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News

## Common Council OKs \$10,000 for Midnight on Main

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MIDDLETOWN — The Common Council voted Monday evening to be a co-sponsor for the Midnight on Main New Year's festivities.

The event, scheduled to run through the afternoon and evening on Dec. 31, was announced last month with a sneak peek at this winter's celebrations. The city will contribute \$10,000 for the event and block off traffic on Main Street between Washington and Court streets.

Council members pointed to the potential economic benefit of having people visit Middletown's downtown area and seeing what it has to offer.

Organizers Lucy McMillan, Jennifer Alexander and Mark Masselli outlined their plans for the New Year's celebration. Fourteen stages will be set up throughout the downtown, with different performances and interactive activities at each. Masselli said he estimates between 3,000 and 5,000 people will come to Middletown for the festivities. The event will feature fireworks at 6:15 p.m., so young children have a chance to see them before bedtime.

"It's really going to be something that brings out people from all walks of life," Alexander said.

Volunteer are still needed to help run the event, and information about the festivities is available at <http://midnight.org>, McMillan said.

Councilman David Bauer said that while he supports the event, he questions why the city is supporting the New Year's event after it didn't host Independence Day fireworks for two years in a row.

"Where is the money coming from?" Bauer asked.

Mayor Sebastian Giuliano said the police and fire departments wouldn't incur double-time costs for working on the holiday, as they would have staff working anyway. Only members of the city's Local 466 union would be paid overtime, but Giuliano said he hopes the city will be able to run the event with minimal staff.

"If an appropriation is required, then we're going to have to come forward with one," he said. "My hope is that we can do this without much more than we put on the street at any event. We've got nothing to lose. If it doesn't work, we'll know."

Middletown really is unique in terms of what it offers to the community, Councilman Gerald Daley said.

“It’s time that we do these things for the citizens of Middletown,” Majority Leader Thomas Serra said.

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