

# middle **TOWN NEWS** letter

March 2017

## Town Meeting 2017

### VOTE

Polls Open - Tuesday, March 7  
7 am-7 pm at the Firehouse

Allow yourself plenty of time at the polls. There are SIX ballots, some of which are more than one page.

## Wells Springs Merger

### VOTE

Tuesday, March 7  
7 am-7 pm at the Firehouse

This vote has significant consequences.  
Details begin on Page 2

## Informational Meeting

Town//School

Monday, March 6

7:30 pm at the Elementary School

Bring your Town Report and come get your questions answered in preparation for voting the next day.

## No Time for Dinner ??

Let the 6<sup>th</sup> grade feed you!

Monday, March 6  
at MSES

Food service begins at 6:15 pm  
Homemade Soups, Salad, Bread,  
Desserts, and more!

*Fill up on Dinner & Local Democracy*

All proceeds benefit the 6th grade class trip to DC!



## Town Meeting Food Sale

Tuesday, March 7!

Vote then Eat - OR - Eat then Vote.  
Either way you can't lose. The Building Committee is hosting their 5<sup>th</sup> annual food sale. Stop in for delicious homemade soups and stews, chili, mac & cheese, fresh bread, muffins, and more. **Open 7 am-7 pm** in the dining room of the Historical Society.

## PIE for Breakfast!

The trustees of the Middletown Springs Public Library have a sure cure for the Wintertime Blues: Pie for Breakfast. On **Saturday, March 11, 2017, 8 am-11 am**, the trustees will be serving up All You Can Eat PIE for Breakfast with tea, coffee, or juice. The slices are cut thin so it is easy to try many different varieties. Pies are both sweet (such as pumpkin, apple, berry, chocolate) and savory (such as spinach or ham quiche).

This delicious annual event is so popular that it has outgrown the Library building and the Historical Society, and is now held at the Elementary School. Same scrumptious pies, hot coffee, and fine conversation - just with more elbow room. There will also be a basket-type raffle with over 30 prizes, including maple syrup, books, craft items, housewares, and gift certificates from local businesses.

\$7 for adults; \$4 for children 5-12; under 5 FREE. All proceeds benefit the Middletown Springs Public Library.

Would you like to donate a pie?!?! Contact Alida at 235-2323 or [randatarbell@vermontel.net](mailto:randatarbell@vermontel.net) and let her know.

For more information, contact the Library at [middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com) or 235-2435.

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Rabies Clinic - March 4  
Property Tax Due - March 15  
Maple Festival - March 18  
Tea & Conversation - March 26  
Homestead Declarations - April 18  
Community Basketball - Thurs. & Sun.

# Wells Springs Merger

VOTE - Tuesday, March 7, 2017

**The State has approved our plan to consolidate school boards and budgets. The next step is the community vote on March 7.**

Thanks to everyone who came out to our community forums. As many of you heard, the State Board of Education approved a plan to consolidate the governance of five school districts in our area into two. Middletown Springs and Wells would combine to form the Wells Springs Unified Union School District and operate grades Pre-K through 6, with full choice for grades 7-12. In a separate merger, Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland would combine to create the Quarry Valley Unified Union School District and operate grades Pre-K-12. Together, these two mergers would form a "Side by Side," one of the configurations for consolidation that meets the requirements of Act 46.

To move forward, all five communities need to vote YES. In Middletown and Wells, a **YES vote means:**

- One school board and one budget for the towns of Middletown Springs and Wells.
- Both schools stay open.
- Wells Springs qualifies for tax incentives offered under Act 46.
- Wells Springs retains the Small Schools Grants that each school district currently receives from the State (roughly \$170,000 between both schools).
- There is reduced volatility in school budgets as there will be more students and a larger tax base.
- There are more opportunities for sharing teachers and educational resources to improve student opportunity.
- Middletown maintains full 7-12 choice for its students, and Wells moves from designating Granville to full 7-12 choice.
- Middletown sees lower projected tax rates. (See graph attached to this newsletter.)

If any of the five communities vote NO, there is a short window of opportunity for a revote. **BUT if voters DO NOT APPROVE a merger by July 1, 2017:**

- Middletown Springs would not receive any tax incentives.
- Middletown Springs would lose Small Schools Grant (roughly \$170,000 between both schools).
- Tax rates would rise to unsustainable levels, threatening the existence of our local elemen-

tary school. (See graph attached to this newsletter.)

