

NEW CASTLE COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

September 10, at 5:30 p.m.
Hybrid

MINUTES

Present:

Abdullah Muhammad
Ann Ciabattoni
Donell Sousa
Linda Goodman
Geri Krolin-Taylor
Connie Malin
Kay Bowes
Cheryl Rice-Moore

Zoom

Subira Ibrahim
Rose Passarella
Sophia Sotilleo
Margaret Ann Ryan

Excused:

Janet Dean

Guest:

Julie Brewer
Alta Porterfield

Community Services:

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

Legal Representation:

Council to the Board - Mary Jacobson – Excused

I. Call to Order – Introductions

- Chairperson Abdullah Muhammad called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

II. Roll Call**III. Approval of Minutes**

- Motion made by Geri Krolin-Taylor to accept June 11, 2025, meeting minutes. Seconded by Linda Goodman. Motion passed.

IV. Chairman's Remarks

- Welcomed the LAB after summer hiatus.
- Asked members to consider library news/issues as topics for future meetings or subcommittee review

V. Board Member Reports

- Kay Bowes –
 - Announced her retirement from the Library Advisory Board, November will be her last meeting.
 - The Friends of Delaware Libraries will be having their annual meeting on Monday, November 10 at Harrington Library at 1:30 pm.
- Ann Ciabattoni –
 - Introduced herself as the new Library Advisory Board Member.
- Janet Dean – Excused

- Linda Goodman –
 - The Friends of Appoquinimink Library’s book sale more than doubled their sales, earning between somewhere between \$5,500 and \$6,000. The friends also hosted a membership drive and recruited 35 new members.
 - The Friends of Appoquinimink Library are sponsoring two fundraising programs in the fall: Miniature Golf and a Coin and Jewelry Appraisal.
- Subira Ibrahim –
 - The opening date for NOMA is no longer set for September 20. Rep Chukwuocha indicated opening could occur in October but there is a great deal of uncertainty.
 - The State is in process of purchasing the Rite Aid is on Market Steet.
- Geri Krolin-Taylor –
 - The Friends of Hockessin Library have purchased new furniture for the Children’s area.
 - Complimented the craft programs offered by libraries commenting that they build a sense of community.
 - The Friends held their book sale on the weekend of Sept 7 and made \$5,700.
- Connie Malin –
 - Bear Library is hosting its 4th annual Fall Festival on October 18, hoping for 2,000+ attendees. Funding next year may be iffy because of economic uncertainty. The friends are hosting a membership drive the week before the festival and will have a table at the event itself.
 - Reviewed donations received by the library and friends.
- Rose Passarella –
 - The Friends of the Brandywine Hundred Library continue to purchase items for the Teen space.
 - Early Literacy was the focus of the 2024 Do More campaign; remaining funds will be used to purchase AWE computers.
 - The Friends sponsored the Brandywine Hundred Library Block Party, estimate an attendance of 1,400 – 1,500. Sen. Cruce received a private tour of the library and was enthusiastic.
 - The friends are sponsoring a thank you luncheon for teen volunteers and another for library staff.
- Cheryl Rice-Moore –
 - Announced her retirement from the Library Advisory Board, November will be her last meeting.
- Margaret Ann Ryan – Nothing new to report
- Sophia Sotilleo – Nothing new to report
- Donell Sousa –
 - Sen. Mantzavinos attended the Elsmere Library Coffee hour and he facilitated the installation of new doors.
 - Elsmere hosted annual Quilt-a-thon, which raised \$109.
- Ann introduced herself and background.

VI. Guest Speakers

- Alta Porterfield - Statewide Social Innovator, Delaware Libraries
 - PowerPoint attached. Reviewed:
 - DDL Social Innovation Team
 - AmeriCorps VISTAs
 - Teleservice Kiosks

- Public Health partnerships

VII. Manager of Libraries Report

- Attached.
- Reviewed challenges in bringing NOMA online.

