents will be invited to share their thoughts on the revised regulations in early 2027. Mahr said last month, "This is the time to have input into what kind of town you want Middlebury to be (or don't want it to be). The goal is well-written regulations that are clear and easy to understand. Details on the upcoming public hearing will be shared once they are known."

Hazardous waste event

The rescheduled Naugatuck Valley Council of Government's hazardous waste collection event will be held Saturday, November 14, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ansonia transfer station at 1 N. Division St. in Ansonia, Conn. Residents of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethlehem, Derby, Middlebury, Naugatuck, Oxford, Prospect, Seymour, Southbury, Thomaston, Waterbury Watertown, Wolcott and Woodbury may dispose of up to 50 lbs of hazardous waste for no charge. For information on what you may bring, see nvcogct.gov/hhw.

Southbury can and bottle collection

Sustainable Southbury's next can and bottle collection will be Sunday, November 1, from 12 to 2 p.m. at the rear of the building at 800 Main St. S. (across from ShopRite) in Southbury. The drive will raise money for the Southbury Lions Club. Globally, Lions Clubs focus on Vision, Hunger, Environment, Disaster Relief, and Childhood Cancer. Most recently, local members rallied to provide critical disaster relief after the devastating August 2024 floods by repairing homes and distributing supplies. They also champion youth vision health by implementing the KidSight screening program across all Region 15 elementary schools. The organization collects thousands of donated eyeglasses and helps produce specialized books for visually impaired individuals. They provide dedicated financial and hands-on assistance to families navigating the hardships of childhood cancer. The Southbury Lions Club also directly combats local food insecurity by stocking the Southbury Food Bank and area Little Pantries. Their environmental stewardship has successfully diverted over three tons of plastic bags from local landfills. Through a dynamic partnership with Sustainable Southbury, the club continues to foster long-term community sustainability and improvement.

For information about accepted items, sorting requirements, and express lane guidelines, visit www.sustainablesouthbury.org or email info@sustainablesouthbury.org.

Photo Angel Project

The Glebe House Museum & Gertrude Jekyll Garden invites the public to a special free presentation with Kate Kelley, founder of The Photo Angel Project, on Saturday, November 7, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the Woodbury Public Library. The Photo Angel Project's mission is to reunite long-lost photographs with their relatives. Kelley has returned images to families in all 50 states and in several countries.

Book signing

Sunday, November 8, at 3 p.m., The Hickory Stick Bookshop in Washington Depot, Conn., will host longtime publishing industry professional and editor-in-chief and co-founder of "Shelf-Awareness," John Mutter, to discuss and sign copies of his debut novel, "Fortune and Glass." Inspired by the true story of Fritz Kolbe, an American spy behind enemy lines during World War II, Mutter approaches the rise of Nazi Germany from the perspective of Rudi Baumann, an everyman bureaucrat whose morality and individuality are put to the test.

The bookshop is at 2 Green Hill Road in Washington Depot. Those unable to attend the free event may reserve signed copies of the book by calling the bookshop at 860-868-0525 or visiting its website, www.hickorystickbookshop.com.

Houseplants

The Pomperaug Valley Garden Club will present "Houseplants by Design: Adding Plants to Your Décor" with Tovah Martin on Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the Woodbury Orenaug Firehouse at 25 Quassuk Road in Woodbury. Members of the public are welcome to attend for a $5 donation.

MDTC

The Middlebury Democratic Town Committee will meet Tuesday, November 10, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 5 at Shepardson Community Center.

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