- State Agency of Education would assign Middletown a merger partner and force a consolidation plan of their own design in 2018, but with no incentives.

There will be one more community meeting to discuss the Wells Springs merger proposal before the March 7 vote.

Additionally, please contact anyone on the School Board (Clarence Haynes, Meredith Morgan, Sarah Haley, Jennelle Carr, Chris Smid) for more information about the Wells Springs merger plan.

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## Is It Your Turn?

The Selectboard would like you to know that there are a significant number of vacancies in both elected and appointed positions, and would like to encourage people to take up civic service. Specifically, there are at least the following openings.

**Elected positions:** Run as a write-in or seek appointment after Town Meeting.

- Town Agent
- Town Constable
- Auditor, 2 positions
- Trustee of Louis Fund

**Appointed positions:**

- Fence Viewer
- Service Officer
- Emergency Management Director
- Representative to Rutland Regional Transportation Council
- Conservation Commission, several seats.

There is no end of ways to be engaged in community service, but these are some specific areas of need. Your town needs you. Step up. The Selectboard would love to hear from you!

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## Community Basketball This Winter!!

**Pick-up Basketball:** All ages and abilities, 4-6 pm Sundays

Children under 10 should bring an adult or a responsible older sibling.

**Pick-Up Basketball:** 15 years old and up, 6-8 pm Thursdays

**All games at the MSES Gym**

Contact Justin Hier for info, 235-1297 or [justinhier@hotmail.com](mailto:justinhier@hotmail.com)



## Town Report 2017 Corrections

As you may have already discovered while poring over your Town Report, the Town Budget contains more than one numerical oddity. This note is to correct and explain those numbers that “don’t add up” and to let you know that a corrected version of the Report as well as the two pages of the Report containing errors have been posted to the Town’s website, [www.middletownsprings.vt.gov](http://www.middletownsprings.vt.gov)

These errors do not affect the numbers you will be voting on at Town Meeting and do not change the proposed budget. They are simply errors in layout that were not caught or corrected in the proof-reading phase of putting the Report together.

Two errors appear on page 23 of the Report in the General Government section. They are as follows:

1. Subtotal Town General for FY 2017 Budget should read \$224,815 instead of \$214,815 (the \$10,000 separately voted for Law Enforcement was not included in the subtotal).
2. Subtotal Town General – Other for FY 2017 Budget should read \$59,000 instead of \$9,000 (the \$50,000 separately voted for Municipal Facilities was not in the subtotal).

On page 25 there are three erroneous numbers. They are all under the line item Total Town Expenditures and are as follows:

1. FY 2016 Budget # should read \$767,412 instead of \$767,4122
2. FY 2017 Budget figure should read \$753,798 instead of \$693,798 (\$50,000 missing from the Subtotal Town General – Other on page 23 also not included here).
3. FY 2018 Proposed Budget figure should read \$653,805 instead of \$743,367 (The appropriations to be voted on were mistakenly included in the total proposed budget number.)

### 3rd Quarter Property Tax

### Due Wednesday, March 15

Jenny Munyak will be in the Town Office that day  
9 am-12 pm & 1-4 pm

Or mail checks, postmarked on for before 3/15:  
Town of Middletown Springs  
attn: TOWN TREASURER  
PO Box 1022, Middletown Springs, VT 05757

## Important Notice to Property Owners

Homestead Declarations are required annually and MUST be filed with the Vermont Tax Department by April 15. However, in 2017 the form is due on April 18. If you plan to file it with your Vermont personal income taxes and you file for an extension, you must still file the Homestead Declaration by April 18. Late filers will be penalized.

### What is the Vermont Homestead Declaration?

In Vermont, all property is subject to a state-wide education property tax to pay for the state’s schools. Property is categorized as either nonresidential or homestead. A homestead is the principal dwelling and parcel of land surrounding the dwelling, owned and occupied by the resident as the person’s domicile on April 15, 2017.