VIII. Library Managers' Reports

- None

IX. Unfinished Business

- Kay Bowes reviewed the timeline and agenda for the October Friends Forum.
- Linda Goodman volunteered to write Letter to President Trump regarding the dismissal of Dr. Carla Hayden, the 14th librarian of Congress. She requested information regarding Dr. Hayden's biography.
- LAB Name tags distributed

X. New Business

- None

XI. Public Comments

- None

XII. Announcements

- Kirkwood Library is hosting a jigsaw puzzle competition on October 19, 2-4 pm.

XIII. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made by Kay Bowes, seconded by Cheryl Rice-Moore.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm.

Next Meeting: October 8, 2025, at 5:00 PM at Gilliam Multipurpose Room, in-person

New Castle County Libraries

September 10, 2025

Manager's Report

Highlights

Libraries

- Glasgow Library Project – The County is in the process of identifying potential sites for a building. Council on Libraries has approved a \$2 million funding request for FY 27, the County will match these funds. The request will go to the State Bond Bill Committee for their consideration and approval. The combined \$4 million should be enough to cover architectural, civil engineering and construction management costs and take the project through site selection, preliminary design, and public engagement phases.
- Newark Library Project – Demolition began in July. A time capsule from 1974 has been preserved for an October 6 celebration with the Newark Partnership. In response to curious onlookers wandering onsite, Wohlsen posted large signs warning the public not to enter and the City of Newark posted the same on FB. Newark staff continue to offer programs at other libraries and outreach events in Newark itself.
- Woodlawn Library – The Friends of Woodlawn Library pledged \$50,000 toward children's area upgrades. Council on Libraries approved a bon bill request to match.
- Appoquinimink Library – An enhanced ventilation project is scheduled to start in September to allow additional equipment to be used.
- The Duck Creek Regional Library Board has communicated their intent to submit a request for ongoing funding in FY27, presumably for \$125,000, the same amount they received in FY25 and FY26.
- Dr. Cyndee Landrum has been named Interim Director of the Wilmington Libraries. She comes to the position having recently served as Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services where she worked with State Librarian Annie Norman while she was an IMLS Board member.
- New Castle County Libraries have been awarded a 2025–2026 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA Big Read grant). Libraries will receive \$20,000 to offer programming related to the grant's theme, Our Nature: How Our Physical Environment Can Lead Us to Seek Hope, Courage, and Connection. Programming will be centered around the selected novel, The Seed Keeper, and include an author visit, cultural events, writing workshops, gardening, and nature walks.
- HB 119 was passed by the House and Senate before the end of the legislative session. It is still awaiting Governor Meyer's signature.

County Council Engagement/Elected Official Engagement

- New Castle County Council President Williams-Johns and Council Members Sheldon and Kilpatrick hosted a successful Food Bank of Delaware food drive drop off at the Kirkwood Library on June 3. The library was the first stop on her 5-stop community tour from June 3 – June 9.
- Staff provided a response to Council President Williams-Johns inquiry about generators in libraries.
- Elsmere Library welcomed State Senator Spiros Mantzavinos on Monday, July 7, for a library tour and Senior Coffee Hour. He met with seniors, Community Connections, and the Friends of Elsmere Library Treasurer. The senator noted the library's strong community engagement.

