

NEW CASTLE COUNTY LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

January 14, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
In-Person Meeting

MINUTES

Present:

Abdullah Muhammad
Ann Ciabattoni
Janet Dean
Linda Goodman
Subira Ibrahim
Geri Krolin-Taylor
Connie Malin
Rose Passarella
Margaret Ann Ryan
Donell Sousa

Excused:

Sophia Sotilleo

Guest:

Julie Brewer

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

- Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

II. Roll Call

III. Approval of Minutes

- Motion made by Rose Passarella to accept November 12, 2025, seconded by Connie Malin. Three abstained. Motion passed.

IV. Chairman's Remarks

- Geri Krolin-Taylor will be the new Co-Chair of the Library Advisory Board, replacing Kay Bowes.
- Asked for the creation of a committee to draft the Annual Report.
- Seeking additional members for the Friends Forum Committee to replace Cheryl and Kay.

V. Board Member Reports

- Ann Ciabattoni – Nothing to report.
- Janet Dean –
 - Retired last June, looking to join either the Friends of Kirkwood or Hockessin Library

- Linda Goodman –
 - The Friends of Appoquinmink Library are looking for new Board members. The group is funding the library's story times in 2026. On January 22 the Appoquinimink Library staff will be having a training day that the Friends will host a luncheon for.
- Subira Ibrahim –
 - Will Johnson has been appointed the new Executive Director of Wilmington. He will start on January 20, 2026. May bring clarity to the NOMA Library status. No public opening date has been scheduled for the NOMA Library Campus.
- Geri Krolin-Taylor –
 - Hockessin Library is replacing the flooring and will be closed January 17 – Feb 2.
 - Friends celebrated their 50th Anniversary last year and held brunch.
 - Added six new museum passes, see Diana's report.
 - Currently seeking new board members
- Connie Malin –
 - Bear Library hosted the bell ringers on December 9, the event was over capacity.
 - Friends of the Library are still running without a membership chair. Next meeting is January 28.
 - Attended the Library Town Meeting on December 2 at the new Duck Creek Library.
- Rose Passarella –
 - The Brandywine Hundred Library would like to purchase an additional AWE computer, which costs \$3,800. The Friends will use remaining Do More Funds and Friends funds to purchase.
 - 2026 Do More 24 goal will be \$5,000. Literacy programs will be scheduled for parents who work during the week, and will be expand to nighttime and Sundays.
- Margaret Ann Ryan –
 - Librarian I, Erica Jones was hired as the director of Duck Creek Library
 - Planning is starting for May Fest program with hopes of expansion.
- Sophia Sotilleo – Excused
- Donell Sousa –
 - Elsmere Library is not any closer to completing their non-profit status because they are missing the articles of incorporation. The Friends plan to contact their bank to see what documents they still have on file.

VI. Guest Speakers

- None

VII. Manager of Libraries Report

- Attached.

VIII. Library Managers' Reports

- None

IX. Unfinished Business

- Review of the Friends Forum. There were over 40 attendees. Reviewed the survey results and discussed topics of interest. Discussed the possibility of moving to a larger venue and expanding participation. Notes attached.

X. New Business

- Friends Forum new committee members – Geri Krolin-Taylor and Ann Ciabattoni have volunteered to replace Kay Bowes and Cheryl Rice-Moore
- 2025 Annual Report – No volunteers for a committee
- Future Meeting Locations – February meeting will be held at Gilliam. April, May and June may be held at a library location.

XI. Public Comments

- None

XII. Announcements

- Connie Malin reviewed upcoming calendar of library events.

XIII. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn made by Janet Dean, seconded by Donell.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Next Meeting: February 11, 2026, at 5:30 PM at Gilliam.

New Castle County Libraries

January 14, 2026

Manager's Report

Highlights

Libraries:

- The department is evaluating and revising webpages and online forms to ensure compliance with the accessibility requirements outlined in the DOJ's ruling, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities."
- NCC Reads demonstrated strong community interest, with book club registration reaching capacity in less than 48 hours, highlighting the popularity of the selected title, *The First Ladies*.
- Staff have been asked to keep the Executive Office briefed on Literacy and Education Initiatives. Libraries continue to work with partner organizations on literacy initiatives and attended the recent Spotlight Delaware Summit to brief attendees on current efforts.

