

# NEW CASTLE COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

November 12, at 5:30 p.m.  
In-Person Meeting

## MINUTES

### **Present:**

Kay Bowes  
Ann Ciabattoni  
Linda Goodman  
Subira Ibrahim  
Connie Malin  
Rose Passarella  
Cheryl Rice-Moore  
Sophia Sotilleo  
Donell Sousa

### **Excused:**

Janet Dean  
Geri Krolin-Taylor  
Abdullah Muhammad  
Margaret Ann Ryan

### **Guest:**

Carrie Casey – General Manager, NCC  
Dr. Annie Norman – State Librarian

### **Community Services:**

Diana Brown, Community Services Manager  
Catherine Wimberley, Programs and Services Coordinator

### **Legal Representation:**

Council to the Board - Mary Jacobson

### **I. Call to Order – Introductions**

- Acting Chair Kay Bowes called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

### **II. Roll Call**

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

- Motion made by Sophia to accept September 10, 2025, seconded Rose. Motion passed.

### **IV. Chairman's Remarks**

- None

### **V. Board Member Reports**

- Kay Bowes – Nothing to Report
- Ann Ciabattoni – Nothing to report
- Janet Dean – Excused
- Linda Goodman –
  - The Appoquinimink Friends group held their annual meeting in October and will be holding board elections the week of November 17.
- Subira Ibrahim –
  - NOMA library – still trying to open in December.
- Geri Krolin-Taylor – Excused.

- Connie Malin –
  - Bear Library held its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Fall Festival on October 18; Over 2,000 people attended.
  - The Bear Friends are planning to participate in Giving Tuesday on December 2.
  - Next Friends meeting is November 19; the agenda will focus on vacancies.
- Rose Passarella –
  - The Brandywine Hundred Library Friends Group are still receiving funds for DoMore24. The group approved the purchase of teen art, based on IMAZINE submissions, and are working with the library to buy computers for an early literacy center.
  - The December meeting will be a holiday party.
- Cheryl Rice-Moore – Nothing to report
- Margaret Ann Ryan – Excused
- Sophia Sotilleo – Nothing new to report
- Donell Sousa –
  - The Elsmere Friends Group lost its non-profit status and is working to get it back up and running. They are trying to reach their representative for assistance and hope to get any fines waived.

## VI. Guest Speakers

- Dr. Annie Norman – State Librarian, Delaware Division of Libraries
  - Delaware Office of Management and Budget (OMB):
    - The State Standards Fund for libraries has remained largely flat, with only small increases that have not kept pace with the growth of libraries facilitated by Bond Bill allocations.
    - Candace Vessella (Council on Libraries) provided remarks during the hearing. The State allocated \$400,000 for technology, but there was no increase to Library Standards funding.
  - Federal Funding - Federal funding remains uncertain, though some funding may be maintained which would allow DDL to continue core services.
  - Delaware Literacy Alliance
    - The Governor declared a literacy emergency and has engaged Secretary of Education Marten to develop a response. The initiative emphasizes coordination between school and public libraries to improve literacy outcomes.
    - Secretary Marten and Dr. Annie Norman are co-chairing the Delaware Literacy Alliance, which is planning a meeting for literacy-focused organizations.
  - 2026 is Delaware 250 and the 125 anniversary of Delaware libraries.
  - The next Delaware Library Town Meeting will be December 4 at the Duck Creek Library.
- Carrie Casey – General Manager, Community Services NCC
  - Thanked the Board for their work and support of libraries.
  - Thanked Kay and Cheryl Rice-Moore for their service on the Board.
  - Reviewed what other services the Community Services department provides
- Mary Jacobson – Council to the Board:
  - Reviewed Library Advisory Board duties. Clarified that the Library Advisory Board is not an independent body; it functions as part of the County’s executive branch and serves in an advisory role to the County Library Manager. As outlined in state law (9 Del. C. §§ 801–802) and New Castle County Code 2.05.403, the Board’s authority is limited to advising on local library needs, programs, policies, budgets, long-range planning, and library construction or expansion. The Board may also raise library matters to the Administrator of State Library Services through its representatives on the Council on Libraries.

- Emphasized that the Board cannot act independently of the executive branch and does not have authority to communicate with the federal government.

**VII. Manager of Libraries Report**

- Attached.

**VIII. Library Managers' Reports**

- Catherine Wimberley, New Castle County Reads

**IX. Unfinished Business**

- Sophia Sotilleo motioned to hold review and discussion of the Friends Forum to the next Library Advisory Board Meeting. Donell Sousa seconded. Motion passed.

**X. New Business**

- Diana Brown presented a tribute from the County Executive to retiring members Kay Bowes and Cheryl Rice-Moore. The Board thanked the members for their years of service and leadership.
- Rose Passarella motioned for the Library Advisory Board to forgo the December meeting and instead reconvene on January 14, 2026. The motion was seconded by Sophia Sotilleo. Motion passed.

**XI. Public Comments**

- None

**XII. Announcements**

- Connie Malin reviewed upcoming calendar of library events.

