

**Milford Public Library
Board Meeting Minutes
May 18th, 2026**

President Ya'nelle Powell called the meeting to order at 10:00AM.

Present: Ya'nelle Powell, Joe Zurzolo, Patti Calhoun, and Meredith Wise.

Staff Present: Lea Rosell

Minutes of April regular meeting: Patti motioned; Meredith seconded to accept the minutes.

Director's Report: Circulation was down for the last two months. March circulation was down statewide, but April was lower than the state average for Milford, which will continue to be monitored. Daily traffic and program attendance are up. Partner programs continue to be strong, including partnerships with the Francois Foundation for Autism, Snapology, Polytech, Delaware Public Archives, Milford School District Avenue Preschool, Lake Forest School District, Rehoboth Beach Writers Guild, Nehemiah Gateway, Milford Advocacy for the Homeless, Parson Thorne Mansion, Milford Museum and other community partners. Lea reported that she met with Chris Coleman, the new City Manager, and Lauren Swain, Economic Development Director, on May 5th to review construction updates and the likely impacts on the City. They discussed the potential for increased presence in parks and along the Riverwalk during construction due to reduced library space. The handicap ramp was also discussed and will not impede the sidewalk. Councilperson Maribello also visited the library and received a walkthrough of the project updates. Staff evaluations have been completed and one-on-one meetings are being scheduled. Overall, staff members are doing well. There was an update regarding county library funding conversations. Sussex County is facing similar funding concerns due to instability with realty transfer tax revenue. Kent County library funding discussions have also begun. A formal request was made to Susan Durham to clarify the process for how county funding decisions are made and how that process may be changed or modified. Follow-up communication also took place with Kent County Levy Court Commissioner Joanne Masten.

Financial Reports: The CRF request was modified to \$755,000. The full ARPA drawdown was received on May 8th in the amount of \$782,800. Bond Bill reimbursement amounts were clarified as 50% reimbursements, with \$228,879.25 expected back on the \$457,758.50 request and \$97,328.41 expected back on the \$194,656.82 request. Financially, the library is in a good position. The HVAC maintenance contract was canceled due to upcoming construction, which will save funds. Electric and sewer costs are expected to come in under budget. Adult programming costs were discussed due to turnover and the need to keep programs on the calendar. The library is currently maintaining a strong cash position while construction-related expenses and reimbursements continue. Patti made a motion to approve the financial reports. Joe seconded.

New/Old Business: Final subcontractor walkthroughs were scheduled for the same day from 12:30PM to 2:30PM. Prior walkthroughs included a presentation of bid packages and requirements. Whiting-Turner has begun preparation work and will be in the building full time starting the following Tuesday. The attic clean-out has begun, with historical materials being preserved for a future retrospective tied to the library's centennial and construction project. Full mobilization is expected the week of July 20th. Interior safety partitions and the handicap ramp are expected to begin during that time. Library services are expected to be officially out of the Smith Room as of July 27th. The Bailey Room, Lions Rooms and nearby areas are expected to remain mostly undisturbed during the first phase and will be used for staff space and programming. Bathroom access during construction was discussed. The children's bathroom alone is not expected to be sufficient, so options are being reviewed to keep an additional bathroom accessible. Security camera planning is also underway with Be Safe, including a proposal for a camera in the teen wing. Permitting and procurement have started, and bid package two has gone out. The Sussex County Council letter was discussed. It was confirmed that the letter was sent along with approximately 70 postcards. Postcard collection will continue. The American History Series was discussed. Due to Tom's retirement from the museum, he will become an independent contractor with the library so the program can continue. The library and Milford Museum will work in partnership, with the museum covering speaker-related costs and the library compensating Tom for administrative and promotional work.

Other Business: The updated budget draft was reviewed. Patti and Lea previously reviewed the draft line by line. Due to construction and reduced service space, several budget items are based on estimates and unknowns. The board discussed operating income, supply costs, adult programming, salaries, wages and benefits. The draft budget includes expected wage adjustments and is intended to keep the library operating with a cushion while accounting for construction-related uncertainty. Patti made a motion to approve the budget. Joe seconded.

Construction messaging and public communications were discussed. The board reviewed the general messaging for public updates. Future communications will include press releases, newsletter updates, website updates and social media posts as construction progresses. Whiting-Turner was named in the draft messaging due to upcoming construction signage, and Becker Morgan was discussed as part of the project team.

The library's upcoming centennial was also discussed. Historical photos and materials found during the attic clean-out may be used for a future booklet, display or retrospective project.

Administrative matters & public comments: N/A

Adjourn: Patti motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meredith seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:52AM.

The next regular board meeting will be held at 10:00AM on Monday, June 15th, 2026 in the Bailey room at MPL.