Department Activities

- Literacy Programs and Initiatives:
 - On December 31, Appoquinimink Library hosted two special story time sessions for children to countdown to the New Year. The annual event was well-attended with a total of 100 attendees between the two sessions.
 - Woodlawn Library's PAWS for Reading program has been highly successful since its return, with the second session fully booked and demand strong enough to warrant requesting an additional therapy dog team.
 - Tax Assistance:
 - The AARP TaxAide registration at Kirkwood Library is filling quickly. As of January 11, almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the season's 330 slots have been filled. The new online registration system has been working smoothly.
 - The Route 9 and Woodlawn Libraries will partner with Nehemiah Gateway to offer free tax assistance to qualifying low-income residents.
- Community Engagement/Outreach:
 - The Western YMCA's new Community Executive Director visited the Kirkwood Library on January 13 to discuss partnership opportunities for the coming year, including participation in Read Across America Day (March 3), Healthy Kids Day (April 18)—both of which were supported last year—and Welcoming Week (September). Additional ideas included sharing promotional handouts and exploring a temporary StoryWalk on the YMCA's outdoor trail.
 - Route 9 Library hosted its 4th Annual Holiday Open House on December 17, welcoming an estimated 200 visitors for activities, vendors, and performances. In partnership with DHSS, approximately 10 community organizations tabled onsite, and highlights included gingerbread decorating, the Resolution Steel Orchestra's return performance, and Maker Lab demonstrations with custom pencil giveaways.
- Enrichment Activities:
 - Claymont Library held a Holiday Hub Drop-In for children on December 30 to help curb their boredom during the winter break. 20 children of all ages participated in board games, crafts and computer activities.

- Claymont Library’s Bingo for Books program on January 8 drew its largest attendance since the fall, with 24 participants, including first-time attendees. The next Bingo for Books program is scheduled for January 22.
- On January 7, based on the suggestion from a participant in December’s Bridging Blocks discussion, WHYY facilitated a community conversation about Artificial Intelligence. While it was a smaller group than December’s discussion, it was a passionate discussion about what Art and Education look like in the age of AI as well as the environmental and ethical concerns about its use.
- DHSS’ Department of Public Health’s Mobile Health Clinic stopped at Kirkwood Library on December 30 from 10-2pm. They performed flu shots, blood sugar tests, cholesterol tests and blood pressure tests for the public. They will return on February 27.
- Route 9 Library hosted two Open STEM Lab sessions in December featuring new Cal Ripken STEM Center kits. Across both sessions, attendance remained strong (35–40 participants each), with high engagement in activities such as LittleBits, Makey Makey, 3D printing, button making, and programming the Indi robot car.
- Woodlawn Library hosted the First State Ringers for a holiday concert on December 20, 2025, marking the group’s first holiday performance at the library and drawing an audience of more than 50 attendees.
- Community Building & Social Connection (Recreational)
 - Members of the Middletown Historical Society recently contacted the Appoquinimink Library to use their Video Lab to conduct video interviews as part of a local history project. They plan to schedule the lab in February to interview long-time Middletown residents.
 - Bear Library’s “Noon Years Eve Dance Party” was a very popular program that allowed families to enjoy a New Years celebration in the daytime, with music, dancing, crafts, and a balloon drop. With 150 attendees, the program was our most successful dance party yet. A secondary party was improvised in the Children’s Room Den to accommodate the overflow, as patron interest far exceeded room capacity.
 - Delaware City Library welcomed more than 100 attendees to the January 9 reception for Aerial Photographic Retrospective of Delaware City from the Early 20th Century, with an additional 30 visitors on January 10 when curator Ben Fournier, grandson of the photographer, returned for a second day. The exhibit—on display through February 12 as part of Delaware City’s Bicentennial (1826–2026)—is presented in collaboration with the City of Delaware City, the Delaware City Bicentennial Committee, and Main Street Delaware City, and features the work of early aerial photographer Benjamin Gardner “BG” Carpenter, whose images document Delaware City and the surrounding region.
 - On January 10, seventeen attendees participated in the New Castle Public Library’s DQS (Delaware Queer Social) Make and Mingle program. Participants brought crafts or hobbies to share, learned new activities, and engaged in conversation. The program provides an inclusive space for individuals to build new connections and reconnect with familiar faces.
- Friends of the Library Engagement:
 - The Friends of the Hockessin Library have sponsored new museum passes added to the Delaware Libraries’ Museum Pass program starting January 1:
 - American Helicopter Museum, West Chester, PA
 - The Delaware Contemporary, Wilmington, DE
 - Delaware Museum of Nature & Science, Wilmington, DE
- Other:
 - The Corbit-Calloway Library was not awarded the DE 250 grant to support the organization and cataloging of the Delmarva papers. The library is currently exploring alternative funding opportunities to advance this work.

Mark Your Calendar

February 2 (Connie)

"The Harlem Renaissance: A Revolution of Words, Art, and Activism"

6:30pm, Bear Library

(Adults. Registration required.)

February 10 (Connie)

"Heroes of the Underground Railroad"

6:30-7:30pm, Bear Library

(Adults. Registration required.)