### Property Tax Adjustment Claim and Eligibility Requirements

The Vermont Property Tax Adjustment assists many Vermont homeowners with paying their property taxes. You may be eligible for a property tax adjustment if your property qualifies as a homestead and you meet the eligibility requirements. The maximum property tax adjustment you can receive is \$8,000. Eligibility requirements are as follows:

- The property must be declared as your homestead.
- You were domiciled in Vermont for the entire 2016 calendar year.
- You were not claimed as a dependent of another taxpayer.
- You own the property as your principal residence on April 1, 2017.
- You meet the household income criteria of \$141,000 or less.

Click on <http://tax.vermont.gov/sites/tax/files/documents/2017-HS-122-Instr.pdf> for more detailed information about your circumstances.

You may file online at [www.tax.vermont.gov](http://www.tax.vermont.gov). Click on VT Tax Forms. On the left of the screen, under the category Tax Forms and Publications, click on Property Owners, then click on HS-122, HI-144. You may contact us if you have any questions.

Board of Listers:

Sally Achey, Chair (235-2434), Randy Kniffin (235-2620), Patricia Hemenway (235-2421)



## Library Bookmarks

**Tea & Conversation:** The next in this series of talks is Sunday, March 26, at 2:30 pm.

**Herb Childress** will talk about his recent book, *The PhDictionary*, as well as his upcoming book, *Contingent*. Join us for a fun conversation about the changing culture of higher education, and the ways in which faculty life increasingly resembles Uber and TaskRabbit, that is, temporary workers scrambling to make ends meet.

**Toddler Time:** Stories, songs, and a snack for our youngest patrons and their caregivers. Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am. Two six-week sessions: March 1-April 5, and April 26-May 31. Come to one, or come to them all!

**Knitting Circle:** First Monday of the month 7-9 pm, October-May. Novice to experienced knitters welcomed. Come for inspiration, technical support, and quiet conversation.

**Seed Swap:** Celebrate Spring! The Third Annual Seed Swap commences March 3 at the Library. You can bring last year's surplus seeds in clearly marked envelopes to offer your fellow gardeners, and peruse our box of seeds on display to take away some new varieties of old favorites - or try growing something completely new to you!

Our Swap Box has been supplemented by a generous donation of seeds from High Mowing Organic Seeds.

**Gratitude:** Library Trustees wish to express their thanks to candidates and inquiring voters, as well as Rep. Robin Chesnut-Tangerman, for their time and insights at the Candidates Forum.

Thanks also to Andy Floyd for his time and expertise in troubleshooting & resolving various small facility troubles.

Library programs are free and open to the public. More information available at the Library. Stop in or call 235-2435, or email [middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com).

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## Rabies Clinic

Saturday, March 4, 2017  
1 pm to 2 pm

at the Middletown Springs Firehouse  
\$8 per animal  
Dr. Scott MacLachlan  
Poultney Veterinary Services

Town Clerk will be available to issue licenses before the April 1 deadline.

## Be A Friend

The Friends of the Library is an independent 501c3 organization. Its mission is to support and enhance the Town Library. This past year the Friends purchased new motion-sensory outdoor lighting, which has been installed on the east side of the building to help light the way to the rear parking lot.

The Friends' Executive Committee declared February as "Love Your Library Month" as they reminded their current members to renew their annual memberships. The Friends are also beginning a New Member Campaign, which will continue through April. More information about the Friends is available at the Library. Having a robust membership increases the Friends' ability to go for grants on the behalf of the Library.

To join the Friends, fill out a [membership form](#) and send it with a check to Friends of the Middletown Springs Public Library, PO Box 1262, Middletown Springs, VT 05757. Annual dues are \$5 for an individual and \$10 for a family.

Mark your calendar now for the Friends' Garden Festival, which has been scheduled for **May 20**. As the time approaches, the Friends will be reaching out for donations of plants and gently used lawn & garden equipment, and for volunteers to help staff the event.

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## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS from the Fire Department:

### Want to Burn?

1. James Reed is the Fire Warden for the town. With the snow cover completely gone as of this publication, ANY brush-pile burns you plan must be cleared by the Warden. Call James Reed before you burn to notify and get clearance for any burning. His cell is 802-558-4239, or home is 235-2060.

