

**Milford Public Library
Board Meeting Minutes
March 2nd, 2026 (Rescheduled from February 23rd, 2026)**

President Ya'nelle Powell called the meeting to order at 10:01AM.

Present: Ya'nelle Powell, Joe Zurzolo, Patti Calhoun, Meredith Wise, and Averi Richards
Staff Present: Lea Rosell

Previous Meeting Minutes: Patti made a motion to approve the minutes. Meredith seconded.

Director's Report: Traffic increased significantly compared to January of last year, with an increase of about 40%. These numbers are important because they are reported for funding purposes, including IMLS funding. Collection development decisions are now being driven by data, which has improved circulation and reduced the number of items being borrowed from other libraries. New adult fiction and nonfiction had their best January in four years. The multilingual learner program at Lulu Ross connected with approximately 185 families, most of them bilingual or immigrant families. Tax preparation resumed with a revised Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday schedule, and all appointments are currently booked. Easterseals classes are visiting the library twice each week, and students are helping with small tasks in the library as part of community participation. The library will need to close for the Sussex County Staff Development Day on Thursday, March 26th, because much of the staff is required to attend training. Limited services such as ESL and tax appointments will still be maintained that day. The library is in a strong position due in part to an unexpected \$227,000 in CRF funding. Funds are expected to be used quickly as construction-related expenses continue. Staff evaluations will begin after Lea's return from vacation. The library experienced recent power outages. During those outages, staff placed systems into test mode to manage alarms and building systems. MPL has been collecting postcards from community members to be delivered publicly at the Sussex County Council meeting on March 17th to assist with the Sussex County library funding push. Representative Steve McCarron has been contacted to request time at the next board meeting on March 16th.

Financial Reports: The annual appeal donations are still coming in. Additional reply cards will be printed next year so visitors can donate even if they did not receive a mailing at home. Utility costs, especially electricity, remain unusually high. The board discussed increases in electric costs and the aging efficiency of the building will soon be corrected with the upcoming project. Patti made a motion to approve the financial report. Averi seconded.

New/Old Business: Construction planning was discussed. The final design materials should be sent out on March 12th and that a construction meeting will be held in person possibly before the regular board meeting to allow time for board review. The possibility of local capital requests were discussed but it was agreed to wait until the final design and updated project costs are received before moving forward with donor outreach. The first draft of the FY27 budget was presented. Government funding projections, operating income, service contracts, utilities, maintenance, programming, supplies, and fundraising were reviewed. It was noted that the

budget will likely need adjustments due to construction impacts and healthcare costs. Health insurance costs for staff are projected to increase by approximately 19%. Additional information on possible nonprofit group coverage options is being gathered and those details will be provided to the board for review. Staff salaries and wages were also discussed, including compensation adjustments for staff roles and credentials. Further board discussion on compensation and benefits will continue after more information is gathered.

Administrative Matters & Public Comments: None.

Adjourn: Patti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:14AM. Averi seconded.

The next regular board meeting will be held at 10:00AM on Monday, March 16th, 2026 in the Bailey Room at MPL.