

No: 2026-2

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN
REQUESTING LEGISLATIVE RELIEF REGARDING PUBLIC LIBRARY
CONSTRUCTION REIMBURSEMENT REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Town of Middletown's public library is currently housed in a surplus United States Navy building originally designed and constructed for use as a daycare facility; and

WHEREAS, the existing library facility has reached the end of its economic life and suffers from significant structural and mechanical deficiencies; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Middletown has acquired an existing building to be renovated for use as a replacement public library, resulting in substantial cost avoidance compared to new construction and corresponding savings to both the Town and the State; and

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island provides reimbursement for public library construction projects pursuant to regulations administered by the State Library Board of Rhode Island and the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS); and

WHEREAS, the public library construction reimbursement regulations were last updated in 2017–2018 and do not reflect current construction costs, which have increased significantly due to inflation, COVID-related disruptions, and recent federal economic policy changes; and

WHEREAS, representatives of the Town of Middletown appeared before the State Library Board of Rhode Island on June 17, 2024, and formally requested that the public library construction reimbursement regulations be reviewed and updated; and

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2024, the State Library Board voted to form a committee to review the Public Library Construction Reimbursement Program Regulations but stated that such review would occur only after completion of its review of the Minimum Standards for Rhode Island Public Libraries; and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2024, the State Library Board confirmed that it would complete the Minimum Standards review before proceeding with the construction reimbursement regulation review; and

WHEREAS, the review of the Minimum Standards was completed in the spring of 2025, and in May 2025 the State Library Board established a committee to begin review of the construction reimbursement regulations; and

WHEREAS, in June 2025, OLIS advised the Town of Middletown that the review, approval, and enactment of revised construction reimbursement regulations is expected to take approximately twelve (12) months, in part due to competing priorities, including efforts to address potential reductions in federal library funding, which represents a significant portion of OLIS' operating budget; and

WHEREAS, OLIS has further advised that the regulations in effect at the time a library construction reimbursement agreement is executed will govern the agreement for its duration, regardless of subsequent regulatory changes; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Middletown has retained a project manager, architect, and construction manager and is completing design work and bid packages necessary to advance the library project; and

WHEREAS, the Town must execute a library construction reimbursement agreement with the State Library Board and/or OLIS before reimbursable construction work may commence; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Middletown is prepared to proceed with construction, and further delay will result in increased project costs and financial inefficiency.

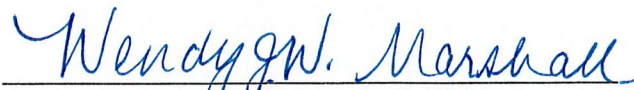
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Middletown Town Council respectfully requests that the Town's State legislative delegation draft, introduce, and support legislation to allow the Town of Middletown to proceed with its public library construction project without delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such legislation should permit the Town to execute a library construction reimbursement agreement with the State Library Board and/or OLIS under the current regulatory framework, while preserving the Town's eligibility for revised reimbursement rates once those rates are adopted and approved, without financial penalty to the Town; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized to transmit this resolution to the Town's State legislative delegation, the State Library Board of Rhode Island, OLIS, and other appropriate State officials.

JANUARY 5, 2026

READ AND PASSED IN COUNCIL



Wendy J. W. Marshall, MMC

Town Clerk