### Got Solar?

2. If you have solar panels installed on your property, please contact James Reed. The Fire Department must be made aware of the location of the shut-off in case of fire. You can email him [reedredneckemt@aol.com](mailto:reedredneckemt@aol.com).



## Q&A with the Town Treasurer

### When are 3rd Qtr property taxes due?

On or before 3/15/17.

### Who collects property taxes?

The Town Treasurer - Jenny Talke Munyak - collects current year NON-delinquent taxes.

### Can I give my taxes to the Town Clerk?

Current property tax payments should be given to the Treasurer.

### What if the Treasurer is not in the office when I want to drop them off?

There are 3 options:

1. Mail your taxes to PO Box 1022 and make sure your envelope is postmarked on or before 3/15/17, otherwise you'll incur a late fee. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you need a receipt.
2. The Treasurer will be available in the Town Office on Wednesday March 15, 9 am-noon and 1 pm-4 pm to receive taxes.
3. A dropbox for submission of your taxes will be available in the Town Office during open hours. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you need a receipt, or indicate on your envelope that you would like a receipt, and one can be left at the Town Office for you to pick up.

### What form of payment do you accept?

We accept:

Checks - made out to "The Town of Middletown Springs."

Cash - please submit the exact amount due, as we do not keep cash in the Town Office to make change.

### What if I forget to submit my taxes on or before the due date?

Late taxes will incur a late fee. Payments made the day after taxes are due are considered late, and a 1% late fee will be charged. For the two months after that, each month will incur an additional penalty of 1%; after 3 months, a 1.5% charge will be incurred until payment is made.

## Milestones

### DEATHS:

David A. Parker  
February 10, 2017

## Maple Festival at MSHS Blends Old and New

Come to the 29th Annual Maple Festival of the Middletown Springs Historical Society on **Sunday, March 19, 1-4 pm** with an exciting Silent Auction offering vacation rentals, donations from local artists and craftspersons, merchants and professional.

The event will feature an outdoor demonstration of early maple sugarmaking in a cast iron kettle over an open fire. Inside the Historical Society auditorium, local sugarmaker Ryan Mahar and historians David Wright and Jon Mathewson will give a presentation on maple sugaring history and current practice, using examples from the Historical Society collection.

Delicious maple desserts created by Society members, Vermont maple products and new 2017 syrup will be available for sale. Old-fashioned sugar-on-snow and maple cotton candy are always favorites.

Acoustic music and kids' activities enliven the free afternoon event. Videos about Vermont maple sugaring will be shown continuously.

A raffle with over 50 prizes including \$100.00 and \$50.00 in cash, maple syrup and maple products, craft items, and gift certificates from local businesses will go on continuously during the festival.

Museum exhibits on Middletown Springs history are on view during the festival. Admission is free and the event is handicap accessible.

## RSWSU NEWS

The RSWSU Board is pleased to announce that Judith Pullinen has been hired as Interim Superintendent of Schools, effective July 1, 2017.

Dr. Joan Paustian will be retiring on June 30. Dr. Paustian had agreed to delay her retirement in order to help the school boards navigate the challenges of the political landscape due to Act 46. The board has hired Mrs. Pullinen as an Interim Superintendent at least through the 2017-2018 school year as the boards work through the Act 46 transition process, which anticipates merging school districts and supervisory unions.

Mrs. Pullinen's educational background, experience, and knowledge of Vermont educational law will enable her to provide direction and support to the Supervisory Union and the school districts of Poultney, Wells, Middletown Springs, and Ira.

The Board anticipates a smooth transition and looks forward to working with Mrs. Pullinen.