February 27 and 28 (Geri)

FOHL Book Sale

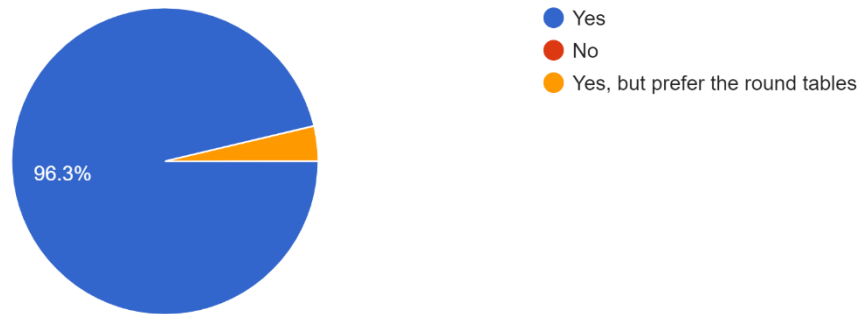
Hockessin Library Community Room

(Further information is forthcoming.)

2025 LAB/Friends Forum Evaluation Responses

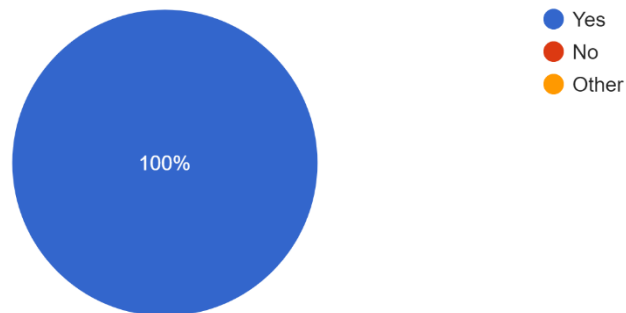
Were you satisfied with the location?

27 responses



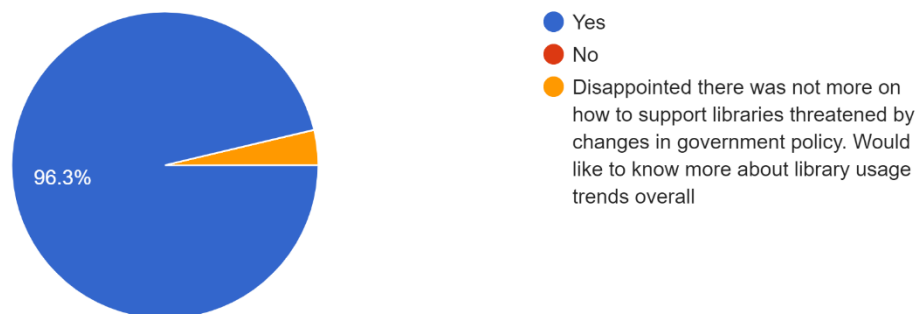
Were you satisfied with the time?

26 responses



Were you satisfied with the day?

27 responses



What is your big takeaway from this event?

- Good ideas for fundraising. Many creative and manageable ideas
- Ideas for future fun-raising :)

- Fun-raising
- New fundraising ideas
- Friends should be vocal
- Hearing what other friends groups are doing for fundraising and library events.
- Very engaging, very informative, and well received!
- Fundraising ideas
- Received ideas and suggestion that can be used to support our libraries
- Fundraising is important but need more info on how to get and keep volunteers!
- Ideas for fundraising
- Fundraising is crucial to advancing the library's mission.
- Creative fundraising ideas and advocacy ideas
- Relationship building opportunities. Fundraising activities, strategies
- Really liked the program example/fundraising goals. The friends want to help and raise funds, but the example were really helpful to see how
- Targeted DoMore24 projects, antiques roadshow-esque program
- Attendees seem to be the same every year. Perhaps some small group activities might help attendees get to know each other better.
- Some good ideas about fundraising
- New programming and fundraising ideas
- Ideas for how to extend DoMore24 Donations
- Bingo was fun. Would appreciate the list of facts. Fundraising ideas were great! Advocacy tactics are very meaningful and clever.
- Ideas for fundraising
- Hearing about programs and fundraising from various libraries
- The BINGO was a great activity!
- There are many events that friends can organize for fundraising and creating awareness
- Good hints on advocacy
- Ideas for programs, fundraisers, and advertising.

Comments:

- Thanks for the food and ideas
- Very nice
- Thank you for another successful forum!
- Keep up the good.
- Always a fun time and lots to learn! Very inspiring!
- Very informative and can lead to success
- Many children/teens do not read. What can we do?
- I would consider holding the forum bi-annually.
- Good meeting!
- Designated time to look at display tables/brag boards
- Loved the BINGO - great library trivia!
- To the point and not too long. Good job
- I enjoy the Friends/LAB meeting every year. It's always informative.
- Appreciate attention to agenda time
- Food was great - great ideas were shared.
- Fun trivia
- Introductions needed
- BINGO was better last year when we worked in teams
- The BINGO was fun. Good giveaways
- Very nice - great opportunity to meet with other friends groups.