**XIII. Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn made by Sophia Sotilleo, seconded by Linda Goodman.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.

Next Meeting: January 14, 2026, at 5:30 PM at Gilliam

# New Castle County Libraries

## November 12, 2025

### Manager's Report

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#### Highlights

#### **Libraries:**

- Newark Free Library, Construction Update – completed elevator pit concrete, footings, and piers; continued utility work for the new entrance; prepared the Library Avenue entrance; removed old water service and north tree; set water meter pit; began masonry foundations; and conducted anchor bolt survey.

#### Department Activities

- Literacy Programs and Initiatives:
  - On Monday, October 27th, Appoquinimink Library held its 4th annual Spooky Story Stroll. Children ages 3 to 8 participated in a guided tour around library grounds featuring games, stories, and trick-or-treating. The event was well-received and attended by 70 people.
  - On October 21, 2025, the Elsmere Library hosted a *Time Trekkers Troupe* homeschool program which celebrated the Statue of Liberty's upcoming anniversary. Participants enjoyed a reading of *The Story of the Statue of Liberty* by Betsy Maestro and created their own miniature statues as a hands-on activity.
  - On October 23, Route 9 Library staff offered a preschool story time with the childcare center at Ezion Fair Church. Staff also provided the kids with their first library cards.
- Community Engagement/Outreach:
  - On October 25, Brandywine Hundred Library participated in the Brandywine Hundred Fire Company's Open House and Halloween Parade, engaging 163 community members and distributing books and information about library services.
  - Brandywine Hundred Library conducted outreach at the Hope Center on October 27, assisting 105 individuals with library card updates, account remediation, and demonstrations of digital resources such as Hoopla.
  - On October 22, representatives from Hockessin, Kirkwood, and New Castle Libraries participated in the Red Clay Consolidated School District's College and Career Fair at A.I. duPont High School. Staff shared information on library cards, Learning Express, Transparent Language, and teen volunteer opportunities, and displayed test prep and career resources. Over 80 attendees engaged with staff.
  - As of October 29, 29 Hockessin Library patrons joined the New Zealand Pen Pal Program, with 15 successfully matched and eager to exchange letters.
  - Kirkwood Library staff and Friends participated in the Western YMCA's Trunk or Treat Fall Festival on October 25, distributing books, word games and library information to 310 people.
  - The DE Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health will add Kirkwood Library to their list of sites for regular public training in how to use Narcan. The first session at Kirkwood will be November 13 at 12pm.
  - New Castle Public Library participated as an outreach vendor at the Saturday, November 1 Pride Market, hosted by the Delaware Sexuality & Gender Collective. During the event, NCPL talked with over 200 attendees, registered 15 new library cards, and promoted eMedia resources, including our digital library collection, MuseumPass, and Transparent Language.
  - Newark Free Library staff and the Friends of the Newark Free Library participated in the City of Newark Parks and Recreation Halloween event at the George Wilson Center on October 23. The Friends distributed 100 books, while library staff led a spooky story time and craft for more than 100

attendees. Families expressed enthusiasm and appreciation for seeing familiar library faces and shared how much they miss the library's welcoming space and staff.

- Route 9 Library youth staff performed an outreach at William Hicks Community Center on Wed, Oct 22 which reached approximately 25 kids and afterschool staff. The kids were excited to take books and read during the program. This was part of the *Lights on Afterschool Celebration* working with partners from United Way and Winners Inc.
- On October 25, Route 9 Library partnered with Energize Delaware to host a community resource event in our Black Box Theater. Approximately 15 vendors were in attendance, and many of them gave a brief presentation about the services they offer. The cafe was open for Saturday service, and a dessert truck was in our parking lot. PAWS dogs were in attendance, as well as various library activities
- The Woodlawn Library is continuing its partnership with the West End Neighborhood House to provide turkeys and all of the trimmings for Thanksgiving. This is the 5th year that the library has hosted the giveaway. The giveaway will take place Saturday, November 22, 2025 from 8 am until 11 am or while supplies last. Participants need to register with West End Neighborhood House to receive a turkey. It is estimated that over 500 turkeys will be given away.
- Civic Engagement:
  - In partnership with the Division of Public Health, Appoquinmink Library will be hosting the Mobile Health Care Clinic on November 18th from 10am- 2pm. The clinic serves a vital need in the Middletown community as flu and Covid cases are currently on the rise in the Middletown region according to the statistics provided by Christiana Care.
  - The Brandywine Hundred Library completed its eighth year of the Great Decisions Foreign Policy series, a nonpartisan program promoting informed discussion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues. A total of 162 patrons participated across the eight-week series, averaging 20 attendees per session. Interest has been expressed in expanding it into a year-round program.
  - DPH Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program visited Kirkwood Library's *Book Babies* story time at Kirkwood Library on October 23 to educate parents about the dangers of lead poisoning. The program went so well that she asked to return in 2026.
- Enrichment Activities:
  - The Brandywine Hundred Library is partnering with the Halina Wind Preston Education Committee to offer a program series, *Holocaust Survivors: Eyewitness Testimony*, which features interviews with Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Delaware after World War II.
  - The Corbit Calloway Memorial Library was awarded another grant for the Creative Aging Series. The library will host a 9-week class beginning in December. This session's theme will be Winter Wonderland Pottery. This class will have 98% new students from our previous waiting lists.
  - On November 1, the Hockessin Library hosted its first Sahaja Yoga guided meditation class, with 26 participants learning techniques to reduce stress and improve emotional balance.
  - On October 23, nine patrons, including a County Library Advisory Board member, attended a Leaf Imprinting art class led by Kelly Martin of the NCC Art Studio at Hockessin Library. Adult craft programs continue to reach registration capacity within days.
  - Kirkwood Library recently donated a stack of old newspapers to the nearby Kirkwood Detox Center for an art project. The project organizer called at the last minute, and staff gathered the papers for the next day. The organizer was very appreciative saying the library had saved the project.
  - The Route 9 Library partners with the nonprofit One Step at a Time to provide monthly STEM activities for local children, many of whom reside in nearby motels and have limited access to library resources. Each session introduces participants to the library's STEM equipment and hands-on learning opportunities. The children have shown strong engagement and enthusiasm, and each visit concludes with a meal provided by the Readers Café.
  - On October 22, Wilmington Library partnered with Pacem in Terris for an inspiring Peace Week event featuring Marc Brackett, author of *Dealing with Feeling* and founding director of the Yale Center for

