

**Milford Public Library
Boarding Meeting Minutes
July 20th, 2026**

President Ya’Nelle Powell called the meeting to order at 10:03AM.

Present: Ya’Nelle Powell, Joe Zurzolo, Patti Calhoun, Meredith Wise and Averri Richards

Staff Present: Lea Rosell

Minutes of June Regular Meeting: Patti made a motion to approve the minutes of the June regular meeting. Meredith seconded.

Director’s Report: Total circulation continues to be down statewide. It was reported that the decline appears to be connected in part to the loss of Baker & Taylor and the resulting absence of prerelease “shadow records” in the statewide catalog. Previously, patrons could place holds on upcoming titles months before release. Without those records, patrons are not seeing or reserving new titles as early. Sussex County has offered to add the top ten fiction and nonfiction releases each week as an interim measure. The State is also evaluating a new Integrated Library System. Despite lower circulation, library programming and usage remain strong. FY26 overall program attendance increased approximately 26% compared with FY25. Adult attendance increased approximately 45%, children’s attendance increased approximately 11%, and teen attendance increased approximately 25%. Daily traffic also increased significantly. The favorite pop culture dinosaur vote ended in a tie between Rex from *Toy Story* and Dino from *The Flintstones*. The Rotary Club awarded Milford Public Library a \$500 Good Neighbor Grant. The Board received an update regarding efforts to increase library tax funding in both Kent and Sussex Counties. Milford Public Library has been working with the Kent County Library Advisory Committee and Kent County Levy Court Commissioner Joanne Masten regarding the procedure for requesting an increase to the library tax rate. There is currently no clearly published procedure, and the County is working to clarify the process. Sussex County provided an update regarding its library funding formula. The County plans to hire BerryDunn to conduct an independent countywide study of the library system. The study will examine both independent and county-operated libraries, including operations, funding, efficiency and the existing allocation methodology. Milford Public Library is also working with its own consultant through a previously awarded Delaware Community Foundation grant. Advocacy efforts and postcard collection regarding library funding will continue. The Seaford Library Board responded to previous correspondence and indicated that it intends to participate in future advocacy events.

Financial Reports: The FY26 financial year concluded with ordinary income approximately \$39,531 below ordinary expenses. The Board discussed that a larger withdrawal from investments had originally been budgeted; however, the Library’s current cash position did not require that transfer. FY26 total income was approximately \$757,637 compared with approximately \$797,168 in ordinary expenses. Library materials finished below budget overall, while several programming and maintenance categories exceeded budget. The FY27 budget was also discussed. A transfer from investments is budgeted if necessary, but the transfer may

not be required depending upon the Library's cash position. Patti made a motion to approve the financial reports. Averil seconded.

Executive Session: Joe made a motion to enter the executive session at 10:17AM. Averil seconded. Following the executive session, the regular meeting resumed.

New/Old Business: The Board reviewed potential naming opportunities as a fundraising strategy for the construction project. Gary Downs expressed interest in placing the Downs family name on an appropriate area of the Library. A naming-opportunities brochure will be developed and may also be promoted through social media, newsletters and other outreach. Before offering the circulation desk as a naming opportunity, the Library will confirm whether it was previously designated in honor of Kay Hudson. Examples from other libraries, including Lewes, will be reviewed when developing the final naming program. Permanent naming of trees or landscaping will be avoided because of the long-term responsibility to replace memorial plantings. Board members discussed the importance of actively supporting fundraising efforts for the construction project. Potential fundraising events, donor outreach and assistance sharing naming opportunities will be explored.

Administrative Matters & Public Comments: Meredith shared positive community feedback from a parent whose child recently received an award from the Library. The parent reported how excited the child was to be recognized, and the Board expressed appreciation for the feedback.

Adjourn: Patti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:03AM. Joe seconded.

The next regular board meeting will be held at **10:00 AM on Monday, August 17, 2026, in the Library's Bailey Room.**