Department Activities

- Literacy Programs and Initiatives:
 - Bear Library has created dedicated story times for local daycare providers.
 - Library partner and regional non-profit organization PAWS for People (pet-assisted visitation volunteer services) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. As Kirkwood Library was the organization's first library partner in 2006 for their now hugely popular Read to the (therapy) Dogs program, PAWS recently interviewed Youth Services Elisabeth Simmons Kirkwood Library's Youth Services Librarian for their July newsletter.
 - Brandywine Hundred partnered with Jefferson Health NE to provide 200 donated books for pediatric wellness visits.
 - Hockessin Library provided gently used books to a volunteer at the Elsmere VA Hospital for distribution to hospitalized veterans.
 - Hockessin Library's weekly story times have grown significantly since February 2025, with average attendance rising from 32 in February to 49 in June. Families stay for after the programs to enjoy self-directed activities and play areas.
 - Woodlawn Library issued a library card on June 26 to 100-year-old new patron Cecillia Mis, who recently moved to the area. Ms. Mis, an avid reader, now enjoys weekly visits to Woodlawn Library.
 - Route 9 Library has partnered with the ABA Centers of Delaware to offer monthly sensory-friendly story times and play sessions for young children and their families. July's program in the Bookatarium drew strong attendance and engagement.
 - Digital/Media –
 - Claymont Library welcomed a new CSW III Computer Assistant on August 4. This is the first time Claymont Library has offered evening and weekend one-on-one computer instruction, expanding access for patrons during those times.
 - Health and Wellness –
 - Hockessin Library hosts a monthly Senior Medicare Patrol table to assist patrons with Medicare questions. In August, staff helped a patron who had been a victim of a Medicare scam understand next steps and potential impacts, better equipping her to make decisions about her future
- Community Engagement/Outreach:
 - The Claymont Library hosted the Brandywine School District Nutrition Program between June 23 and July 31. Due to the BrandyDine food truck being out of service, meals were delivered by a district van Monday–Thursday. Breakfast was free for children; lunch was free for ages 0–18 and \$5 for adults. The library foot traffic increased, sometimes by as much as 50%.
 - Libraries participated in numerous outreach events over the summer:
 - Appoquinimink Library - hosted a visit from a group of special needs high school students from Appoquinimink School District's summer school program.
 - Appoquinimink Library – hosted a Meet and Greet for the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) – 26 participants
 - Brandywine Library's Alzheimer's Support Group meets twice a month and now has a regular attendance of 15 people
 - Claymont Library - New Castle County Police Play Zone.
 - Corbit-Calloway Library - Townsend Festival, 210 participants.
 - Corbit-Calloway Library - Odessa Fire House Open House, with 105 participants.
 - Delaware City - National Night Out
 - Route 9 Library - Delaware River & Bay Authority – 250 participants.
 - Route 9 Library hosted the Delaware Department of Labor Veterans Job and Resource Fair on August 6, connecting approximately 115 job seekers with 20 employers and 11 resource tables.
 - Woodlawn Library - Nature & Science Museum Family Fun Day, 175 participants.
 - Woodlawn Library – Open Streets – 300 participants
 - Woodlawn Library - Christiana Hospital's Big Latch On and Family Fair – 100 participants
- Civic Engagement:

- Delaware 250 - Staff participated in statewide planning sessions for 2026 celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Delaware Division of Libraries is acting as the liaison for libraries.
- Kirkwood Library is now a drop-off site for Delaware's Head Huggers, a chemo cap charity. The library's Castaways knit and crochet group contributed six hand-knit hats to the effort.
- Libraries continued to host blood drives throughout the summer
- Enrichment Activities:
 - Appoquinimink Library offered a summer maker series for all age groups, featuring hands-on projects like oil diffusers, painted tote bags, and book-themed magnets. The programs provided opportunities to build skills and connect with others.
 - Claymont Library summer programs were highly attended, with many at capacity. Jitterbugs Music and Movement drew 40–60 participants per session, and other popular offerings included story times, movies, and arts and crafts. Most programs requiring registration had wait lists.
 - Several libraries received additional Creative Aging grants, a popular arts program for seniors 55+. For example, Woodlawn Library hosted the culminating event for its second 2025 Creative Aging program, Life Lines – A Writing Journey, on July 15. Led by JoAnn Balingit, 12 participants aged 55+ spent eight weeks writing and sharing personal stories.
 - Route 9 Library relaunched its VEX IQ program in May with a new two-part structure: a summer session focused on exploration and a fall–spring session for competition preparation. The summer session reached full capacity with 16 students, who successfully built and raced Mia Kits. Nearly all participants plan to return in the fall, indicating strong momentum for the advanced session and March competition
- Community Building & Social Connection (Recreational)
 - Hockessin Library received a moving testimonial from a patron who credited the library and its staff with helping her overcome childhood trauma, build healthy relationships, and find community support through library resources and programs
 - Delaware City Library received a \$1,000 donation from PBF/Delaware City Refinery to support local students with backpacks and free haircut vouchers as they return to school.
 - Hockessin Library's *Open Table Sunday program* launched on June 29. Patrons could come and play a selection of games. Initial interest was strong but waned over the summer so a new program is in development.
 - Hockessin Library hosted a Teacher Swap on August 7, drawing 20 educators to exchange classroom décor, connect with peers, and learn about library resources, including educator cards. Remaining materials were made available in the lobby for the public.
 - Kirkwood Library continues its involvement in the Delaware–New Zealand pen pal program and will participate in an upcoming Vietnam–Delaware digital exchange. Staff with cultural ties to both countries are providing valuable insight to support these international connections.
- Other:
 - Bear Library staff secured a \$700 sponsorship from Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union for the petting zoo. The library also plans to apply for an Arts Access Grant in the future. While 2025 is fully funded, 2026 remains unfunded and fundraising challenges are anticipated. The Fall Fest is a highlight for the community, staff received a \$25 donation from Michigan resident Sally Moore, who attended the 2024 Fall Festival and was inspired to support the program she and her grandchildren enjoyed
 - Claymont Library is adapting its Adult Services department to meet changing patron needs. Collections are being weeded and relocated; the former Periodical Room has been converted into a quieter reading area with additional tables and seating.
 - Elsmere Library experienced a social media prank on August 21, 2025, when two young men disrupted a sewing program by pretending to ask questions before one individual ripped off his pants. Staff responded calmly and directed them to leave the building. The individuals were identified as the same persons involved in a 2022 disturbance

- Hockessin Library launched a three-part series with “Good Death Doula” Linda Gould. The first session, Facing Death: Death and Denial, had 11 attendees, all registered for the following workshops: Death and Art and Death and Sustainability.
- Kirkwood Library recorded 13,004 user visits in June 2025—a monthly record—driven by Newark Library’s closure and expanded youth and teen programs. FY25 visits total 110,328, up from 91,652 in FY24.
- Library staff attended the 2025 ALA Conference in Philadelphia, participating in workshops.
- Friends of the Library Engagement:
 - The Friends of the Appoquinimink Library reported strong results from their annual book sale during the Middletown Peach Festival, raising about \$5,500 in 2025—over \$2,000 more than 2024. Friday, August 15, was the most successful day, generating \$3,200 in sales and drawing 200 more visits than an average Friday
 - The Friends of the Hockessin Library are working with staff to update the Children’s Room. New couches have been selected to replace worn furniture, and a new area rug is under consideration to complete the refresh.
 - Kirkwood Library Friends group will hold their second Jigsaw Puzzle Competition Fundraiser on October 19, with two-person teams competing to complete 500-piece puzzles; prizes will be sponsored by local businesses

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

September 5-6	Hockessin Library (Geri) FOHL Fall 2025 Book Sale (All ages) 10am-5pm (September 5) 10am-4pm (September 6)
September 6	Brandywine Hundred Library (Rose) "Brandywine Block Party" (to celebrate Library Card Sign-Up Month) - 11am-3pm Enjoy games, a Bounce House, music, crafts, food trucks, and more!
September 20	Bear Library Jigsaw Puzzle Competition - 11am-2pm (\$20 registration fee per person)
October 8	LAB Countywide Friends Forum - 4:30-7pm
October 18	Bear Library Bear Library Annual Fall Festival - 12-3pm