Emotional Intelligence, as he shared proven strategies to boost well-being through emotional intelligence.

- Community Building & Social Connection (Recreational)
  - Brandywine Hundred Library’s Mahjong program consistently maintains an attendance of 12-14 players. Mahjong is known for boosting memory, sharpening concentration skills, mental agility, and logical thinking.
  - Claymont Library hosted its Annual Spookebration event on Thursday, October 30, drawing a record 592 attendees. The Friends of the Claymont Library greeted guests, while local organizations—including CCOBH, Claymont Boys and Girls Club, Delaware Pride, and others—distributed treats and community information. Library staff led indoor activities such as photo booths, corn hole, and crafts, and the Friends sponsored LEGO raffle prizes for attendees. Widely recognized as Claymont’s most popular fall event, Spookebration reflects the library’s role as a community hub by bringing families together.
  - The Corbit-Calloway Memorial Library hosted Halloween in the Park on Saturday, October 25 from 2-4pm. Library staff engaged 640 people.
  - On October 29, Route 9 Library partnered with the NCCPD to host their annual Trunk or Treat celebration in the library parking lot. Nearly 1000 kids and adults were treated to candy, pumpkin carving, games and many other activities throughout the evening. Many of the guests came in the library to participate in some of the activities and many left with more candy and free books courtesy of the Route 9 Library.
- Friends of the Library Engagement:
  - The Friends of the Hockessin Library created a lobby display for National Friends of Libraries Week, offering a raffle for new and renewing members.
  - During *Halloween in Hockessin* on October 26, the Friends hosted a story walk and table in the Reading Garden, where a teen volunteer in a Baby Blue Hen mascot costume greeted roughly 250 trick-or-treaters.
- Other:
  - County library staff continue efforts to identify a replacement for materials supplier, Baker & Taylor. The Collaborative Collection Development Committee (CCDC) met with Follett and Penworthy to evaluate their capacity to meet systemwide collection needs. Neither vendor could fulfill current requirements: both lacked standing order options, offered higher pricing than B&T or Amazon, and faced inventory and fulfillment issues. CCDC concluded that neither vendor could meet the system’s immediate need for current, high-demand titles, though both may serve future purposes. Technical Services is currently working with Brodart to review processing specifications and pricing, with an anticipated launch in early 2025. Contract libraries (Corbit, Delaware City, and New Castle) will be included under NCC library accounts to ensure full access.
  - On October 20, 2025, the Elsmere Library celebrated Karen Higgins’ retirement after more than 15 years of service at Hockessin, Bear, and Elsmere Libraries. Known as the “Tech Maven,” Karen developed impactful programs for seniors and children that strengthened community engagement. Over 70 patrons and staff attended a special Senior Coffee Hour in her honor.
  - Hockessin Library enhanced its Teen Area with rotating displays, take-and-make kits, and interactive prompts, earning positive feedback from young patrons.

Mark your Calendars

November 18

"Microscopic Marvels", 4-6pm, Bear Library

(All Ages Drop-In.)

(Interactive session on microscopes, led by UD and Delaware Biotechnology Institute Graduate Students)

November 21 and 22

FOHL Holiday Book Sale

Hockessin Library Community Room

10am-5pm (November 21)

10am-4pm (November 22)

December 1

"Keynote Jazz Singers Holiday Concert", 7-8pm, Bear Library

(All Ages Registration required.)

December 9

"First State Bell Ringers Holiday Concert", 7-8pm, Bear Library

(All Ages Registration required)

December 13

FOHL Book Drop

FOHL Book Shed across from Hockessin Fire Department

9am-12 noon