



MIDDLETOWN FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

"Birthplace of the OAPFF"

Local 336

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A message from the President

Welcome to the International Association of Firefighters Local 336 web site. Since 1848 the men and women of the Middletown Fire Department have proudly served the city. From the bucket brigade, to the horse drawn pumper, to the modern day fire truck. We have protected the city 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Being a Middletown fire fighter is not just a job to these professional, it's a way of life. As a firefighter/paramedic you see the best and the worst the city has to offer. These brave firefighters put their lives on the line to insure the safety of each and every citizen as well as those visiting or passing through this great city.

As President of The International Association of Firefighters Local 336 it is my responsibility to insure the well being of our membership. With the staffing cuts that the City of Middletown is implementing in 2005 the citizens of Middletown will have an understaffed fire response service.

In 2001 the National Fire Protection Association adopted staffing standards to insure that professional fire departments, such as Middletown, would have guidelines to insure that firefighters would be as safe as possible in a very dangerous profession. City leaders have chosen to ignore these standards putting firefighters increasingly in harms way.

Firefighters in Middletown have long operated well below these standards. As the city has grown we have gotten increasingly farther away from the standard.

Constantly, the city has stated that the staffing reduction is to reduce overtime cost to the city. **In truth, the only reduction is to the daily staffing. Overtime has been increasing do to the city not hiring firefighters when vacancies have been created.**

Paying overtime has been the choice of the city. With a properly staffed fire department there would be little overtime. A properly staffed fire department would insure the safety of the citizens as well as the firefighters.

The city hired Matrix Consulting Group out of Texas choosing to pay \$36,000 to evaluate the fire department. They seemed to leave more questions than answers in their wake. In their report they made simple mathematical errors. Failed to address how reductions in staffing would affect ISO ratings, the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative code and nationally recognized standards. Matrix was to provide a 5-10 year conceptual master plan. They were to identify what the community would belike in 5-10 years and actions the Division of Fire must take in order to be prepared for the future. These areas were not

included in any report. The Matrix Consulting Group is back in Texas with \$36,000 of the city's money and we are left with a mess.

The city wants to experiment with the reduced staffing level for a period of 9 months. What will determine the experiment a success or failure? Is the goal further cuts? This we do not know. All we know is browning out stations did not work in Cincinnati and it will not work in Middletown.

City leaders have operated using deficit spending for several years. In that time they have failed to come up with a plan that would reverse the financial outlook of the city. The easy solution to deficit spending is to cut services and cut staff. It takes vision to come up with a formative solution. If the road levy was an attempt to increase revenue it was a miserable failure. Using a low key approach and investing very limited funds is a way to pass a tax levy, the city has proven it does not work. Ron Olson said, in the quarterly budget meeting this October, he expected the levy to fail. Mr. Olson is gone and we are still here to clean up the mess.

Middletown Firefighters have long provided a superior service to the citizens of Middletown. We are proud people, in a proud profession, belonging to a proud union. We will always stand up for what we believe in. We believe that the 2005 staffing "EXPERIMENT" is unsafe and will only result in tragedy. Don't let the city experiment with you!

Jon Harvey

President, IAFF Local 336

Middletown, Ohio