# Calendar of Events

## March

Building Committee	Wed 1	7 pm	Library
<b>School Budget/Merger</b>	<b>Wed 1</b>	<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>Town Plan Hearing</b>	<b>Thurs 2</b>	<b>6 pm</b>	<b>Town Office</b>
Historical Society	Thurs 2	7 pm	MSHS
<b>Rabies Clinic</b>	<b>Sat 4</b>	<b>1-2 pm</b>	<b>Firehouse</b>
Planning Commission	Mon 6	4 pm	Town Office
<b>Food Sale</b>	<b>Mon 6</b>	<b>6:15 pm</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>Town Meeting</b>	<b>Mon 6</b>	<b>7:30 pm</b>	<b>School</b>
<b>POLLS OPEN</b>	<b>Tues 7</b>	<b>7 am-7 pm</b>	<b>Firehouse</b>
<b>BC Food Sale</b>	<b>Tues 7</b>	<b>7 am-7 pm</b>	<b>MSHS</b>
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 7	6:30 pm	Firehouse
School Board	Thurs 9	6 pm	School
Selectboard	Thurs 9	7 pm	Town Office
<b>PIE for Breakfast</b>	<b>Sat 11</b>	<b>8-11 am</b>	<b>School</b>
Knitting Circle	Mon 13	7-9 pm	Library
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 14	6:30 pm	Firehouse
<b>PROPERTY TAXES DUE</b>	<b>Wed 15</b>		<b>Town Office</b>
Building Committee	Thurs 16	7 pm	Library
<b>Maple Festival</b>	<b>Sun 19</b>	<b>1-4 pm</b>	<b>MSHS</b>
First Response	Sun 19	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 21	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Selectboard	Thurs 23	7 pm	Town Office
Book Group	Thurs 23	7 pm	Library
<b>Tea &amp; Conversation</b>	<b>Sun 26</b>	<b>2:30 pm</b>	<b>Library</b>
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 28	6:30 pm	Firehouse

## April

Planning Commission	Mon 3	4 pm	Town Office
Knitting Circle	Mon 3	7-9 pm	Library
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 4	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Building Committee	Wed 5	7 pm	Library
Historical Society	Thurs 6	7 pm	MSHS
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 11	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Schoolboard	Thurs 13	6 pm	School
Select Board	Thurs 13	7 pm	Town Office
First Response	Sun 16	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 18	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Building Committee	Thurs 20	7 pm	Library
Fire Dept. Training	Tues 25	6:30 pm	Firehouse
Library Trustees	Wed 26	7 pm	Library
Selectboard	Thurs 27	7 pm	Town Office
Book Group	Thurs 27	7 pm	Library

*Calendar Events – subject to change.*

*When in doubt, please check with the organization for details.*

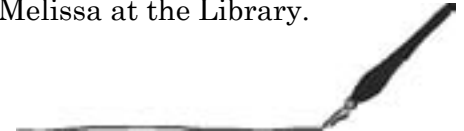
## TOWN NEWSLETTER

Lots of information in a snippet & list format, plus a Calendar of Events. No ads, articles, or minutes.

This supplements and enhances the Town website & Front Porch Forum and will serve the needs of those who don't regularly use computers.

Digital copies are available as a PDF. The PDF is posted to FPF or the Town website or is sent free via email to those who sign up. It is also available in hard copy, delivered by USPS, to those who subscribe for \$6 a year postage. Copies are posted at the Town Office, Grant's Village Store, and the Library.

**Questions:** Call 235-2435, or email [middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com) to reach Kimberly & Melissa at the Library.



### Submit News & Events to:

Middletown Springs Public Library  
PO Box 1206

Middletown Springs, VT 05757

[middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:middletownspringslibrary@gmail.com)

Deadline: 25th of the month  
for inclusion in upcoming issue.

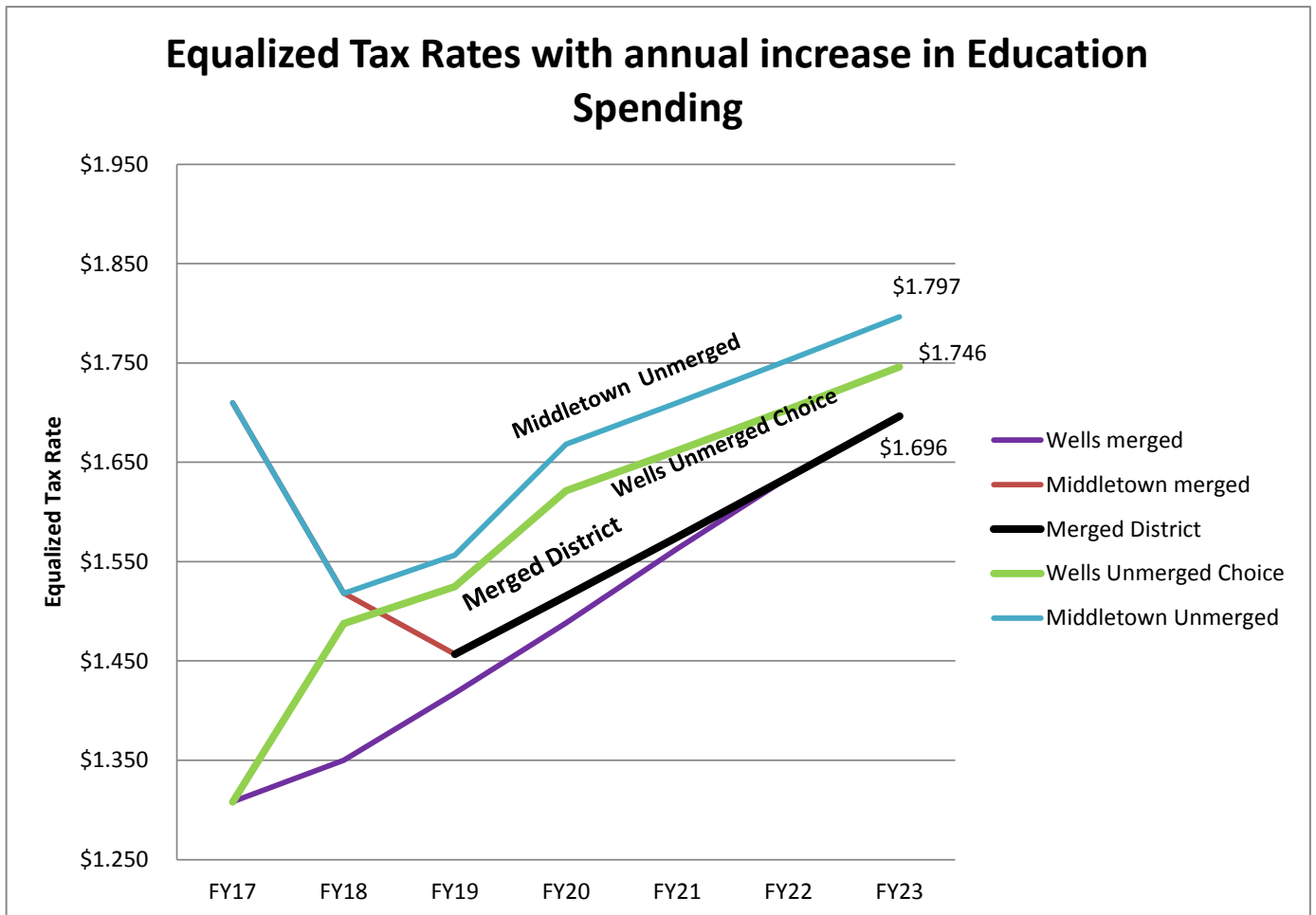


## Middletown - Wells

### Updated Financial Model Based on FY18 preliminary budget & FY19 Merger

#### Merged District Equalized Tax Rate w/ Increases in Education Spending

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Wells merged	\$ 1.308	\$ 1.350	\$1.418	\$ 1.488	\$ 1.563	\$ 1.635	\$ 1.696
Middletown merged	\$ 1.710	\$ 1.518	\$1.457	\$ 1.515	\$ 1.575	\$ 1.635	\$ 1.696
Merged District			\$1.457	\$ 1.515	\$ 1.575	\$ 1.635	\$ 1.696
Wells Unmerged Choice	\$ 1.308	\$ 1.488	\$1.525	\$ 1.621	\$ 1.662	\$ 1.703	\$ 1.746
Middletown Unmerged	\$ 1.710	\$ 1.518	\$1.556	\$ 1.668	\$ 1.710	\$ 1.753	\$ 1.797



**Assumptions:**

1. All options assume 2.5% annual increase in Educational Spending from FY19 - FY23
2. All options assume State yield will remain at \$9701 from FY18 - FY23
3. All options assume Equalized pupils remain at FY17 level from FY18 - FY23
4. FY18 Educational Spending based on FY18 Budget 1st Draft
5. Unmerged options take into account loss of Small Schools Grant of \$85,000 per school in FY20
6. Increase in expense due to Choice is included